

Best practice within the industry



“Just knowing that my employee acknowledged what my children and I were going through meant everything – work became a safe place, and I was able to be open and ask for help. That lifted a massive weight of my shoulders and enabled me to start rebuilding my life with a degree of stability I hadn’t had for many years”

CASE STUDY

Sellafield Ltd: making domestic abuse a workplace topic



The only industrial company in the North of England to hold EIDA Strategic Partner status.

Domestic abuse affects 1 in 4 people in the UK at some point in their lives - and in Cumbria, where Sellafield Ltd mainly operates, that figure is even higher. With a workforce of over 11,500 people, Sellafield Ltd recognised that the scale of impact on its employees was too significant to ignore. In 2025, it became a Strategic Partner of the Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) - the only industrial company in the North of England to hold that status.

Sellafield Ltd’s programme did not begin with a grand plan. It grew from a network of trained domestic abuse workplace contacts - volunteers who underwent training delivered by the Freedom Project (a local Domestic Abuse charity) - and expanded as the evidence of local need became impossible to ignore. A pivotal moment came when the Freedom Project hosted (and Sellafield Ltd sponsored) an employer conference in Cumbria, bringing together senior leaders, police and crime commissioners and senior leaders from a range of local organisations. As Alan Rankin, Inclusion and Wellbeing Lead for Sellafield Ltd put it: “The lights went on at the same time for everyone. It was a wow moment - we knew we needed to do more in this space.”

Today, the programme encompasses a Domestic Abuse Steering Group, a network of trained workplace contacts, partnerships with the Freedom Project and EIDA, and a dedicated intranet hub providing resources at the point of need, and training is being rolled out for line managers and the whole workforce. Critically, it has the active sponsorship of Sellafield Ltd Chief Operating Officer and Chief People Officer - who were won over by the data, by survivor stories, and by the Freedom Project conference – and who now speak about the topic with genuine knowledge and passion at leadership forums.

Senior Sponsor for domestic abuse at Sellafield, Lesley Bowen, also chairs the trustees of a local domestic abuse charity, bringing the realities of frontline support directly into the organisation’s approach. Measuring the impact of cultural change is difficult, but the most powerful evidence comes from those who have been supported. One anonymous Sellafield employee, supported through the Freedom Project, left a message that has stayed with the team: “You literally saved my life.”



“Bring it out of the dark into the light, like you do with mental health, as you do with menopause. The more you talk about it, the more it becomes common business language.” - Lesley Bowen, Senior Sponsor for Domestic Abuse, Sellafield Ltd

For organisations considering a similar journey, Sellafield’s message is clear: it does not need to be expensive or complex. EIDA’s free handbook, policy templates and foundation programme provide a ready-made roadmap for employers of any size. The most important step is simply starting the conversation.

Sellafield Ltd is the only industrial company and the only organisation in the North of England to be an EIDA Strategic Partner. For more information on EIDA and its free resources for employers, visit www.eida.org.uk.