

Domestic abuse

What is domestic abuse?

The **Government** define domestic abuse and violence as *'any incident or pattern of incidents 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 gender or sexuality.'*

Domestic abuse is common, but it is largely a hidden crime that tends to take place inside the home. It can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, race, religion or sexuality. Most commonly, domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, but men can also be victims of domestic abuse. It affects **one in four women** and **one in six men** in their lifetime, and it can happen in same sex relationships too.



Different types of domestic abuse

Psychological and emotional

This type of abuse includes non-physical actions, such as the use of words to manipulate, frighten, hurt, or confuse you. It also includes name calling and putting rules in place to control how you are to do things.

Sexual

This type of abuse includes forced, coerced or unwanted sexual activity. It also covers withholding affection to 'punish' you.

Physical

This can include pulling your hair, punching, slapping, kicking, biting and choking. It also covers controlling what you eat, hurting you with objects or weapons, stopping you from sleeping and harming your children.

Coercive control

Women's Aid describes this type of abuse as 'a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence'.

Financial

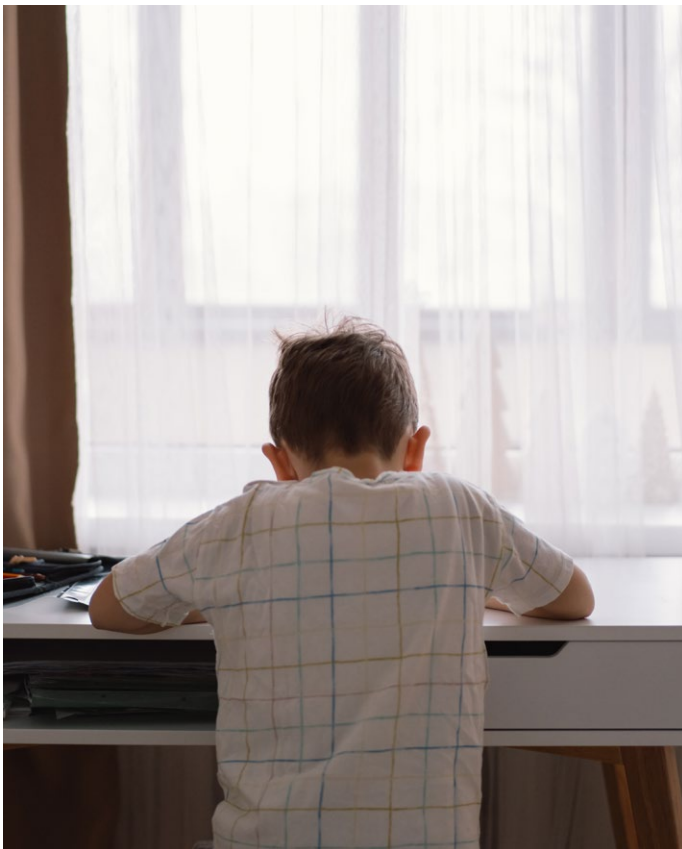
This includes giving you money and forcing you to explain how you've spent it. It also covers withholding access to bank accounts, stopping you from working, taking out debt in your name or forcing you to take on debt for them.

Online/digital

This includes monitoring your social media accounts, checking your messages, sending you abusive texts, demanding access to your devices and using technology to track your movements.

Other forms of abuse

Further types of domestic abuse include harassment, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and **'honour-based'** abuse.



What causes domestic abuse?

Some people may blame domestic abuse on a variety of factors, such as alcohol or drugs. While these factors may make existing abuse worse or act as a catalyst, they do not cause domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is the result of the abuser's desire for power and control. It is a matter of choice for perpetrators and is never the victim's fault.

Do children experience domestic abuse?

An estimated **90%** of children whose mothers are abused witness the abuse. They might hear shouting and hitting, or see their parent upset or injured. Often children are nearby when domestic abuse is taking place and, in some cases, they are also hurt by the abuser directly.

Domestic abuse can be very traumatic for children and young people; it can impact on their health, behaviour, education and the development of relationships. When a child witnesses domestic abuse, this is a form of **child abuse**.

What support is available?

Women's Aid - www.womensaid.org.uk

Support for women and children

Scottish Women's Aid - womensaid.scot

Support for women and children

Refuge - refuge.org.uk

Support for women and children

Man Kind - www.mankind.org.uk

Support for male victims of domestic abuse

Southall Black Sisters - southallblacksisters.org.uk

Advice for Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women.

SignHealth -

signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse

Support and advice for those who are deaf

Domestic abuse in pregnancy - www.nhs.uk

Visit **NHS** or **Gov.uk** for further support options

If you have access to an **employee assistance programme (EAP)** you can also use this service to seek professional support.

Helplines

National Domestic Violence Helpline (England)

0808 2000 247 **Online chat**

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline (Northern Ireland)

0808 802 1414 **Online chat**

Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline (Scotland)

0800 027 1234 **Online chat**

Live Fear Free (Wales)

0808 80 10 800 **Online chat**

The Men's Advice Line (UK-wide)

For male domestic abuse survivors

0808 801 0327 info@mensadvice.org.uk

The Mix

Essential support for under 25s

0808 808 4994 **Online chat**

National LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

0800 999 5428

Samaritans

Free 24/7 confidential helpline offering emotional support

116 123

If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police. If you are not able to speak and are calling on a mobile, press 55 to have your call transferred to the police.

Sources: www.gov.uk, womensaid.scot, www.shb.scot.nhs.uk, safelives.org.uk.