



Home Office

Domestic abuse

What services and organisations should do
to keep victims safe

Easy read version of the statutory guidance framework

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The Domestic Abuse Act 2021



The Domestic Abuse Act became law in 2021. It lets people know about domestic abuse and helps to stop it happening. It aims to protect and care for people who have been abused.



This paper is the statutory guidance. It helps organisations with understanding what the law says domestic abuse is and with stopping domestic abuse.



It is for services like the police, prisons, the courts, the NHS, JobCentre Plus, Housing and Social Services for adults and children.



It is for organisations like faith and community groups and voluntary organisations that support victims of domestic abuse.

What is domestic abuse?



Domestic abuse is when someone abuses another person that they are related or closely connected to, and both people are 16 or over.



It is also domestic abuse where a child sees, hears or experiences the effects of abuse towards a parent or relative.

Abusive behaviour includes:



Physical abuse, like hurting or threatening to hurt someone, their family members or their pets.



Sexual abuse, like forcing someone to have sex.



Controlling behaviour so the victim is frightened or does things they don't want to.



Economic abuse such as taking all their money.



Psychological or emotional abuse such as making the person feel worthless or stopping them seeing their friends or having a social life.



Abuse that uses technology and social media. Such as putting false information or private photos on the internet.



Honour based abuse, where abuse may be linked to beliefs that a family or community has about respect.



Verbal abuse, like shouting at someone or making fun of them.

**2.3
Million**

There are many ways people can be abused. In the year ending March 2020 there were 2.3 million victims of domestic abuse.

Understanding domestic abuse – who can be victims



Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. It is usually women who are abused but it can also be men.



1 out of every 4 women has been a victim of domestic abuse in their life.



More people are telling the police they have been a victim of domestic abuse. But this could mean more people are able to tell the police. Or that the police record these crimes better.



Domestic abuse is about the person who does it having power and control over the victim.



It can continue and even get worse when the relationship ends.



Domestic abuse can happen between people in a relationship. This could be teenagers who are going out together.

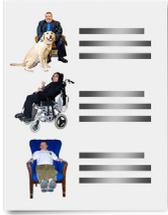


It can be done by relatives, and they don't need to live in the same house.



It can also be when children over 16 abuse their parents.

Understanding domestic abuse – Groups who can find it harder to get help



There are people from many groups who can find it harder to get help and support if they are abused.

These are some of those groups:



Disabled people, Deaf people.



People from the LGBT community. These are people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.



Pregnant women.



People who feel they can't seek help because of their religion and victims of forced marriage.



Migrants and people who may not speak a lot of English.



People who use drugs and alcohol.



People with mental health problems.

How does domestic abuse affect the victims?



Domestic abuse can affect people's physical and mental health. This can last a long time and lead to a lot of upset and distress.



Some victims even take their own life.



Some can turn to drugs and alcohol to help them cope.



It can also lead to homelessness and losing their job.



Children and young people who see and hear domestic abuse are also affected. They are victims too.



They might show it in different ways, such as not sleeping or being depressed and anxious. They might self-harm or turn to drugs and alcohol.

How should services and organisations respond to domestic abuse?



All the services and organisations must work together to help stop domestic abuse and protect the victims.



It can take a long time for victims to ask for help. Especially victims from those groups who can find it harder to get help.



Only 1 in 5 victims report domestic abuse to the police.



Sometimes when victims are arrested for a crime, the police are the first to find out they are also a victim of domestic abuse.



Everyone must help victims.
This includes childcare, schools,
colleges and universities.



It also includes employers and banks.



And health care, social care
and the courts.



Services should work with voluntary
organisations who support the victims.
Some also work with the people who
do the abuse to help them to change
how they act.



It is the social worker's job to look at the
risks for those who might be abused.

Working together to stop domestic abuse



All the services and organisations must
work together. This will mean victims
can be helped early which will stop
the abuse getting worse.



Everyone needs training to understand
what domestic abuse is and how to
recognise it.

What the local authorities must do.



Local authorities should think about what victims need and how to stop abuse from happening.



The Domestic Abuse Act says that councils must set up a group called a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.



This group must be made up of people from different organisations and services.



They will see what is needed in their villages, towns and cities, to protect and support victims. They should make sure there are safe places for victims to stay.



They must report on their work to the government every year.



At the end of the Statutory Guidance you can find a list of other guidance and organisations who can help victims of domestic abuse.

The telephone number for the **FREE** National Domestic Abuse helpline is **0808 2000 247**.

Domestic abuse

What do these words mean?

Coercive behaviour

When someone uses violence, threats, puts them down or scares their victim. They do this to harm, punish, or frighten them.

Controlling behaviour

When someone does something to a victim to make them do what they want. They can also control them by stopping them seeing friends, getting help and having the things they need.

Domestic abuse

Controlling, bullying and violence including sexual violence, by a partner or ex-partner. Women are usually the victims and men are the ones who do it. But men can also be victims. The people doing the abuse can also be family members or carers.

Female genital mutilation or female genital cutting

When a young girl or teenager has part of their genitals cut for cultural or religious not medical reasons. It is against the law.

Forced marriage

When someone is made to marry someone else.

Local Authorities

A local authority is an organization that is responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area.

