



MEDWAY DOMESTIC ABUSE FORUM

DOMESTIC ABUSE

– SUPPORT, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk



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WHO CAN BE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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.

The abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse and it can include all kinds of behaviour that is meant to hurt or frighten you. Not all abuse leaves visible marks; it ranges from physical violence to cruel words and threats. It can happen to anyone, women and men; gay, lesbian and straight (heterosexual) people; and people of any age or background.

- Abuse of any type damages a person's self esteem, confidence and self worth. Domestic abuse is never your fault.
- Domestic abuse should always be taken seriously regardless of type or frequency of the abuse.
- Everyone has the right not to experience violence or abuse. This booklet aims to give advice if you, or someone you know is suffering from domestic abuse and to explain some of the terminology and legal responses to domestic abuse.

If you are in a dangerous situation and you fear for your immediate safety you should phone the police on **999**, in a non emergency phone **101**.

EXAMPLES OF ABUSE

Psychological and emotional abuse

Calling you names and putting you down; constantly moving the goal posts or changing rules and expectations; threatening to take your children away or threatening loved ones; calling you a bad parent; encouraging your children or others to be negative towards you; controlling who you can talk to or the places you can go socially or for work and education; breaks or damages your property.

Physical abuse

Punching; kicking; hitting; slapping; pulling hair; choking, breaking bones; burning (with cigarettes or irons etc.); keeping you awake and depriving you of sleep; using weapons or objects to hurt you.

Sexual abuse

Forcing you to have sex or take part in sexual acts against your will; refusing to have sex with you; forcing you into prostitution or pornography; accusing you of cheating on them; criticisms of sexuality; sexual jokes or demeaning you.

Financial abuse

Checking every penny you spend; controlling all finances; accusing you of not managing money properly; holding all the money, leaving you with no access to bank accounts and checking the mileage in the car.

Controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour is often disguised or excused as concern. Concern for your safety, your emotional or mental health, the need to use your time well, or to make sensible decisions. Your abuser may be angry or upset if you are 'late' coming back from work, shopping, visiting friends, etc., even if you told them you would be back later than usual. Your abuser may question you closely about where you were, who you spoke to, the content of every conversation you held, or why you did something he/she was not involved in. As this behaviour gets worse, you may not be allowed to make personal decisions about the house, clothing, or how you spend your time or money or even making you ask for permission to leave the house or room. Alternately, he/she may theoretically allow you your own decisions, but penalise you for making the wrong ones. Concern for our loved ones to a certain extent is normal - trying to control their every move is not.

Coercive behaviour

Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation or intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten you. By using these tactics the abuser can create a world where the victim is constantly monitored and criticised and every move and action checked. Victims often describe coercive control as not being 'allowed' or having to ask permission to do everyday things, being in constant fear of not meeting the abusers expectations or demands.

“ I’m not his punch bag, nor shall I be disrespected or made to feel low about myself to become weak, as this is what he wants and the nice things that he did like phoning me every day but really he was just checking up on me. ”
Refuge resident

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

'Stalking is repeated acts which are unwanted, intrusive and can be reasonably expected to cause distress, alarm or fear.'

Stalking is against the law in the UK. It is hard to give an exact definition of stalking because stalkers will often use multiple and differing methods to harass their victims.

Stalking can consist of any type of behavior such as regularly sending unwanted gifts, making unwanted or malicious communication, damaging property and physical or sexual assault. If the behavior is persistent and clearly unwanted, causing you fear, harassment or anxiety then it is stalking and you should not have to live with it.

Individual incidents taken on their own might not seem too serious, such as a rude remark in the street or persistent phone calls, but they can also involve deeply traumatic events – threats of violence, aggression, criminal damage and worse.

What makes the problem particularly hard to cope with is that it can go on over a long period of time, making victims constantly anxious and afraid. Sometimes the problem can build up slowly and it can take a while for the victim to realise that they are caught up in an on-going campaign of abuse. The problem isn't always 'physical' because of the internet and 'cyber-stalking' or online threats can be just as intimidating for the victim.

Safety online

Stay as anonymous as possible: do not reveal details about your address, phone number, routine or place of work on your social networking profile or to anyone who asks online.

Things you can do if you think you are suffering harassment or stalking:

- Keeping a diary of events. Write down the date, time, location and details of what happened. It's also a good idea to include information about any other witnesses who can confirm what happened and how it made you feel.
- Keeping copies of letters, text messages, emails and take screen prints of other online messages (eg on Facebook).
- Trying to get 'evidence' of any events that happen – but be careful to do this discreetly.
- Inform your friends, family and work colleagues so that they will be aware and not give any information about you.
- Try and vary your daily routine, vary the route you take to and from your home
- Consider installing an alarm system if you don't already have one. Ensure all doors and windows are fitted with locks or mortice deadlocks

National Stalking Helpline – A national helpline and advice service for anyone experiencing stalking or needing advice:

0800 802 0300 www.suzylamplugh.org

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-victims/ive-been-affected/stalking-and-harassment#sthash.BAweh6h.dpuf>

Kent Police will take positive action if you report that you are being stalked and have new powers to apply for Stalking Protection Orders.

The **Medway One Stop Shop** can advise and support you.

www.protectionagainststalking.org to improve the safety for all victims of stalking and harassment.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR IN RECOGNISING ABUSE

- Have they tried to keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- Have they prevented you from continuing or starting a college course, or from going to work?
- Do they constantly check up on you or follow you?
- Do they accuse you unjustly of flirting or of having affairs?
- Do they constantly belittle or humiliate you, or regularly criticise or insult you in front of other people?
- Are you ever scared of them?
- Have you ever changed your behaviour because you're afraid of what they might do or say to you?
- Have they ever deliberately destroyed any of your possessions?
- Have they ever hurt or threatened you or your children?
- Have they ever kept you short of money so you're unable to buy food and other necessary items for yourself and your children?
- Have they ever forced you to do something that you really didn't want to do, including sexually?

The person being abusive may be a current partner, ex-partner or family member for example brother, sister, step-family or in-laws.

The following is a list of personality traits that may indicate a potential abuser.

Jealousy:

At the start of the relationship, an abuser will equate jealousy with love. They will question you about who you talk to, accuse you of flirting or become jealous of time spent with others.

Controlling behaviour:

In the beginning an abuser will excuse their controlling behaviour as concern for you (for example, your safety or decision making skills). The situation will become worse as this behaviour progresses. They may assume all control of you, including finances and even prevent you from doing as you please.

Quick involvement:

Often people in your situation knew or have dated their abuser for less than six months before getting married, engaged or living together and this is due to pressure from their partners to commit to the relationship.

Unrealistic expectations:

An abuser expects their partner to meet all of their needs and to take care of everything emotionally and domestically.

Isolation:

An abuser will attempt to isolate their partner by severing their ties to outside support and resources. The abuser may accuse your friends or family of being 'trouble makers'. They may limit your access to the outside world by not allowing you to use the car, not letting you go to work and limiting your time on a computer or phone.

Blames others for problems:

Abusers will always blame others for their shortcomings. Someone is always out to get them or is stopping them from achieving. You will be blamed for almost everything that goes wrong.

Over sensitivity:

An abusive person will use feelings to manipulate you. Common phrases you may hear are "you're hurting me by not doing as I want" or "if you truly loved me..."

Cruelty to children:

The abuser does not want to meet the needs of the child e.g. does not display warmth and love or stops you caring for them. They may expect a child to behave in a way that is older than what they are and cruelly punish them (for example, whipping a two year old for wetting a nappy or teasing children or siblings until they cry). They may threaten to hurt the children to control your behaviour, or they may encourage the children to be abusive.

'Playful' use of force in sex:

This behaviour includes restraining you against your will or initiating sex when you are asleep or demanding sex. Abusers may show little concern for your opinion and will use sulking and anger to manipulate you into having sex (compliance).

Verbal abuse:

This behaviour involves saying things that are intended to be cruel and hurtful, cursing or degrading to you, or minimising/criticising your accomplishments.

Rigid gender roles:

Views your role as to simply serve. For instance, a male abuser will see women as inferior to men, responsible for menial tasks, stupid and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

Dual personality:

They have explosive behaviour and moodiness that can shift quickly.

Threats of violence:

This consists of any threat of physical force meant to control you. Breaking or striking objects, often used as a punishment (breaking sentimental possessions) or to terrorise the victim.

Any force used during an argument:

This may involve an abuser holding you down, physically restraining you from leaving, or pushing and shoving.

Cruelty to animals

This is a person who mistreats or punishes animals or is insensitive to their pain.

#LOVES ME OR NOT

Signs that a person is abusive

- Rapes you, expects sex on demand or will not accept no for an answer.
- Pressures you into having children.
- Acts as a bully, glaring, shouting, smashing things and sulking.
- Puts you down and tells you that you're too fat, too thin, ugly, stupid, useless etc.
- Controls all the money.
- Threatens to report you to social services, benefits agencies etc.
- Denies any abuse or says it was "only" a slap. Blames drink, drugs, stress, over-work on you.
- Threatens to hurt themselves if you left them.
- Stops you from working and seeing your friends, tells you what to wear or keeps you in the house.
- Treats you as a servant or slave.
- Uses child contact to harass you or tries to turn the children against you and calls you a bad parent, but leaves all the care of the children to you.
- Constantly texts and calls you to monitor what you are doing.

Signs that a person is NOT abusive

- Shows you physical affection without assuming it will lead to sex and accepts your right to say no to sex.
- Equally responsible for contraception.
- Acts as a friend, talks and listens to you, is cheerful and good company.
- Values you, tells you that you look good, values your opinions and supports your ambitions.
- Shares financial responsibility.
- Supports your dealings with the children and is a responsible parent.
- Accepts responsibility and admits to being wrong.
- Takes responsibility for their own wellbeing and happiness.
- Welcomes your friends and family.
- Encourages you to have outside interests. Encourages you to develop your skills at work or college.
- Does their share of parenting and housework and treats you as an equal.
- Is a responsible and equal parent.
- Encourages you to be independent and trusts you.

THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON CHILDREN

Children, regardless of whether they were abused directly, are affected by domestic abuse. All children will react to seeing or hearing domestic abuse differently and the signs that they have been affected vary at different ages. All children will be affected.

Even from before a child is born they could be harmed if the mother is assaulted or put under stress.

Witnessing abuse and the relationship of children exposed to domestic abuse can have a negative effect on children's emotional and behavioural development. They may not be very good at making friends or may be clingy and not want independence. They may not have any confidence or may not have respect for others.

Even when children grow up and have their own relationships they may not understand what a loving and stable relationship should look like and may become a victim or abuser themselves. Abusive behaviour is learned behaviour and children in an abusive environment may mimic the types of behaviour they see in the abuser. If abusive behaviour is normalised, children may not be able to identify it and protect themselves later in life.

Children may be injured when caught between their parents during a violent incident or may feel responsible and guilty for the violence that is occurring that they can not stop. They may be confused by the abuse and feel a divided sense of loyalty because they want to protect you, but they still love the one hurting you and may be scared of the person themselves.

Common effects of domestic abuse on children.

- Headaches, stomach aches, sleeping problems like bedwetting and nightmares.
- Anxiety about being separated from you, being taken away or left behind.
- Aggressive behaviour towards you and others, especially to get what they want.
- Constant worry about possible dangers, always on edge.
- Refusing to go to school or to get involved with things they usually like.
- Low self esteem and lack of interest in friends and family.
- Being quiet and withdrawn, not talking anyone and not trusting adults.
- Uncontrollable behaviour and trouble concentrating
- Self harm behaviour

KEY POINT

If you have noticed changes in your child's behaviour or can identify the signs that they have been affected by domestic abuse, please seek support from your GP, health visitor, children's centre or specialist domestic abuse service. Medway Council Children's Services 01634 334466.

- Medway Council Children's Services: **01634 334466**
- Medway Council Family Information Service: **www.medwayfisd.com**
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) – a website full of information regarding safety of young people: **www.nspcc.org.uk**
- A website created for young people about domestic abuse: **www.thehideout.org.uk**
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) – an interactive website from age 5 upwards: **www.thinkuknow.co.uk**
- Advice and support for young people: **www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111**

CYCLE OF ABUSE

Most abusive relationships display a distinct pattern, known as the Cycle of Abuse or Violence. Abuse is rarely constant but alternates between: tension building, acting out, the honeymoon period and calm.

Not all relationships follow the same cycle, and individual experiences vary, some stages - especially the honeymoon or calm periods, may shorten or be left out completely, especially as the abuse intensifies over a period of time.

Each stage of the cycle can last from a few minutes to a number of months, but within an abusive relationship, the following stages can often be pin-pointed.

It is used to gain power and control over another person. Physical abuse is only one part of a system of abusive behaviors.

The most difficult part of a violent and abusive relationship is breaking the cycle of abuse. The longer you stay in this abusive relationship, the more violent the abuser will become and the tougher it will be for you to end the relationship. Getting support is the first step in ensuring that you are safe.

Cycle of abuse:



TEENAGERS

We recognise that 16 and 17 year olds can experience domestic abuse, but even younger people experience abuse in their relationships both as the victim and abuser.

Teenage relationships can sometimes be dismissed because they don't last long or it is just 'young love' but they need to be taken seriously as they are often intense and develop quickly. Young people may not understand what it is to be in a relationship because they lack experience and may find it difficult to manage their feelings. They may need some more advice and guidance as they can suffer the same abuse as adults, or use the same abusive behaviours.

Young people may feel pressured into staying in relationships by their friendship groups. They may also see jealousy, possessiveness and abuse as signs of love. They may also justify the abuse e.g. because they were unfaithful.

At this age teenagers will be pushing boundaries and may choose partners their parents disapprove of. This may mean they do not come to you for support when they find themselves dealing with the, sometimes scary, experiences they are having in their relationship.

If teenagers feel they can not talk to anyone about their relationship or have to hide it because of rules that forbid their relationship. There is also a risk of teenage pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

If a young person is already feeling down about themselves, or they have other issues, they may be more vulnerable to abuse. The media also plays a part in young people understanding how they should look and behave which impacts how people act in relationships.

Teenagers may find it hard to escape their abuser if they are at school or college with them. That may also limit who they have to talk to.

Signs that a young person is experiencing relationship abuse:

- Physical signs of injury / illness.
- Skipping school or falling grades.
- Changes in mood and personality, stress, depression, eating disorders and self harm.
- They stop seeing friends and family, becoming quiet and withdrawn.
- Constant texts and calls from their boyfriend/girlfriend.
- New use of drugs and alcohol.
- Bullying or being bullied.
- Pregnancy and inappropriate sexual behaviour/language/attitudes.

Teenagers can also be violent towards their parents and siblings, which can have a huge impact on family life. There are many reasons why it occurs. These include children witnessing or experiencing family violence or other forms of violence and repeating abuse patterns towards others, traumatic or stressful situations, mental health or drug and alcohol issues and other contributing factors. Sometimes there is no apparent reason why it happens.

A booklet has been produced to support parents who may be suffering from this abuse, which is available from the domestic abuse website or from the Medway One Stop Shop.

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) – an interactive website from age 5 upwards: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- From the campaign *This is abuse*: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- For anyone in Kent or Medway experiencing abuse: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk

VULNERABLE ADULTS

If you know about an adult (18 years of age or over) who is being harmed and requires care and support with every day tasks as a result of either their physical health, mental health, a disability, a learning disability, a sensory impairment or substance misuse, this could be an Adult Safeguarding concern.

Please contact Medway Council to report this where staff are available 24/7.
Phone **01634 334466** (Text relay **18008 01634 334466**) Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm
Or phone **03000 419191** (Text relay **18008 03000 419191**) outside of these hours.

If you think a crime is being committed, or someone is in immediate danger contact the emergency services on **999**.

What happens when you report alleged abuse or neglect?

Your help is vital in deciding what's best for the person who may be being abused.

You'll speak to a social care professional who'll discuss your concerns with you. Your call today could save someone's life

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Honour-based abuse is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with their traditional beliefs.

HBA can exist in any culture or community where males are in position to establish and enforce women's conduct, examples include: Turkish; Kurdish; Afghani; South Asian; African; Middle Eastern; South and Eastern European; Gypsy and the travelling community (this is not an exhaustive list).

Males can also be victims, sometimes as a consequence of a relationship which is deemed to be inappropriate, if they are gay, have a disability or if they have assisted a victim. This abuse is not just carried out by men, sometimes female relatives will support, incite or assist. It is also not unusual for younger relatives to be selected to undertake the abuse as a way to protect senior members of the family. Sometimes contract killers and bounty hunters will also be employed.

For example, honour-based abuse might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- want to get out of an arranged marriage
- want to get out of a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

You may be at risk if:

- you are being forced to marry against your will
- you are being pressurised to enter a marriage you are unsure about
- you are worried that you will let your family down if you say 'no' to an arranged marriage
- you fear you may bring shame or dishonour to your family or community
- you are scared you may be cut

Forced marriage

You have the right to choose who you marry, when you marry or if you marry at all. Forced marriage is when you face physical pressure to marry (eg threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (eg if you're made to feel like you're bringing shame on your family).

Forced Marriage Protection Order

Each order is unique, and is designed to protect you according to your individual circumstances. For example, the court may order someone to hand over your passport or reveal where you are so you can be safe. In an emergency, an order can be made to protect you immediately. The Forced Marriage Unit can assist you in applying for a forced marriage protection order.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision or cutting) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. The girls may be taken to their countries of origin so that FGM can be carried out during the summer holidays, allowing them time to "heal" before they return to school. There are also some girls that may have FGM performed in the UK.

FGM is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to arrange for a child to be taken abroad for FGM. If caught, offenders face a large fine and a prison sentence of up to 14 years.

Karma Nirvana support victims of honour crimes and forced marriages. They will listen in complete confidence and not speak to your family, friends or anyone else. Their helpline is **0800 5999** or visit: **www.karmanirvana.org.uk**

The Forced Marriage Unit can advise and assist if you have concerns that a forced marriage is about to take place or has already taken place. Forced marriage is a criminal offence. Phone: **020 7008 0151** **fmu@fco.gov.uk**
Out of hours: **020 7008 1500** (ask for the Global Response Centre)

NSPCC FGM Helpline **0800 028 3550**.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND QUESTIONING

LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning) people experience the same types of domestic abuse (emotional, physical, financial and sexual) as non LGBTQ people regardless of their gender or sexual identity.

LGBTQ people can experience abuse from a partner, ex partner, family member, within a same sex relationship and in heterosexual relationships.

LGBTQ people may experience different or additional risk factors due to their sexuality and/or gender identity as a result of people's responses to their identity (i.e. homophobia, transphobia...etc).

Risk factors that are specific to LGBTQ people include:

- The abuser threatening to reveal the person's sexuality or gender identity to others without consent, also known as 'outing'.
- The abuser using the LGBTQ person's identity to isolate or reinforce the abuse.

Galop: Advice and support to the LGBTQ+ community experiencing hate crime, sexual violence or domestic abuse. Phone: 0800 9995428 Email: help@galop.org.uk www.galop.org.uk

Men's Advice Line: Advice and support for men in abusive relationships regardless of their gender or sexual identity. Phone: **0808 801 0327** (Mon to Fri, 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm). **www.mensadvice.org.uk**

National 24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline: Phone: **0808 2000 247**

The LGBT Foundation Helpline: Free advice on a range of issues. Phone: **0845 330 3030**

Metro: An equality and diversity charity providing health, community and youth services. Phone: **020 8305 5000** **www.metrocharity.org.uk**

PRACTICAL THINGS TO DO TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

The first thing is to make sure that you and any children are safe.

- If you need protection during a violent incident, call the police on **999**. If you are using a mobile phone, tell the operator where you are immediately because they cannot find out by tracing your call. The police have a duty to protect you and any children and make sure you are safe.
- If you want help from the police at some point after you were abused, you can call **101** and someone will be able to advise you on what to do.
- If you choose to stay at home but are scared that your abuser may return, you could ask friends and neighbours to keep an eye on your property in case your abuser appears.
- You may also want to alert your employer so that you are safe at work and receive support.
- Social media, such as Facebook, is often used to keep track or to find people. Make sure you regularly check your privacy settings: who you are friends with and their connections. Suspending your profile may be an option you want to explore. Further detailed guidance is available on www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk

Sanctuary Scheme can assess your home for safety measures to ensure that you and your children are safe. sanctuary.medway@peabody.org.uk Phone: **0800 028 3172** (option 3). Direct line **01732 758312**

Kent Fire & Rescue Service offer a free home safety check and can seal your letterbox. Call them on **0800 923 7000**.

COLLECTING AND REPORTING EVIDENCE

Collecting evidence is important to support your case. Keep this evidence hidden from the abuser.

- Keep a diary of events
- Photograph your injuries, sign and date each photograph
- Keep crime reference numbers from the Police to pass to a solicitor.
- Keep a record of any threatening calls, texts, or social network messages.

PLANNING TO LEAVE

Sometimes it is safer just to get out of the home with whatever you can grab. Don't panic; make sure you are safe first.

If you are planning to leave or may need to escape in a hurry, there are some things you will need to take with you. They need to be easily accessible so maybe put them in a "grab bag" or keep with friends.

- Keep benefit books, bank cards/savings books, birth certificates and marriage certificate, passports, national insurance number, medical cards, court orders, pay slips in a safe place. Try and get copies and leave one set with your solicitor or a trusted family member or friend. A utility bill or bank statement is useful for proof of address.
- Write down all emergency and personal telephone numbers. Do not rely on your mobile phone.
- Keep spare clothes, belongings and toiletries for yourself and children in a bag at a friend's house or perhaps at work if possible.
- Keep a spare set of house and car keys.
- Keep some money in a safe place or open a new online bank account.
- A photograph (if you have one) of your abuser.

The **Medway One Stop Shop** can help you with your plans to leave and provide you with personal safety equipment.

LOCAL SERVICES

ONE STOP SHOP – (OSS)

The Medway One Stop Shop is a drop-in service for any victim of domestic abuse to gain support and advice held every Tuesday 9.30-11.30am at the Sunlight Centre Richmond Road, Gillingham. No appointments necessary.

There are a number of partner agencies to support you including DVAs, Health Visitor, Solicitors, Housing Support, Children's Centre, Family Support Workers, Substance Misuse etc. They can all advise you on your options and help you and your children.

Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA)

IDVAs are domestic abuse specialists that work with men and women to help them to increase their safety by providing advocacy and advice around domestic abuse, safety planning, accessing services, raising with partner agencies and being the voice of the victim at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

Victim support

Advise about safety planning and support you can receive. Anyone wishing to access our service directly can either phone the contact centre number of **0300 303 0156** (Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm and Sat 9-5) or visit www.victimsupport.org.uk and submit a simple on-line form from which will then make a callback.

Medway Domestic Abuse Service (MDAS; Choices)

MDAS is a specialist domestic abuse service for Medway that recognises that the impact of domestic abuse goes beyond the abuse itself. They offer advice and information via their helpline; one to one specialist support to keep you safe; a joined up package of support; specialist group support programmes; school programmes to help young people identify and understand abusive behaviour.

The first step is to get in touch by calling the helpline (0800 917 9948), dropping into the Medway One Stop Shop and by email info@choicesdaservice.org.uk

I felt at the time very confused and over whelmed by my situation but after the meeting at the one stop shop I didn't feel so alone and knew that there are people to help and answer my questions. I felt that people were concerned for me and my welfare and really wanted to help.

Refuge resident

Freedom programme

The Freedom Programme is a free, informative group that offers women an insight into abusive and controlling behaviour and its effects on the family. It is a two-hour weekly session run over 12 weeks. Women can attend the group if they are separated or still in the relationship. The programme **focuses** on many aspects including the effects on the children, how an abuser plays mind games and uses techniques to assert power and control in the relationship. Phone: **0800 917 9948**

National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV)

The National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation.

24-hour emergency **0800 970 2070** or text 'NCDV' to **60777**

Turning Point

Turning Point are a service dedicated to showing that there is a way out of drug and alcohol dependency, encouraging Medway service users to achieve their individual potential. Turning Point will offer a range of services that support the individual in achieving their treatment goals, supporting them through their recovery journey and providing well being, support and aftercare through the peer-mentor programme. Turning Point Contact **01634 820 390**

Your GP or Health Centre will be able to advise you on access to further support such as drug and alcohol services, mental health services, health visitor and midwifery.

“**I have had an IDVA involved and feel that they contact me on a regular basis and I find them easy to talk to.**”
Refuge resident

HOUSING SUPPORT

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness due to domestic abuse, you can approach Medway Council for advice and assistance.

If you feel unsafe and need emergency assistance, call 999. If you are unable to remain in your home due to risk of harm, you can approach Medway Council or another local authority to make a homeless application. Depending on your situation, they will be able to advise and support you with your options.

You may be offered a refuge out of area, however, this is only one option and may not be suitable for you. The council may be able to offer you temporary accommodation or assist with a rent deposit, whilst they make enquiries into your case.

You may need to show evidence of domestic abuse when you make a homeless application to the council.

Sanctuary Scheme

The **Sanctuary Scheme** can assess your home for safety measures to ensure that you and your children are safe. sanctuary.medway@peabody.org.uk
Phone: **0800 028 3172** (option 3). Direct line **01732 758312, 07507 761071**

Refuges

If you need to leave your home, refuges support both men and women fleeing domestic abuse by moving them out of the area for their safety, however these places are limited. They offer a safe place to stay with information, advice and practical and emotional support.

Contact Choices Domestic Abuse Service: **0800 917 9948**

Medway Domestic Abuse Floating Support Service is a housing related, community support service. Open to both men and women, aged over 16, living in Medway, who are, or have recently experienced domestic abuse and have housing issues. Self-referrals are accepted and can be obtained by calling **0800 917 9948**

Medway Council: Phone: **01634 306000** Out of hours: **01634 304400**

WHAT THE POLICE CAN DO

Their first priority is to make sure you and any children are safe. Call them if you need help and support.

Firm action will be taken against anyone abusing you. They may arrest your abuser. They will take your wishes into account when they decide what to do with the suspect. They may be able to use bail conditions to prevent your abuser having contact with you whilst the investigation is ongoing.

As a victim of crime you are entitled to information and support.

If your abuser is charged, you may be entitled to special measures to help you give evidence these could include having screens around the witness box or giving evidence by live video-link so you do not have to face the abuser or their family.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/going-to-court-victim-witness.

The police may be able to apply for the following orders to protect you and your children:

Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders (DVPNs and DVPOs)

The police can apply for a DVPO on your behalf if they feel you are at risk of further harm. The order can place conditions on the abuser like stopping them from coming to your home or contacting you for between 14-28 days. The aim is to provide you with immediate protection following an incident of domestic violence and gives you time to consider what to do next. As part of this process victims will be contacted by local specialist services providing advice and support.

Download guidance on DVPN/DVPO from the Kent Police website:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/pdfs/dvpn_dvpo.pdf

Restraining Order

This order is to protect a victim from the abuser. The order can be for any length of time and could be indefinite. It places conditions on the abuser to help prevent any further abuse. Frequently the order will prohibit contact directly or indirectly with the victim but could include keeping away from a property or premises.

Any person convicted or acquitted of any criminal offence can be made subject to a restraining order. It is up to the court whether such an order is imposed. The prosecution usually applies for the order if the circumstances of the case warrant it and the court will make such an order if considered necessary to protect a person from the abuser.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)

If you are concerned that your partner may have been abusive in past relationships you can ask the police. If a police check identifies anything that shows that you or your children may be at risk they will tell you. Other people can also ask the police but the information will generally only be disclosed to you or maybe to the person best placed to support you. To make an application you can call **101** or visit a police station.

National Monitoring Alarm

The police can install an alarm that is monitored 24/7 in order to keep you safe and alert the police instantly without you having to call them.

Stalking Protection Order (SPO)

Within a SPO police can request prohibitions and/or requirements to protect you from the risk of stalking.

“ I have used the **One Stop Shop** and found it really helpful and informative. ”
Refuge resident

COURT ORDERS THAT PROTECT YOU

You will need to attend the Family Court to apply for these orders. You may be entitled to Legal Aid and the One Stop Shop can provide you with information on how to access this.

Non-molestation order:

This tells your abuser that they must not use or threaten violence against you, or 'harass, pester or intimidate' you or any children living with you. The order is generally written in wide terms to stop all forms of unpleasant behaviour, for example threatening phone calls or getting someone else to harass you. Breach of this order is a criminal offence.

Occupation order:

This is an order that states who can and can't live in the family home. This cannot be used to change ownership of the property; it is just to keep the abuser away from you.

Child arrangement orders:

This decides where your child lives, when your child spends time with each parent and when and what other types of contact (like phone calls) take place.

A Prohibited Steps order (PSO):

This is given when there is a suspicion that one parent may attempt to take the children without the other parent knowing. It stops parents from taking the children to certain events or places without permission from the other parent being expressed.

Rights of Women have produced *Child arrangement and domestic violence, a handbook for women*, detailed guidance that can take you through the Civil Court process.

The Rights of Women advice line can provide you with legal advice and information on legal issues including domestic violence, child contact, sexual violence and the criminal justice process and immigration and asylum as well as other legal issues arising from relationship breakdown. Phone: **0207 251 6577** www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

The National Centre for Domestic Violence is a charitable organisation that can assist you with obtaining civil orders. www.ncdv.org.uk
Text 'NCDV' to **60777** or phone **0800 940 2070**

TERMS USED TO DO WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE

Word	Definition
Breach	When the named person has acted outside of an order
Civil courts	Courts that do not deal with crime. For family law injunctions, you generally use the county court, although you can sometimes use the family proceedings court, which is part of the magistrates' court.
Court bail	When the abuser is given detailed instructions on what they are restricted from doing until the next court hearing.
Criminal courts	Courts that deal with crime. Cases start in the magistrates' court and may go from there to the crown court. If a defendant is found guilty, then the court can impose a punishment such as a fine or a prison sentence.
Family proceedings court	The section of the magistrates' court that deals with family cases. It can sometimes be used instead of the county court.
Forced Marriage	When one or both parties do not consent to the marriage but have been coerced, threatened or forced.
Honour based abuse	HBA is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.
IDVA and DVAP	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor – a specialist that is able to advise and offer support.
Injunction	An order made by a civil court telling someone they must not do something. If they breach (disobey) it, the person who took out the order can ask the court to punish them.
MARAC	A multi-agency meeting for professionals to discuss cases that have been identified as high risk of harm.
NCDV	National Centre for Domestic Abuse.
Parental responsibility	All the rights and duties that go with parenthood, such as the duty to care for and protect the child, the right to consent to medical treatment, and the right to choose a child's name, religion and schooling.
Partner	In this leaflet, partner means someone you are living with; either a husband, wife, civil partner or cohabitant. You may be part of a heterosexual (male-female) or a same-sex couple. Sometimes the law for cohabitants is different from that for people who are married or civil partners.

Perpetrator	The abuser is sometimes referred to as a perpetrator.
Police bail	Bail is the term used when a person is released from police custody until they next attend court or a police station. Sometimes conditions can be imposed to help keep you safe like preventing your abuser from contacting you or coming to your home, these conditions are called bail conditions
Return date	A date on which a case has to come back to court for another hearing.
SARC	Sexual assault referral centre.
Victim	The person who is suffering abuse.
Witness care	Allocated officer who will keep you up to date on progress with a case once a suspect has been charged.

SERVICES

Cut out and keep this useful set of numbers at hand.

Kent and Medway domestic abuse	www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
Kent & Medway Police	101 for non emergency 999 emergency
Medway Council Social Care	01634 334466
24 Hour domestic abuse	0808 200 0247
Choice's Medway Domestic Abuse Service	0800 917 9948
Medway Council Housing Options	01634 306000, out of hours: 01634 304400
NCDV	0800 970 2070
Freedom Programme	01634 338848
Mens Advice Line	0808 801 0327
Karma Nirvana	08005 999247
Broken Rainbow	03009 995428
Shelter	08088 004444
National Stalking Helpline	08088 020300
Victim Support	08453 899528
Rights of Women	0207 251 6577
Turning Point Substance Misuse	0300 123 1560
Kent Fire & Rescue	0800 028 317





The Medway Domestic Abuse Forum would like to thank all partners for their support in producing this booklet.