

Supporting a friend or relative

There is no simple way to 'spot' whether a person is experiencing domestic abuse, but a pattern of abuse could include:

- **Absence from work or school or social events**
- **Fear of their partner, references to their partner's anger**
- **Personality changes**
- **Repeated unexplained injuries.**

People often feel awkward about taking sides and getting involved in another person's relationship, but if you think a friend or family member is a victim of domestic abuse they will need your help. There are things you can do.

Tell them that you're concerned. Say why you're worried and ask if they want to talk to you about it. Let them know you want to help. You don't have to know all the answers, and the important thing is to break the isolation.

Always prioritise safety – yours and theirs. The abuser won't appreciate you getting involved so be careful about what you do and where and when you do it – be careful not to intervene personally and ring the police if there is immediate danger.

Support your friend in whatever decision he or she is currently making about their relationship, while being clear that the abuse is wrong. Remember, what you are trying to do is be supportive, not to make them feel judged. It's not always easy to just leave.

Stay in contact over time and help your friend or loved one to explore what choices are on offer. Try to focus on their safety rather than the abuser or the relationship. Let them guide you in how best to support them.

Reassure them that the abuse is not their fault and that you are there for them. Remind them of their strengths, challenge them if they put themselves down or blame themselves, praise them for every step they take and let them know they have your support. **Most importantly, don't give up on them. You might be their only lifeline.** You can also report domestic abuse anonymously to Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111.

Useful contacts – you can get help

If you, your family or someone you know is experiencing (or has experienced) physical, emotional, financial or sexual violence or abuse from a partner, ex-partner or family member then help is available. The numbers given below are for organisations or groups that can offer you advice, practical help or just be there when you need to talk.

In an emergency, always dial 999.

Hampshire Constabulary non-emergency 101

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

Victim Support Hampshire and IOW 0845 0703002

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) 02392 210352

ChildLine 0800 1111

Runaway Helpline 0808 800 70 70

Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327

Respect Phoneline – for people who are abusive towards their partners and want help to stop **0845 122 8609**

National Centre for Domestic Violence – for advice on civil injunctions **0844 8044 999**

Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151 or 020 7008 1500

Honour Network Helpline 0800 5999 247

Broken Rainbow – advice for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered victims of domestic abuse **08452 604460**

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum
website www.hampshiredomesticabuse.org.uk
for a full list of services available to you in your area, including refuge and outreach support.



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Domestic abuse

Information and guidance



Hampshire
County Council

This leaflet has been produced by
Hampshire Constabulary and other partner agencies

We are committed to taking positive action to reduce the impact of domestic abuse and to hold those committing this crime accountable for their actions.

Call the FREE National Domestic Violence Helpline:



0808 2000 247

No one deserves to be abused...

Domestic abuse is any form of unacceptable personal abuse. It can happen to anyone – men, women and children. It can be committed by a partner or ex-partner, or a family member in an existing or previous relationship. It can involve a wide range of abusive and controlling behaviour including:

- **PHYSICAL** – pulling hair; biting; choking; beating; kicking; slapping; punching; burning; strangulation; stabbing; denying sleep
- **EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL** – jealousy; humiliation; degradation; being the subject of put downs; isolation from family and friends; threats of suicide; using your children to inform or report on you
- **VERBAL ABUSE** – name calling; threats to harm; being constantly blamed; being 'outed' if you are gay
- **SEXUAL** – rape; enforced sex or prostitution; pornography; any sexual behaviour or activity which you find unacceptable; indecent phone calls
- **FINANCIAL CONTROL** – withholding money; having wages, benefits, pension taken away from you; having to account for all your spending
- **HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE (HBV)** – this is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community
- **STALKING AND HARASSMENT** – following; sending unsolicited text messages or unwanted gifts; phone calls; turning up at your place of work or home uninvited.

Anyone can be abused...

Domestic abuse is a serious and widespread problem, although it is often hidden. It happens in all kinds of relationships regardless of race, class, religion, culture, age, sexuality, disability or gender.

Am I the only one?

No, one in five relationships in the UK are affected by domestic abuse. In Hampshire in 2008, 24,000 cases of domestic abuse were recorded by the police.

Have I brought this upon myself?

No, it is not your fault. Domestic abuse occurs when a person tries to bully or control another. Responsibility lies entirely with that person. It is important not to blame yourself.

Who can help me?

There are many agencies available to give you advice, support and practical help. The names of some of these agencies are listed on the back of this leaflet. A full list of local services can be found at www.hampshiredomesticabuse.org.uk

Refuge

Women's Aid and housing associations operate a number of refuges throughout the region and provide a wide range of services for women and their children. They also have access to dedicated solicitors and can give you help concerning benefits and rehousing. There are some male refuges nationally – call the National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 for assistance.

Who can go to a refuge?

Anyone – and their children – who is the victim of domestic abuse of any kind.

If I decide to leave home what should I take with me?

If you are in immediate danger don't worry about taking anything with you; just leave. If you have time make sure you pack an emergency bag containing:

- **Clothing and toiletries for you and your children**
- **Your children's favourite small toys**
- **Some form of identification for you and your children, for example passports and birth certificates**
- **Any documentation relating to the abuse – diaries, police reports, court orders and copies of medical records**
- **Money, bank or post office books, child benefit or welfare books/cards**
- **Prescribed medication for you and your children**
- **Car and house keys.**

I'm worried about my partner

If you are concerned about your family's safety because of your partner you can tell the police. The police will take details about your concerns in accordance with the disclosure scheme. Then, if considered appropriate, the police will tell you about your partner's relevant history to help you stay safe.



Hampshire
County Council