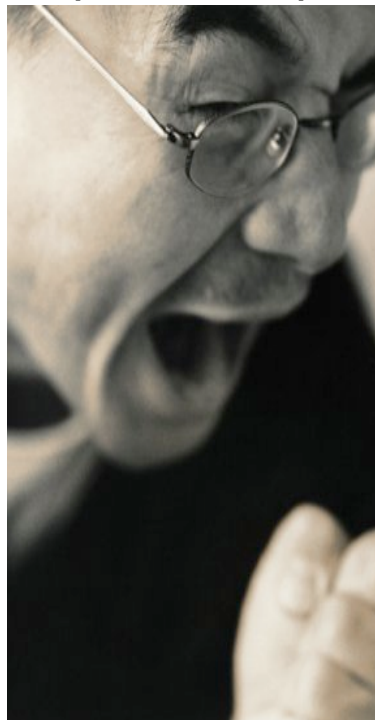




Act on domestic violence

Unite are calling on AXA to introduce a policy on domestic violence to support any employee affected by physical, emotional, sexual or financial violence at home. Victims of domestic violence often feel too scared or ashamed to tell anyone, but this is an area that AXA can make a difference in, by ensuring that the appropriate support mechanisms and policies are in place within the company for any employee who needs them.



A recent report on the **Unite** website detailed the extent of domestic violence in the UK drawing from the findings of the **British Crime Survey**. 21% of women and 10% of men have experienced at least one incident of nonsexual domestic threat or force since they were 16. If financial abuse (the withholding of money) is included, then 26 per cent of women and 17 per cent of men had experienced domestic violence since the age of 16.

Domestic violence affects all sections of society, regardless of age, gender, wealth, sexuality and geography. However, it is mainly women who suffer.

Domestic violence is the physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently 'violent'.

Unite will be presenting a draft domestic violence policy based on best practices from other unions and organisations and hopefully **AXA** will see fit to introduce the suggestions into the employee handbook to ensure readily available and sympathetic support to victims of domestic violence.

Is domestic violence a union issue?

You may think that domestic violence has little to do with the workplace, however it is quite likely that problems surrounding domestic violence will eventually surface at work and this is why employees need support from their employer.

Job performance may be affected, which could well lead to disciplinary action impacting job prospects and security.

The effects of domestic violence may also show themselves in poor timekeeping, frequent sickness or the inability to be flexible about working hours, (for example a victim of domestic violence may be forced to keep to a rigid timetable by their abuser and never socialise after work).

In addition domestic violence undermines a person's self-confidence, self-esteem and feelings of self-worth, impacting their ability to perform their work to required standards.

Are you suffering domestic violence?

Women's Aid is the main national agency for women and children experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse in their homes. If you are suffering domestic violence and need urgent help, call the **Women's Aid Helpline**:

0808 2000 247

If you are (or want to call on behalf of) a man experiencing domestic violence, call the **Men's Advice Line**:

0808 8010 327

Visit the Women's Aid website: www.womensaid.org.uk



2008 International Women's Day



2008 International Women's Day

