# Helpful Questions

Victims of domestic abuse are often too afraid or uncomfortable to raise the issue of abuse themselves.

As a business you can ask questions sensitively, but directly if you have concerns that a colleague or someone you line manage is affected by an unhealthy relationship at home.

The following examples should help you to start a conversation with that person to enable them to disclose and enable you to offer support.

For example:

* Can you tell me what’s been happening?
* You seem upset. How are things?
* Are you frightened of someone/something?
* How are things at home?
* Did someone hurt you?
* How did you get those injuries?
* Are you in a relationship in which you have been physically hurt or threatened by someone?
* Have you ever been in such a relationship?
* Do you ever feel frightened by your partner or other people at home?
* Are you (or have you ever been) in a relationship in which you felt you were badly treated? In what ways?
* Has the abusive person destroyed things that you care about?
* Has the abusive person ever threatened to harm your family? Do you believe that they would?
* What happens when you and the abusive person disagree?
* Have they ever prevented you from leaving the house, seeing friends, getting a job or continuing in education?
* What would happen if you wanted to go out with friends?
* Does the abusive person restrict your access to money or access your Child Benefit or allowances?
* Has the abusive person ever hit, punched, pushed, shoved or slapped you?
* Has the abusive person ever threatened you with a weapon?
* Does the abusive person use drugs or alcohol excessively? If so, how do they behave at this time?
* Do you ever feel you have to walk on eggshells around your partner?
* Have the police ever been involved?
* Have you ever been physically hurt in any way when you were pregnant?
* Have they ever threatened to harm the children? Or to take them away from you?

Basic Principles before asking the question:

Make sure that the time and place is appropriate when asking the question e.g. not when they are about to finish work or go to an appointment/meeting, or there are other people around.

Use a safe space within your business to speak to them, maybe a small office/meeting room, with a drink, to make them feel at ease.

If you suspect domestic abuse, make sure that the person abusing them is not likely to interrupt you if they also work at the same business, and that no one else is able to interrupt you while you are having your chat with them.