

Domestic abuse



What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening or degrading behaviour, violence or abuse, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. This includes forced marriage, abuse relating to gender identity or sexuality and so-called honour based violence.

If you are in fear of a partner, ex-partner or member of your family, you might be experiencing domestic abuse. Domestic abuse takes many forms, not just physical abuse, for example the perpetrator might often:

- make you feel bad about yourself by calling you names, humiliating or criticising you
- make you afraid by threatening you or your children
- behave violently towards you
- stop you seeing friends or family
- keep you without money
- force you to do something you really did not want to do
- threaten to harm themselves if you seek help or leave.

Domestic abuse is very common – nationally, it is estimated that one in four women and one in six men experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime.

Support and advice

Specialist support and advice is available from the following organisations.

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline Free and confidential advice and signposting service.

08 088 088 088

www.hertsdomesticabusehelpline.org

Safer Places Support services for women and men including legal advice, counselling, individual and group support and support with accessing housing and benefits. They also have safe accommodation in locations in the region.

03301 025 811

www.saferplaces.col.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline Information and support for women experiencing domestic violence. A gateway to services across the country, including refuge spaces. Run in partnership by Women's Aid and Refuge.

0808 2000 247

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Women's aid Campaigns to change policy, educate and raise awareness to keep women and children safe. Online survivors' forum where those affected by abuse can share experiences with others and support one another.

www.womensaid.org.uk

Refuge Specialist services including refuges, independent advocacy and community outreach services for women, children and some men escaping domestic violence.

www.refuge.org.uk

The Hideout Support, information and advice for children and young people living with domestic violence.

www.thehideout.org.uk

Men's Advice Line Advice and support for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

0808 801 0327

www.mensadvice.org.uk

LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline Emotional and practical support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse. Run by Galop, the LGBT+ anti-violence charity.

0800 999 5428

www.galop.org.uk

Karma Nirvana Support for victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage. The national helpline offers direct support and guidance.

0800 5999 247

www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Rights of Women Free telephone advice lines offering legal advice for women on a wide range of issues including domestic violence. Note that telephone lines are open for limited time periods each day.

020 7251 6577

www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

Samaritans Free telephone support lines offering a safe space to talk about any issues which are troubling you.

116 123

www.samaritans.org

Shelter Advice, support and legal services for people who are struggling with bad housing or homelessness.

0808 800 4444

www.shelter.org.uk

Help from the Council

You can ask any council for homelessness help if you are at risk in your home or can't stay there because of domestic abuse. The council must look at what they can do to keep you safe in your home or find you somewhere safe to live.

If you are pregnant or have children with you, councils by law have to provide you with emergency housing, unless you don't qualify due to immigration restrictions. If you are single, councils will only have to provide emergency housing if they think you are vulnerable for example because of the abuse or due to physical or mental health problems.

North Herts District Council works with Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse to provide support and crisis intervention for victims of domestic abuse. You will be helped to access legal advice, financial and housing advice, and will be provided with emotional support and additional security features within the home where appropriate. Emergency accommodation is also available.

Contact the Council as soon as possible before you reach crisis point. You can do so via our online [Housing Assistance Referral Portal](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/housing-advice) (www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/housing-advice) or you can call us on 01462 474000.

Wherever possible, seek advice from the Council or one of the organisations listed above before you leave your home permanently. However, if you feel you or your family are in immediate danger, you must leave immediately.

If you need urgent help

In an emergency situation, if you feel you or your family are in danger, call 999. Domestic abuse or violence is a crime – the police can help to protect you.