

# Domestic Abuse Support in Westminster



# What is domestic abuse?

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 include, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

## Definition of a perpetrator

- Someone who uses, or has recently used violence, abuse, fear, force, threats and coercive control over their victim
- Overly charming in presence of professionals
- Blames the survivor
- Justifies their behaviour
- Plays down the abuse
- May have limited parenting capacity

## Trauma caused in children by witnessing domestic abuse

- Impact on child's development - loss of skills (toileting, eating, selfcare)
- Speech and cognitive and auditory processing delays
- Withdrawal, belief that they cause the problem / abuse
- Difficulty sleeping and / or wetting the bed
- Become aggressive, problems at school, high risk behaviours
- Form unhealthy beliefs about gender roles
- Learning compromised because they are too distracted by fear or worry to concentrate
- Receiving conflicting messages from seeing one thing and being told another about violence

## Some warning signs

- Threatening or humiliating you, perhaps in front of other people
- Damaging your belongings or property
- Controlling what you do, controlling how you use, or have access to, money
- Following or visiting you without your permission
- Putting you down constantly, criticising you
- Blaming their culture, religion or personal problems as an excuse for their behaviour
- Pushing, bullying, slapping, kicking, punching or seriously hurting you
- Forcing you to have sex when you don't want to
- Forcing you to make decisions you don't agree with (personal, physical, financial, legal or perhaps about a family member)
- Threatening you and making you fear for your safety

## Plan in advance

- Keep important and emergency telephone numbers with you (inc. National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247)
- Ask neighbours you trust to call the police if they hear sounds of a violent attack
- Rehearse an escape plan, so you can get away safely in an emergency
- Pack an emergency bag and hide it somewhere safe
- Try to keep a small amount of money on you at all times
- Know where the nearest phone is. If you have a mobile try to keep it with you
- If you suspect you are about to be attacked, try to go to a lower risk area of the house - i.e. where there is a way out and access to a phone.
- Teach children to call 999 in an emergency, and what they would need to say (for example, their full name, address and telephone number)

### Teach them how to make a silent 999 call and know how to do this yourself:

- **From a mobile: If you're in danger but can't talk call 999 and press 55 when prompted.** Your call will be transferred to the police. Pressing 55 only works on mobiles and doesn't allow the police to track your location.
- **From a landline:** If you call 999 and don't speak or answer questions the operator will transfer you to the police. If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again. Calling 999 from a landline automatically gives the police information about your location.

If you want to talk about support available in Westminster, please contact:

### Valbona Preniqi - Domestic Violence Coordinator

 Tuesday to Friday: 07971092567  
Emergency out of hours (5pm – 9am): 020 7641 2388

 [vpreniqi@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:vpreniqi@westminster.gov.uk)

 Early Help Service,  
Westminster City Council,  
1st Floor,  
4 Frampton Street,  
London  
NW8 8LF



## Useful contacts

**National Domestic Violence Helpline** 0808 2000 247 • [nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

**Rights of Women** 020 7251 6577 • [rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://rightsofwomen.org.uk) - free legal advice

**London LGBT Abuse Partnership** 020 7704 2040 • [galop.org.uk/domesticabuse](http://galop.org.uk/domesticabuse) - advice and therapeutic services

**Shelter** 0808 800 4444 • [shelter.org.uk](http://shelter.org.uk) - for advice on housing and homelessness

**Karma Nirvana** Honour Based Abuse Helpline: 0800 5999 247 [karmanirvana.org.uk](http://karmanirvana.org.uk)

**IKWRO Women's Rights Organisation** [ikwro.org.uk](http://ikwro.org.uk) 020 7920 6460

**Victim Support Helpline** 0808 1689 111 • [victimsupport.org.uk/](http://victimsupport.org.uk/) - emotional support for those affected by crime

**The Mix** 0808 808 4994 - free information and support for under 25s in the UK

**Men's Advice Line** 0808 801 0327 • [mensadvice.org.uk](http://mensadvice.org.uk) - helpline for men affected by domestic abuse

**Citizens Advice Bureau** [citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us/](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us/)

**Maternity Action** – 0845 600 85 33 • [maternityaction.org.uk/](http://maternityaction.org.uk/)

## Legal support

**Legal Aid Agency** 0345 345 4 345

**The Law Society** (to find a solicitor) [solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/](http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/)

**Resolution** (to find a family lawyer) 01689 820272 • [resolution.org.uk/](http://resolution.org.uk/)

**Bar Council** (to find a barrister) 020 7611 1472 • [barcouncil.org.uk/](http://barcouncil.org.uk/)

**Bar Council's guide** - Representing yourself in court [barcouncil.org.uk/instructing-a-barrister/representing-yourself-in-court/](http://barcouncil.org.uk/instructing-a-barrister/representing-yourself-in-court/)

**Solicitors Regulation Authority** 0370 606 2555 • [sra.org.uk/](http://sra.org.uk/)

**Bar Standards Board** 020 7611 1444 • [barstandardsboard.org.uk/](http://barstandardsboard.org.uk/)

**Law Centres Network** 020 7749 9120 • [lawcentres.org.uk/](http://lawcentres.org.uk/)

**Advocate** [weareadvocate.org.uk/](http://weareadvocate.org.uk/)

**FLAWS** (RCJ Advice) 0203 745 7707 • [flows.org.uk/](http://flows.org.uk/)

**Family Rights Group** (for advice on involvement of children services or local authority) 0808 801 0366

**Coram Children's Legal Centre** (for advice on law relating to family) 0300 330 5480 • [childlawadvice.org.uk/](http://childlawadvice.org.uk/)

**Support Through Court** 020 7947 7701 • [supportthroughcourt.org/](http://supportthroughcourt.org/)

**Court forms** [gov.uk/government/collections/court-and-tribunal-forms](http://gov.uk/government/collections/court-and-tribunal-forms)