



HM Government

# Domestic abuse: how to get help

Find out how to get help if you or  
someone you know is being abused  
at home.

Easy read version



## Find out how to get help if you or someone you know is being abused at home.



If you are in danger, call **999** and ask for the police.

If you can't speak and are calling on a mobile, press **55** to have your call transferred to the police.

[Find out how to call the police when you can't speak.](#)

For free advice, 24 hours a day contact the [domestic abuse helpline.](#)



You do not need to stay at home if you have been in contact with someone with Covid-19 if you have to leave your home to escape domestic abuse.



If English is not your first language, information has been [translated into several languages as well as an easy read version.](#)

Women's Aid also have [documents on domestic abuse and Coronavirus](#) available in lots of different languages for victims, family and friends, and community members.



If you are deaf, you can [watch a British Sign Language video](#) that explains how to get help if you or someone you know is being abused at home.

## How to know if you are a victim of domestic abuse.

Does your partner, ex-partner or someone you live with:



- **stop you from seeing family and friends?**
- **bully, threaten, or control you?**
- **take control of your money?**
- **check your use of phones, laptops and tablets?**
- **physically and/or sexually abuse you?**

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence.

It can also include: control and **'gaslighting'**.

This is when someone uses violence and threats to scare their victims or keeps putting them down.

They do this to harm, punish, frighten and control them.

This includes:



- **taking over the victim's money**
- **online abuse**
- **threats and bullying**
- **emotional abuse**
- **sexual abuse**

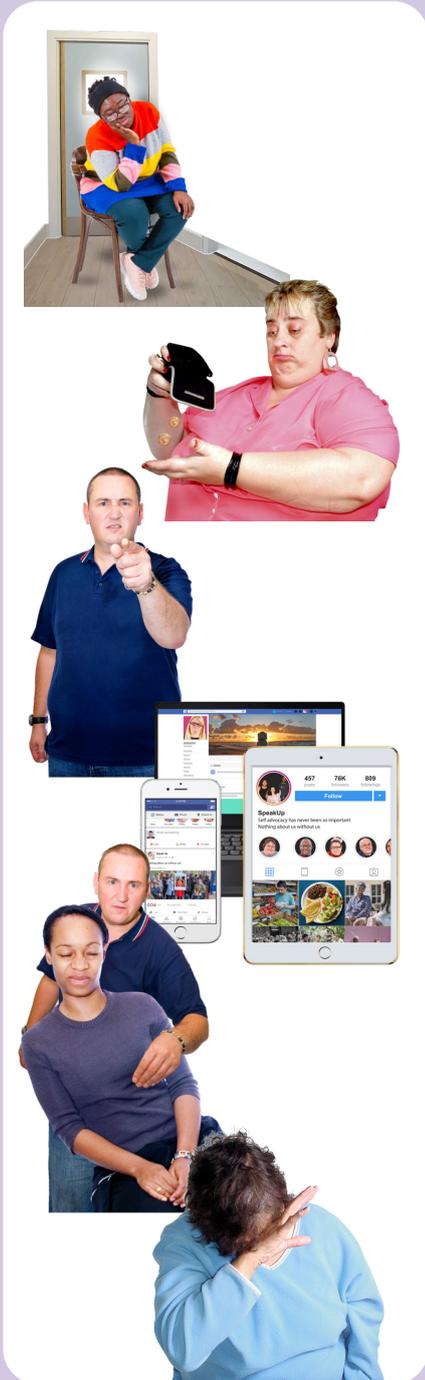


**Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse.**

It doesn't make any difference what your gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or background is.

If you are a victim of domestic abuse, there are signs that you can look out for.

These include:



- **being on your own and separated from your family and friends**
- **having bruises, burns or bite marks on you**
- **having your finances controlled, or not being given enough to buy food, medication or pay bills**
- **not being allowed to leave your house, or stopped from going to college or work**
- **having your internet or social media checked, or someone else reading your texts, emails or letters**
- **being put down all the time or being told you are no good**
- **being made to have sex or sexual contact**
- **being told that abuse is your fault or that you're overreacting**

[See more signs to look for.](#)

## Get help and support

### All domestic abuse is wrong.



If you're experiencing domestic abuse and feel frightened or are being controlled by a partner, an ex-partner or family member, it's important to remember that it's not your fault and you can get help.

It may seem difficult to ask for help but there is support available and you are not alone.

Free support and advice is available to victims and their family members or friends who care for them **24 hours a day**.

Nation	Helpline	Contact
England	<a href="#">Refuge's national abuse helpline</a>	0808 2000 247 <a href="#">Online live chat</a> <a href="#">Web form</a>
Northern Ireland	<a href="#">Domestic and sexual abuse helpline</a>	0808 802 1414 <a href="#">Online live chat</a> <a href="mailto:help@dsahelpline.org">help@dsahelpline.org</a>
Scotland	<a href="#">Domestic abuse and forced marriage helpline</a>	0800 027 1234 <a href="#">Online live chat</a> <a href="mailto:helpline@sdaafmh.org.uk">helpline@sdaafmh.org.uk</a>
Wales	<a href="#">Live fear free</a>	0808 80 10 800 <a href="#">Online live chat</a> <a href="#">Text</a> <a href="mailto:info@livefearfreehelpline">info@livefearfreehelpline</a>
UK wide	The <a href="#">men's advice line</a> run by respect is a confidential helpline specifically for male victims	0808 801 0327 <a href="mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk">info@mensadviceline.org.uk</a>

## Bright Sky app



**Bright Sky** is a mobile app and website for anyone being abused at home or who is worried about someone else.

The app can be downloaded for free from the app stores. Only download the app if it is safe for you to do so and if you are sure that your phone isn't being checked by your abuser.

## Women's Aid local support services directory



Women's Aid have a [list of support services across the UK.](#)

If you are experiencing domestic abuse or are worried about friends or family, you can access the [Women's Aid live chat service](#) 7 days a week, 10am to 6pm.

[helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)

## Victim Support

Victim Support run services for victims of any abuse or crime. It doesn't matter how long ago it happened.

You can talk to them even if you didn't tell the police.



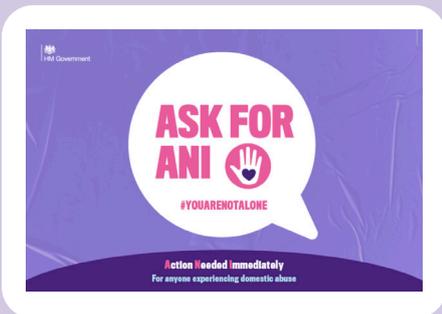
- **free 24/7 Support line 08 08 16 89 111**
- [live chat service](#)
- [My Support Space – a free online site](#)

## Ask for ANI codeword

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and need help now, ask for **'ANI'** in a chemist's shop (a pharmacy with a green cross outside).

**'ANI'** stands for **Action Needed Immediately**.

If a chemist's shop (pharmacy) has the **'Ask for ANI'** logoon display, it means they're ready to help.



They will give you a private space and will let you use a phone.

They will ask if you need support from the police or other support services.

## Safe Spaces

**Safe Spaces** can be found in Boots, Morrisons, Superdrug and Well pharmacies, TSB banks and independent pharmacies across the UK. Once you are inside, help will be available for you.

Many Safe Spaces can also help you if you use the codewords **'Ask for ANI'**.

This lets victims get help to call the police on 999 or specialist support services.

Find your nearest **Safe Space**.



Superdrug ☆



+well



ROYAL  
PHARMACEUTICAL  
SOCIETY

General  
Pharmaceutical  
Council



## Check whether someone has abused others before

If you are worried that a new, previous or existing partner has abused people before you can ask the police to check under the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** (this is also known as **'Clare's Law'**).

It is your 'right to ask'. If the records show that you could be at risk of domestic abuse, the police will give you the information.

If you are worried about a friend or family member, you can apply to the police for the information for them.



You can ask the police for information about a person's previous violent offending at the police station or by telephone, by email, online or as part of a police investigation.

Support agencies and services can also help you ask the police about this.

## Get a court order to protect you or your child

If you're a victim of domestic abuse you can apply to the courts to protect yourself or your child from:

- **your current or previous partner**
- **a family member**
- **someone you currently or previously lived with**

You can apply online, by email or by post.



[Get a court order if you've been the victim of domestic abuse.](#)

## Support someone you know

If you are worried that a friend, neighbour or loved one is a victim of domestic abuse, you can call the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline advice, 24 hours a day, on 0808 2000 247.**

Or you can contact the other support services listed on this page.

Seeking help for someone you know can be difficult. Domestic abuse advisers will offer information and advice on what is available to help you. They will help you to keep safe and give you information to help you make your choices.

If you think someone is in danger or could be harmed, or it is an emergency, you should always call **999**.

If someone tells you they are being abused, there is [more information on how to support your friend.](#)



## If you are a boss:



Bosses should tell their workers that if they are being abused at home they can help them. If anyone at work is at risk of harm or it is an emergency, always call **999**.

Workers should look out for others who may be suffering domestic abuse and help them to get support.

Hestia's [Respond to Abuse Advice](#) Line offers free help for employers. Employers can call **020 3879 3695** Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email [adviceline.eb@hestia.org](mailto:adviceline.eb@hestia.org) for information about domestic abuse and how to support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse.

The [Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#) website provides help to support employers including an [employers' toolkit](#).

## If you are a paid worker working with domestic abuse victims



[SafeLives](#) provides guidance and support to paid workers and those working with victims of domestic abuse.

## Find additional information and support

If you want help for your particular situation and need support for specific types of abuse there are several organisations that can help. See [Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support](#).

You can also find more information on topics such as:

- **help for children and young people**
- **welfare benefits and housing advice**
- **help if you don't have settled status in the UK**
- **support for specific types of abuse**



## Get help if you think you might be an abuser

If you are concerned about your behaviour or the behaviour of someone you know, there is support available.

The [Respect Phonenumber](#) is a helpline for men and women who are abusing their partners and families.

It is open Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm.

The helpline also takes calls from partners or ex-partners, friends and relatives who are concerned about abusers.

A webchat service is available Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10am to 11am and from 3pm to 4pm.

Telephone: **0808 802 4040**



## How to call the police when you can't speak

If you are in danger and can't talk on the phone, call **999** and listen to the questions from the operator and, if you can, cough or tap on the handset.



### Call 999 from a mobile

Press **55** to [Make Yourself Heard](#) and this will transfer your call to the police. Pressing **55** only works on mobiles and does not allow police to track your location.



### Call 999 from a landline

If the operator can only hear background noise and cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, you will be put through to the police.

If you put the phone down, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again.

When **999** calls are made from landlines, information about your location should be available to the people you call, to help provide a response.

## If you are deaf or can't use a phone

You can register with the [emergency SMS](#).

Text **REGISTER** to **999**.

You will get a text which tells you what to do next.

Register when it is safe to do so, so you are ready to text when you are in danger



