

## A fact sheet explaining how we can help support victims of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can affect men and women of any age, from any culture or religion, living with or apart from their abuser. The abuse is not always physical. It can also be controlling, emotional or coercive behaviour. It is rarely a one-off incident and tends to get worse over time.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable. If you feel you are a victim of any form of domestic abuse, or feel at risk, or you know someone who you think may be a victim of domestic abuse, we can offer you a range of advice and support.

### What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse, or domestic violence, is any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

'Abusive behaviour' is defined in the act as any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Violent or threatening behaviour.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Economic abuse.
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

### What is controlling behaviour?

Controlling behaviour is "a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and /or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour."

Controlling acts may include, but are not exclusive to, manipulation, intimidation, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse. The behaviour is intended to make a person become submissive, or to isolate them from sources of support, such as their friends and family. It might include monitoring their time, or communication with others, including checking someone's mobile phone or online communication.

It could also be exploiting their resources, such as their wages or access to money, depriving them of their independence and trying to regulate or control everyday behaviour such as where they can go, who they can see and what to wear.

It may be stopping someone accessing specialist support services, repeatedly putting them down, humiliating or degrading them and making threats to hurt them or their children, or publish private information about them.

Something that may seem like harmless behaviour in isolation can have devastating effects on a victim when they are subjected to repeated controlling behaviour. We would encourage people to speak to someone about any behaviour that is concerning them, all reports will be treated sensitively and taken seriously.

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### What is coercive behaviour?

Coercive behaviour is: “an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.” Some examples of coercive control are:

- Isolating you from your friends and family.
- Depriving you of basic needs, such as food or care.
- Monitoring how you spend your time.
- Tracking what you do online or on your phone.
- Controlling aspects of your everyday life, such as where you can go, who you can see, what you can wear and when you can sleep.
- Stopping you from accessing support services, such as medical services or support groups.
- Repeatedly putting you down, saying you are worthless.
- Humiliating, degrading, or dehumanising you.

### What will you do if I report domestic abuse?

We will listen to you, believing what you tell us, and will contact you safely, in a way and time that suits you.

We will treat what you tell us confidentially but, if we are concerned that someone is at risk of serious harm, we have a duty of care to pass this onto the correct agency. Where possible we will make you aware.

We will be clear about what we can do, and we will help you find specialist support. If you decide you would like to report this to the police, we can support you. We will be patient and understand that each victim/survivor will make changes in their own time. We will support you and ensure you know that you are able to return to the service in future if you need our assistance.

### How can we help?

We will keep in regular contact with you and keep a log of everything you tell us. We will take time to understand the effect the abuse is having on you.

We can give advice and support and make referrals to other agencies. We will work closely with those agencies to make sure you get the help you need.

We realise that your home is extremely important to you and one of the main reasons people do not leave. If you need to leave your home, we can help you find a safe place to live. We can provide advice about alternative housing and give you options to enable you to make an informed choice, this could include temporary or permanent transfers.

If you want to stay at home, we can help source additional security measures. We can also give you advice on applying for benefits and help you fill out the forms.

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We take a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and where possible with your consent and safety in mind we will hold perpetrators of abuse to account where this is appropriate to do so. We will always be clear that domestic abuse is never the fault of the victim/survivor.

### Support available.

#### The Police

**If you, or someone else, is in immediate danger, please call 999 and ask for the police.**

**When you need to call 999 but cannot talk - the Silent Solution can help. The Silent Solution is a system that filters out large numbers of accidental, or hoax 999 calls while ensuring people can alert police and get help when they are in genuine need but unable to speak.**

A recorded message will instruct callers who cannot talk to press 55 to be put through to police. Staying silent and not pressing 55 will lead to the call being terminated.

If you need urgent police help but cannot speak, you should:

- Dial 999.
- Listen to the questions from the operator.
- Respond by coughing or tapping your device if you can.
- If prompted, press 55 to let the operator know it is a genuine emergency and you will be put through to police.

#### LACE Housing and Support Team

Please also talk to our housing and support team, so we can refer you to specialist organisations who can offer you support and advice.

You can also contact:

- [The National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) run by Refuge, which specialises in supporting women suffering domestic violence, on **0808 2000 247**, 24 hours a day.
- [Refuge UK](#) specialises in supporting women suffering domestic violence.
- [Safelives.org.uk](#) a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.
- [Mankind.org.uk](#) specialises in supporting men, on **01823 334244**, Monday – Friday, 10am-4pm.
- [Mensadvice.org.uk](#) also specialises in supporting men, on **0808 8010327**, Monday – Friday 10am-5pm.
- [Galop.org.uk](#) specialises in support to LGBT + community, on **0800 999 5428** or email [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk) for emotional and practical support.

#### The Bright Sky app

This is a free to download mobile app providing information and advice. The app has useful tools, and you can also record evidence in a private journal (via text, audio, video, or photo). The information uploaded is not stored on the phone itself, ensuring the information remains confidential.

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- [Download the Bright Sky app in the Google Play Store](#)
- [Download the Bright Sky app in the iOS App Store](#)

### Respect

For those perpetrators that are worried about their behaviour and who wish to take steps to change them, we can signpost them to [www.respect.org.uk](http://www.respect.org.uk)

**Telephone support** - [0808 8024040](tel:08088024040) Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm. Anonymous and confidential phonenumber.

**Email support** - [info@respectphoneline.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphoneline.org.uk) Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

**Webchat support** -Thursday 2pm - 4pm.

### Women's Aid

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) where you can find a copy of the survivor's handbook. This is free and provides information for women on a wide range of issues, such as housing, money, helping your children, and your legal rights.

On the Women's Aid website, you can also refer to a directory of domestic abuse support services across the UK.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse or are worried about friends or family, you can access the [Women's Aid live chat service](#) 7 days a week, 10am to 6pm.

[helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)

### Victim Support

Run services for victims-survivors of any abuse or crime, regardless of when it occurred or if the crime was reported to the police:

- free, independent, and confidential 24/7 Supportline 08 08 16 89 111
- [live chat service](#)
- [My Support Space - free online resource](#)

### Ask for ANI codeword.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and need immediate help, ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) in participating pharmacies and Jobcentres. When you ask for ANI, you will be offered a private space, provided with a phone, and asked if you need support from the police or other domestic abuse support services.

To find your nearest participating provider, search using the postcode checker on the [Ask-for-ani - page on the Enough website](#).

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### Safe Spaces

Ask for ANI is delivered in partnership with Safe Spaces, a safe and confidential room where victims can take some time to reflect, access information on specialist support services or call friends or family.

[Safe Spaces](#) are also available in Boots, Morrisons, Superdrug and Well pharmacies, TSB banks and independent pharmacies across the UK.

Find your [nearest Safe Space](#).

### To check whether someone has an abusive past.

If you are concerned that a new, former, or existing partner has an abusive past you can ask the police to check under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (also known as 'Clare's Law'). This is your 'right to ask.' If records show that you may be at risk of domestic abuse, the police will consider disclosing the information. A disclosure can be made if it is legal, proportionate, and necessary to do so.

If you are concerned about a friend or family member, you can apply for a disclosure on behalf of someone you know.

You can make a request to the police for information about a person's previous violent offending in person at the police station or elsewhere, by telephone, by email, online or as part of a police investigation. Support agencies and services can also help you ask the police about this.