RAPID REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICIES AND GUIDANCE ACROSS UK UNIVERSITIES

Authors

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Background

This report details a three-phase rapid review conducted to inform an evidence-based domestic abuse policy guidance for use at universities in the UK. Produced by the Honour Abuse Research Matrix (HARM) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), both this rapid review report (Hall, Roberts & Khan, 2021) and the Domestic Abuse Policy Guidance for UK Universities (Khan, 2021), were supported by Research England's Quality-related Research funding associated with the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund (QR-SPF), for research activity that supports evidence-based policy making.

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Contents

About: Honour Abuse Research Matrix

About us

HARM was established in 2018 by Dr Roxanne Khan, in association with the Criminal Justice Partnership, University of Central Lancashire. HARM is a multi-disciplinary research network focused on so-called 'honour'-based abuse, violence and killing, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and other under-researched and often misunderstood forms of domestic abuse.

Who we are

HARM is a diverse consortium of local, national, and international professional representatives from academia, the police and other emergency services and first-responders, crime scene investigators, legal professionals, government advisors, the Civil Service, NGOs and support organisations, social services and safeguarding professionals, survivors, activists, and students.

What we do

HARM aims to develop novel and practical ways to understand, explain, and respond to the global health crisis of domestic violence, including so-called 'honour'-based abuse, forced marriage and FGM. HARM fosters original research, research-based policy innovation, training and advocacy programmes, and campaigns. We work with our members to build a society that ensures equality and freedom from abuse for all.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Domestic abuse is a serious problem that affects a significant number adults worldwide. For example, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (2021) reported that nearly 30% of women and 10% of men in the United States have suffered abuse by an intimate partner. The gender difference in reports of domestic abuse is noted across national surveys and reflects the wider inequality that women and girls face worldwide. In a recent gender social norm index (United Nations Development Programme, 2020) that analysed data from 75 countries representing 80% of the world's population, nearly one-third of this sample thought it acceptable for a husband to beat his wife. In the largest study yet on the global prevalence of violence against women, the World Health Organisation (WHO; 2021) reported that 1 in 4 women and girls have been physically or sexually assaulted by a husband or male partner, and that domestic abuse victimisation started young; a quarter of 15- to 19-year-olds were estimated to have been abused by their husband or male partner at least once in their lives (Ford, 2021). The WHO study also found that in the UK, a quarter of 15-to-49-year-olds had been victim of domestic abuse by a partner.

Although domestic abuse affects people of all ages, this information is relevant to UK university policymakers as this age group reflects the demographic of staff and students at higher education institutions (HEIs) (Magill, Gajparia, Havard, Shepherd, & Kibirige, 2020). A recent national crime survey for England and Wales found that women who were full time students were most likely to be domestic abuse victims, compared to any other occupation (Office for National Statistics; ONS, 2020a).

It has also been estimated that over 185,000 UK university staff and students suffer domestic abuse or violence every year (Khan, 2021).

Despite clear indicators that domestic abuse affects many staff and students, little is known about domestic abuse policies and procedures at UK universities prior to, during, and for after the COVID-19 pandemic. Even less is known about the extent to which existing policies are inclusive, or indeed effective, with respect to the diversity of university staff and students. Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show a broad diversity in staff and student demographics. Some of these characteristics are associated with domestic abuse victimisation, as well as barriers to help-seeking and formal reporting experiences. For example, recent national data shows that disabled women were more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women, and almost twice as likely than disabled men, and that domestic abuse is widely underreported by Black, Asian, and other minoritised ethnic victims (ONS, 2019a), as well as victims within the LGBTQ* community (Bachmann & Gooch, 2017).

Regardless of age, gender, or background, it is also estimated that a significant number of victims do not report their abuse, thus actual rates are expected to be much higher (ONS, 2017).

*LGBTQ is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer

Aims and Methods

This desk-based rapid review explored existing academic literature in addition to collecting new information on current domestic abuse policies and guidance at all UK universities - 133 in total.

The key aims of this rapid review were to collect information to determine whether domestic abuse policies exist and, where they do, if they are inclusive. That is, the extent to which they consider the cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and students, whether they are LGBTQ, have disabilities, and/or are male. The rapid review also assessed whether the policies included information on how to respond appropriately domestic abuse perpetrators, and whether dedicated points of contact ('Champions') or other relevant staff at the university had received specialist training in domestic abuse.

This rapid review was based on three phases of investigation.

1. Scientific databases were searched to locate academic literature on domestic abuse policies at universities in the UK.
2. A scoping study of all 133 UK public university websites was conducted to extrapolate information on how many had domestic abuse policies, either specifically or embedded within a wider safeguarding framework.
3. An online survey was sent to human resources (HR) departments at all 133 UK universities to collect information on domestic abuse policies beyond that available on their public websites (for example, on the university intranet or hard copies).

Information collected in phase 2 and phase 3 was used to examine processes for reporting domestic abuse - that is, whether information was provided on how reports could be made at university, and to whom.

The review also explored whether dedicated points of contact ('Champions') or other relevant staff had received specialist training in domestic abuse.

Key findings

- No academic literature on domestic abuse policy or guidance at universities in the UK could be located, indicating a clear research gap.
- Overall, 88 universities had some form of domestic abuse related policy and/or guidance, which varied in terms of detail and inclusivity.
- Only 9 universities had a specific domestic abuse policy.
- A total of 18 universities had a combined domestic abuse policy; this was typically combined with gender-based violence, sexual abuse/violence, and harassment.
- 27 of the universities that did not appear to have a publicly available domestic abuse policy (specific or combined) during phase 2 of this review, mentioned domestic abuse in their general safeguarding policies.
- Few policies that covered domestic abuse, acknowledged the need to respond appropriately to an abuser.
- A total of 9 universities had detailed domestic abuse guidance/guidelines (i.e., multiple page documents), mostly aimed at staff members.
- Of those universities that had guidance/support in place, the most common form appeared to be online support/information pages for students, with links to internal support services and external support organisations.
- Of those universities that offered domestic abuse support for male victims and LGBTQ victims, resources were not fully inclusive and did not fully consider the cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and students, those with international status or with disabilities.

1.5%

Universities

have specific domestic abuse policy

- Most general safeguarding policies were basic, with only a brief overview of the different types of abuse, and a procedure to contact the organisation's designated safeguarding lead. Often there was little mention of domestic abuse, and if there was, this was without a definition.
- There appeared to be a distinct lack of specialist points of contact ('Champions'). Staff were generally signposted to report to HR or general staff wellbeing/counselling services. Students were typically signposted to wellbeing/counselling services, and student advisors.
- 'Report and Support' systems appear to be a popular tool for staff and students to make online disclosures of domestic abuse, along with other types of abuse, harassment, and violence.
- Only 9 universities state that they provide specific domestic abuse training to staff or students.

Finally, just 6 out of 133 universities reported that they recorded incidents of domestic abuse. A total of 108 domestic abuse incidents involving both staff and students were recorded in the years 2019 and 2020, across the 6 universities that provided this data.

Conclusions

Most universities in the UK do not appear to have domestic abuse policies in place to support their staff and students. Of those that do, most are not fully inclusive. Specifically, while some policies may have considered the safeguarding needs of male and LGBTQ victims, they failed to account for the cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and students (including those with an international status), and those with disabilities. This is of particular concern because HESA data shows a broad diversity of staff and student ethnicities, as well as a notable proportion of staff and students who have international status and/or disability status.

COVID-19 has resulted in significant changes to higher education, affecting the way universities can support domestic abuse victims. This rapid review makes a compelling case for developing domestic abuse policy that is inclusive and covers the diversity of staff and students at HEIs, whether they are on-campus or working and studying remotely using online digital spaces.

This rapid review provided an insight into domestic abuse policies at UK universities, but the findings must be considered in light of limitations. Specifically, this work was conducted over a 2-month period during lockdown, while the research team and universities were constrained by COVID-19 restrictions. Universities that did not respond to the survey, may have domestic abuse policies available on their intranet or hardcopies located within HR departments. Likewise, it is possible that some domestic abuse policies may not have been captured by the research team during academic database searches and scrutiny of websites.

The main aim of this rapid review was to collect information to inform domestic abuse policy guidance (see P.32). Therefore, when lockdown eases, further investigations should collect information from all institutions, for a more comprehensive overview. It is noteworthy that an investigation by the *Guardian* (McVeigh, 2015) used Freedom of Information requests and found that almost one-third of Russell Group Universities did not formally record allegations of sex offences (rapes, assaults, and harassment), and that one-fifth did not have formal guidelines for reporting allegations to the institutions. Further investigations will help to establish the extent to which existing domestic abuse policies are available and whether they are inclusive, with respect of the diversity of staff and students at universities across the UK.

1. Introduction

Rapid review of domestic abuse policies and guidance across UK universities

Domestic Abuse in the context of UK Universities

Little is known about the policies and guidance at UK universities to support victims of domestic abuse. This is out of step with the growing body of work on sexual abuse in HEIs (for an overview, see Towl & Walker, 2019). For example, in a survey of over 5,000 British university students, over half reported being subjected to unwanted sexualised behaviours including inappropriate touching, catcalling, and unwanted explicit messages (Brook Sexual Health, 2019). Likewise, of 4,491 students and graduates across 153 different HEIs, 62% reported that they had been a victim of sexual violence, but only 6% reported it to the university (Revolt Sexual Assault, 2019). This information indicates a need to improve understanding about all forms of abuse, including domestic abuse, in the context of higher education, and for universities to prioritise safeguarding policies to support staff and students who may be at risk.

HESA data shows that universities in the UK are demographically diverse, with a broad mix of staff and students, in terms of age, sex, gender, socioeconomic background, culture, ethnicity, faith, religious beliefs, and disability status. It is important, therefore, that domestic abuse policies are both culturally competent and inclusive, in respect of this diversity. Also, evidence shows that some factors increase the likelihood of abuse. For example, domestic abuse disproportionately affects women.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020) estimated that 1.6 million women and 757,000 men experienced domestic abuse the year previously (ONS, 2020b). In Scotland, of the 60,000 domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police, around four out of every five involved a female victim and a male accused, while around 16% of domestic abuse incidents had a male victim and a female accused (Scottish Government, 2020).

National statistics for England and Wales show that disabled women are more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women, and almost twice as likely than disabled men (ONS, 2020a). With regards to universities specifically, this data showed that full time students were most likely to be domestic abuse victims, compared to any other occupation – with women students more than twice as likely to be a victim than students who were men (ONS, 2020a).

Also of concern is that domestic abuse is vastly underreported, and it is estimated that four out of five victims do not report their abuse to the police (ONS, 2017). Rates of domestic abuse, therefore, are likely to be greater than those recorded by official police reports and statistics.

The impact of COVID-19 has further highlighted the need to address this problem in the context of HEIs. Far more people are now working and studying from home, and restrictions on movement and social activity have been linked with a rise in reported cases of domestic abuse. For instance, it is estimated that around one fifth of all offences recorded by the police since the start of the pandemic (March 2020) involved domestic abuse. This is an increase of around 5% in comparison to previous years (ONS, 2020b).

COVID-19 lockdown has changed the working and learning landscape of higher education, both in the short- and long-term, indicating that domestic abuse safeguarding policy should be a priority for HEIs in the UK. The pandemic has also affected the way universities can support staff and students who are victims of domestic abuse, many of whom will continue to work or learn remotely and online (Khan, 2020; Khan & Hall, 2020). Therefore, it is important to assess the extent to which university policymakers in the UK have responded to this problem effectively.

Prior to COVID-19, a Scottish Government rapid review of domestic abuse guidance in Scottish HEIs (McCullough, McCarry, & Donaldson, 2017) indicated that some Scottish universities are taking positive steps to address domestic abuse. In response to COVID-19, Universities UK (2020a; 2020b) published two reports about the impact of lockdown on domestic abuse victims within the context of the HEIs, called *Beginning the Conversation* and *Continuing the Conversation*.

Although HEIs have a duty of care for the wellbeing of their staff and students, to our knowledge, no previous investigations have assessed existing domestic abuse policies and guidance at universities across the UK. A notable exception is a recent review, of a tenth of university disciplinary policies in the UK, which found fewer than a fifth referred to domestic abuse (Soames & Stanley, 2021).

This review aimed to provide new information by examining domestic abuse policy across UK universities, to be evaluated against the following criteria:

Research questions

1. Does the university have specific domestic abuse policy?

2. Does the university have policy or guidance to support staff and students, including how to respond appropriately to perpetrators?

3. Are existing policies or guidance inclusive (that is, do they considered the cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and students, and whether they are LGBTQ, have disabilities, and/or are male).

4. Is there a dedicated team/point of contact and/or university ('Champions') to whom reports of domestic abuse can be made? Have they undertaken specialist domestic abuse training?

5. Are these policies and programmes subject to evaluation and, if so, how often?

These criteria are drawn from the recommendations outlined in the UK Universities' *Changing the Culture* report (2016). This outlined ways in which universities should aim to tackle violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting students, as follows:

- Developing a clear, accessible, and representative disclosure response for incidents of sexual violence and rape and working with relevant external agencies where appropriate.

- Taking reasonable and practical steps to implement a centralised reporting system.

- Conducting a thorough assessment of which staff members need to be trained and what training needs to be provided. A clear, multi-tiered training strategy covering different types of incidents can then be developed.

- Building and maintaining partnerships with local specialist services to ensure consistent referral pathways for students.

• Establishing and maintaining strong links with the local police and NHS in order to develop and maintain a strategic partnership to prevent and respond to violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting students.

This rapid review adopts the view that all universities in the UK should have specific policies in place to support staff and students who are victims of domestic abuse. These policies should also consider how to respond appropriately to perpetrators of domestic abuse. These policies should be inclusive to reflect the diversity of staff and students of any age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, culture, ethnicity, faith, religious beliefs, and disability status. There should be dedicated points of contact ('Champions') to whom reports of domestic abuse can be made, and Champions should receive specialist training. Domestic abuse policies and programmes should also be subject to regular and systematic evaluation.

47%

UNIVERSITIES
HAVE BASIC
DOMESTIC
ABUSE
GUIDANCE

2. Rapid Review: Methods

This rapid review was conducted between January 2021 and February 2021. This desk-based investigation involved three phases of enquiry to overview and evaluate existing domestic abuse policies and guidance across all UK universities, a total of 133 overall.

Phase 1: Academic literature review

The first phase involved searching scientific databases to locate academic literature on domestic abuse policies in HEIs in the UK. Key terms such as "domestic abuse", "domestic violence", "intimate partner violence", "IPV", "policy", "guidance", "universities", and "higher education" were entered into the following scientific databases: Science Direct, PsychArticles, CINAHL Complete, Academic Search Complete, MEDLINE, PsychInfo, and Google Scholar.

Phase 2: Review of university websites

The second phase involved directly visiting university webpages to identify any publicly available domestic abuse policies. The same search terms used in phase 1 ("domestic abuse", "domestic violence", "policy", and "guidance") were entered into search engines along with the names of all universities in the UK. Where no specific domestic abuse policy could be found, other policies (such as safeguarding or sexual harassment) were then reviewed to determine whether they covered issues of domestic abuse.

Inclusivity. All policies were also reviewed to assess whether they were inclusive. That is, the extent to which they considered the cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and students, whether they were LGBTQ, had

disabilities, and/or were male. In addition to this, whether the policies included information on responding to perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Reporting processes: Existing policies and university webpages were also explored to investigate the domestic abuse reporting process, including whether the university had a specific point of contact ('Champion') to whom reports could be made.

Phase 3: Online survey* - human resources

The third phase involved collecting information using an online survey distributed via email to each Human Resources department at all 131 universities in the UK. The purpose of this survey was to obtain information from universities about any domestic abuse policies that are not publicly available online. In total, 17 universities responded to the survey.

The survey consisted of 9 questions that asked respondents to provide information on existing domestic abuse policies at their respective universities, how such policies are accessed (i.e., online or hard copy), what issues the existing policies covered, information on how often policies are reviewed, and staff training. Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of formal domestic abuse reports made for 2018 and 2019.

The information collected in the three phases were combined to provide an overview of existing domestic abuse policies in at universities in the UK.

* Contact Dr Roxanne Khan (rkhan2@uclan.ac.uk) for a copy of the survey

3. Rapid Review: Findings

Phase 1: Academic literature review

No academic literature on domestic abuse policy or guidance at universities in the UK could be located, which indicated a significant gap in academic research.

Phase 2: Review of university websites

This search found mixed results in terms of existing domestic abuse policy and guidance. While few universities had explicit domestic abuse policy or guidance, many had considered domestic abuse as part of a wider safeguarding issue. For those universities that did not have specific domestic abuse safeguarding policies or guidance, a number had webpages with domestic abuse information, including details on how to make reports of domestic abuse, and contact information for external domestic abuse support organisations.

This review found that only 9 out of 133 UK universities had a specific domestic abuse policy publicly available online. A further 18 universities did, however, have a combined policy publicly available online that covered domestic abuse alongside other related issues such as sexual violence and harassment, or the wider scope of gender-based violence. For the remainder of universities, domestic abuse was mentioned to some extent in a more general safeguarding policy in 27 universities. However, two thirds of these safeguarding policies referred only briefly to domestic abuse. For example, listing "domestic abuse" as a type of abuse, but with no further information or definition.

Additionally, a total of 49 universities provided some form of guidance for domestic abuse publicly available online. This included published documents, online support pages and/or links to external support organisations. Most guidance consisted of webpages aimed at students, with information about domestic abuse, and links to internal and external sources of support. A total of 9 universities appeared to have detailed guidance for domestic abuse, 8 of which were publicly available. Although these were specifically identified as "guidance" rather than "policy", the structure and contents were typically reflective of what could be expected to be seen in a policy document.

Inclusivity. Particular attention was paid to the inclusivity of the support offered. Listed in descending order are the number of universities (shown in parentheses) that offered specific domestic abuse guidance to the following people/groups/issues:

- Male victims (41)
- LGBTQ victims (31)
- Forced marriage (26)
- 'Honour' based abuse/violence (19)
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse (12)
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) (9)
- Black, Asian, and other ethnic minoritised victims (8)
- International students (3)
- Victims with disabilities (1)

This indicates that of the universities that offered domestic abuse support for male victims and LGBTQ victims, the majority did not consider the cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and students, those with international status, or with disabilities.

Reporting Processes: The scoping study also examined processes for reporting domestic abuse, in line with recommendations outlined in the UK Universities' Changing the Culture report (2016). This showed that there were a range of reporting processes in place, including online report portals, designated safeguarding officers, signposting to in-house counselling services, and advising staff to talk to line managers or HR contacts.

Overall, 67 (50.38%) universities detailed at least one method of reporting incidents of domestic abuse, either through a 'Champion' to whom reports could be made, or through another service. Generally, the most common method for reporting incidents of domestic abuse was the use of online support portals. In total, 23 (17.29%) universities had a type of online 'support and report' portal. These portals allow staff and students to make anonymous reports of abuse, harassment, or violence to the university. Many of these webpages had 'click here to hide' buttons, which allows anyone in immediate danger to quickly hide the webpage.

A similar number of universities were found to advise staff and students to report cases of domestic abuse to university and counselling or wellbeing services. Overall, 16 (12.03%) universities refer to either counselling services, wellbeing services, or student services across policy and guidance for reporting domestic abuse. Where this information was found on university webpages, the university generally provided the contact details of the counselling and wellbeing services. Within policy and guidance documents, however, this information was sometimes missing.

It should be noted that some universities did not provide any clear guidance on where to make reports of domestic abuse within the university. This was evident across 64 (48.12%) universities, where it was not stated whether the university has a dedicated 'Champion' to whom reports of domestic abuse can be made, or how victims of domestic abuse could seek other forms of support from the university. A further two universities advise people to contact 999 for cases of domestic abuse, which may be indicative of there being no in-house service to which domestic abuse reports can be made.

Guidance on staff and student domestic abuse training was variable. Nine universities state that they provide domestic abuse training to staff or students, with a further two stating that they provide more general safeguarding training. It is not clear the extent to which safeguarding training covers issues of domestic abuse. Across the nine universities that provide domestic abuse training, only one university stated this is mandatory for all staff. Across the other eight universities, it is not clear whether such training is mandatory or taken up on a voluntary basis. Of the universities that indicated they provide domestic abuse training, there were examples of training programmes making positive steps towards supporting staff and students in cases of domestic abuse. One university was noted to have trained a group of students to deliver Sexual Violence Awareness Training to other students across the University. This training covers issues of domestic and gender-based abuse and is rolled out across the university for all students. This is a positive example of domestic abuse training that may be perceived as more accessible for students, given that it is delivered by other students. Yet no information was provided regarding the evidence-base, quality, or evaluation of this training.

Phase 3: Online survey - human resources

A total of 17 universities responded to the survey. Of these, 6 universities stated that they had a specific domestic abuse policy, and 4 stated that they had a combined domestic abuse policy. Of these, 3 reported that the policies were available online, and 3 were available both online and as a hard copy. The majority (n=10) of those with either specific, or combined domestic abuse policies, stated that these were reviewed every 2+ years.

The survey also asked if universities have domestic abuse guidance available for staff and/or students such as posters, online toolkit, video, booklet, and internal/external support signposting. Out of the 17 respondents, 16 stated that they provided such guidance, which was typically online support such as webpages, or "report and support" systems. Most of this guidance was available to both staff and students (n=13).

Inclusivity. With regards to inclusivity of policies and guidance, it was reported that: 7 covered victims who were Black, Asian or of other minoritised ethnic heritage; 6 covered people who were LGBTQ; 5 covered male victims of domestic abuse; 4 covered perpetrators of domestic abuse; 4 covered disability, and only 1 covered international students.

Training. A total of 12 universities reported that they had a dedicated internal point of contact to whom disclosure/reports of domestic abuse can be made (e.g., HR specialist, specific tutor/s, or a workplace 'Champion').

Of these, 7 were reported to have received specialist training for the role. Respondents were also questioned about the nature of the domestic training available for staff, and it was found that: 2 universities made such training compulsory for all staff; 4 made it compulsory for select staff; 3 had training optional for all staff, and 2 had training optional for select staff. A further 5 were considering training. Five universities reported that they utilised both in-house and external training, 2 used in-house training only, and 1 used external training only.

Recorded incidents: Finally, the survey asked respondents about the recording of domestic abuse incidents relating to staff and students. Six universities reported that they recorded incidents of domestic abuse. Of these, 4 universities recorded incidents involving both staff and students, 2 recorded incidents involving staff only, and 2 recorded incidents involving students only. A total of 108 domestic abuse incidents involving both staff and students was recorded in the years of 2019 and 2020, across the 6 universities that provided data.

UK Universities with specific domestic abuse guidance:

9/133

4. Domestic Abuse Policy: Good Practice

The rapid review identified evidence of good practice. Scottish charity, Emily Test, is creating the first Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Charter for colleges and universities in consultation with Violence Against Women professionals and charity sector staff (Drouet & Gerrard-Abbott, 2021).

Also, the University of Strathclyde's "Gender-Based Violence Policy", which is available in two different versions: one for staff, and one for students. The title of the policy is clear, with the document owner and effective date stated on the policy documents. Contents page is provided, making relevant information easy to find. The policy includes:

- A clear explanation of the purpose and scope of policy.
- A definition of (GBV) with examples that include domestic abuse, 'honour' based abuse, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.
- A clear code of conduct, explaining the organisation's zero tolerance approach.
- Detailed guidance on responding to an alleged perpetrator
- Clear guidance regarding the roles and responsibilities of responders to disclosures.
- Guidance on keeping appropriate records (e.g., information sharing), and how staff can access relevant training.
- The policy review cycle – which in this policy is stated as annually.

This policy also includes helpful appendices, with information on spotting the signs of GBV in the form of a list of common behavioural and physical indicators. Flowchart diagrams are also included, which clearly shows the different stages of the organisations response to tackling GBV.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Domestic abuse is a problem that impacts on the physical, emotional and financial wellbeing of almost a quarter-of-a-million university staff and students in the UK every year (Khan, 2021). Despite the enormity of the problem, and the devastating impact on victims' lives, it appears that most UK universities have no specific policy on domestic abuse. Many offer little or no training, and the majority do not record incidents.

This rapid review makes the following recommendations:

- Universities must aim to develop specific and inclusive domestic abuse policies that are separate from broader safeguarding policies, and that consider the diversity of staff and students.
- Domestic abuse policies must detail how to respond effectively to perpetrators.
- Domestic abuse policies must be subject to annual reviews.
- The contact details of designated points of contact ('Champions') to whom reports of domestic abuse should be made must be stated clearly (in all policy and guidance).
- Specialist domestic abuse awareness and safeguarding training must be compulsory for all dedicated points of contact ('Champions'). This training should also be optional for all staff and students.

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