

# Covid-19 information leaflet

## Updated 12th April 2021

# Domestic abuse

### Coronavirus is fuelling domestic abuse

Home is supposed to be the safest place any of us could be right now. For people experiencing domestic abuse, social distancing means being trapped inside with an abuser. ("Women's Aid comments on the impact of coronavirus on women and children escaping domestic abuse" 6th March 2020)

### Recognising domestic abuse

Although every situation is unique, there are common factors that link the experience of an abusive relationship. Acknowledging these factors is an important step in preventing and stopping the abuse. This list can help you to recognise if you, or someone you know, are in an abusive relationship.

They include :

**Destructive criticism and verbal abuse:** shouting; mocking; accusing; name calling; verbally threatening.

**Pressure tactics:** sulking; threatening to withhold money, disconnecting the phone and internet, taking away or destroying your mobile, tablet or laptop, taking the car away, taking the children away; threatening to report you to the police, social services or the mental health team unless you comply with their demands; threatening or attempting self-harm and suicide; withholding or pressuring you to use drugs or other substances; lying to your friends and family about you; telling you that you have no choice in any decisions.

**Disrespect:** persistently putting you down in front of other people; not listening or responding when you talk; interrupting your telephone calls; taking money from you without asking; refusing to help with childcare or housework.

**Breaking trust:** lying to you; withholding information from you; being jealous; having other relationships; breaking promises and shared agreements.

**Isolation:** monitoring or blocking your phone calls, e-mails and social media accounts, telling you where you can and cannot go; preventing you from seeing friends and relatives; shutting you in the house.

**Harassment:** following you; checking up on you; not allowing you any privacy (for example, opening your mail, going through your laptop, tablet or mobile), repeatedly checking to see who has phoned you; embarrassing you in public; accompanying you everywhere you go.

**Threats:** making angry gestures; using physical size to intimidate; shouting you down; destroying your possessions; breaking things; punching walls; wielding a knife or a gun; threatening to kill or harm you and the children; threatening to kill or harm family pets; threats of suicide.

**Sexual violence:** using force, threats or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts; having sex with you when you don't want it; forcing you to look at pornographic material; constant pressure and harassment into having sex when you don't want to, forcing you to have sex with other people; any degrading treatment related to your sexuality.

**Physical violence:** punching; slapping; hitting; biting; pinching; kicking; pulling hair out; pushing; shoving; burning; strangling, pinning you down, holding you by the neck, restraining you.

**Denial:** saying the abuse doesn't happen; saying you caused the abuse; saying you wind them up; saying they can't control their anger; being publicly gentle and patient; crying and begging for forgiveness; saying it will never happen again.



# Domestic abuse

## We have no room for domestic abuse

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, it is really important to talk to someone about it. You can contact us. We are here to help you so you don't have to face it alone.

If you feel unsafe in your home, we will listen to you and do everything we can to better your situation and keep you safe. Keniston takes domestic abuse extremely seriously.

### Our current approach is to:

- make contact with the resident in every open case, currently flagged as 'Domestic Abuse'
- check the health and wellbeing of the resident and any children
- provide contact details for local and national specialist services

## Are you a victim of domestic abuse?

**In an emergency, always call 999.** If it's not an emergency and you don't want to call the police, contact the 24hr freephone **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** (run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge) on **0808 2000247** - available 24hrs 7 days a week.

**Men's Advice Line** is a confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members). **0808 8010327**

**Victim Support** is an independent charity in England and Wales that provides specialist practical and emotional support to victims and witnesses of crime **0808 1689111**

**Galop** is the UK's only specialist LGBT+ anti-violence charity who have a National LGBT/ DA Helpline **0800 999 5428**

**Respect helpline** (for anyone worried about their own behaviour) **0808 802 0321**  
You can download the **Bright Sky app** on your smartphone. This is a free to download mobile app providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

**Childline** is there to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. At present, you can speak to a Childline counsellor online <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/> or on the phone from 9am – midnight on **0800 1111**

## What to do if you suspect a neighbour is a victim



**Four out of five victims don't call the police. Victims live with domestic abuse for three years on average before they get the support they need.**

You don't know what goes on behind closed doors. If you are worried about someone, it is the right thing to act on your instincts. Ask if they are ok. You could be the person that makes a difference.

If you believe a neighbour is in immediate danger, **call the police on 999.**  
If you suspect that a neighbour you know is being abused in their relationship, there are a number of options open to you. As a concerned friend or neighbour, you can discreetly report your concerns to the police or the specialist organisations mentioned above.

If you are at all concerned about the safety or welfare of a child as a result of domestic abuse, you can get in touch with their school who can investigate safeguarding concerns. You could also report your concerns to the **NSPCC helpline** on **0808 800 5000.**



# Domestic abuse

## Silent solution 55

If you're in an emergency situation and need police help, but can't speak, Make Yourself Heard and let the 999 operator know your call is genuine.

All 999 calls are directed to call centres and will be answered by BT operators.

If making a sound would put you or someone else in danger and the BT operator cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, your call will be transferred to the Silent Solution system.

You will hear an automated police message, which lasts for 20 seconds and begins with 'you are through to the police'. It will ask you to press 55 to be put through to police call management. The BT operator will remain on the line and listen. If you press 55, they will be notified and transfer the call to the police. If you don't press 55, the call will be terminated.

A more detailed explanation can be found here [https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/research-learning/Silent\\_solution\\_guide.pdf](https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/research-learning/Silent_solution_guide.pdf) as there are slight differences between calling from a landline or mobile.

## 'Boots' safe spaces



Victims of domestic abuse will be able to access safe spaces at Boots pharmacy consultation rooms across the country, where they can contact specialist domestic abuse services for support and advice. The scheme is in response to the desperate situation facing many victims who are isolating with perpetrators during lockdown.

While in the consultation room, people will have access to:

- 24-hour National domestic abuse helpline: 0808 2000 247
- Men's advice line: 0808 801 032
- Signposting to download the free mobile app, Bright Sky

For further info, please read their press release here: <https://www.boots-uk.com/our-stories/boots-pharmacy-consultation-rooms-become-safe-spaces-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse/>

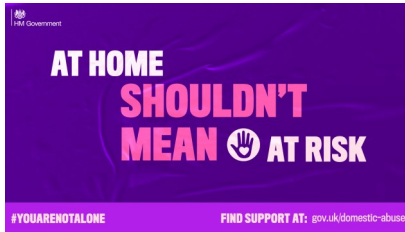
## It can happen to anyone

There are some myths around domestic abuse. It can happen at any time to anyone and by anyone. We do some myth busting here:

- In the vast majority of cases, domestic abuse is experienced by women and perpetrated by men, but men can also be victims and don't always feel able to come forward and ask for help.
- Parents can suffer abuse from their children and may feel embarrassed to admit that their teenager is abusing them for example.
- Alcohol and drugs can make existing abuse worse, but they do not cause domestic abuse. The perpetrator alone is responsible for their actions.
- When a child witnesses domestic abuse, this is child abuse. The effects are traumatic and long-lasting. Between 40% and 70% of these children are also direct victims of the abuse which is happening at home.
- Domestic abuse is very common. It has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other crime, and on average, the police receive over 100 emergency calls relating to domestic abuse every hour.

*You do not have to suffer in silence, you can reach out for help. You are not alone.*

## Useful links



<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>



<https://safelives.org.uk/>



<https://www.refuge.org.uk/>

women's aid  
until women & children are safe

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>



<https://mensadvice.org.uk/>



[freedomproject@dogstrust.org.uk](mailto:freedomproject@dogstrust.org.uk)



[pawsprotect@cats.org.uk](mailto:pawsprotect@cats.org.uk)

**Freedom Project** - Fostering service for dogs belonging to people fleeing from domestic abuse.

**Paws Protect** - Cats Protection's pet fostering service for families fleeing domestic abuse.



<https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/>



01823 334244 - Helping men escape domestic abuse

<https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

## Keeping in contact

Our office is closed, but we are still working and providing essential services. You can keep in contact with us by phone, email or online via our social media pages.

### Call 01689 889700 for all enquiries

☎ Sharon Hobbs & Paul Alderson  
(Housing Officers)

☎ Andrea Spittle & Susan Rimmer  
(Housing Officers)

☐ **The number will be staffed during office hours Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm**

We have published other information leaflets that may be useful to you. These are available to view on our website and will be updated as and when we receive new information.

<https://www.kenistonha.co.uk/about-us/our-policies/information-leaflets/>

If you require anything else please e-mail [enquiries@kenistonha.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@kenistonha.co.uk)

You can find us through a variety of ways online. Please visit our website [www.kenistonha.co.uk](http://www.kenistonha.co.uk) where you will find lots of general information and help for residents. You will also find us on social media, just search Keniston Housing.

