

Domestic abuse

Information for patients or carers who may be experiencing physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial control, harassment, stalking, controlling or coercive behaviour from someone close to them.

0345 155 1074

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 over who are or have been intimate partners or family members.

Domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident. 'Honour violence', forced marriage and female genital mutilation are also considered acts of domestic abuse.

It's abuse if your partner, ex-partner or a family member:

- threatens you or frightens you
- shoves or pushes you
- puts you down or attempts to undermine your self-esteem
- makes you do sexual things against your will
- controls you, for example by stopping you seeing your friends and family
- is jealous and possessive or prevents you getting/keeping a job

Who experiences domestic abuse?

If it is happening to you, you are not alone. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, religion, class, or lifestyle and income.

Children are always affected by living with domestic abuse although their response to it will vary and may show as emotional disturbance, poor school achievement, withdrawal or aggressive behaviour.

Children need to be protected from this abuse and agencies are there to help.

What can I do about it?

Recognise that you are in an abusive relationship – you have the right to live safely and without being abused. It is not your fault.

How can I get help?

The Royal Devon is committed to safeguarding all adults and children. This means that staff may ask you whether you feel frightened at home or have experienced any threatening, controlling or harmful behaviours.

If you feel threatened or are in immediate danger you can call 999.

“Silent Solutions”: If you are unable to speak, dial 999 then press 55 when you hear the operator who will transfer call to police

The **Police** will always respond no matter how many times you call and they have a duty to investigate any complaint you make because your partner, ex-partner or family member is threatening you or your children.

Legal Advice. You may be entitled to legal aid and you may be able to get a protection order that could make the abuser stay away from you. You can get free help from the National Centre for Domestic Violence, call 08009702070 or visit www.ncdv.org.uk.

If you would like to talk to someone, call the **Devon Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0345 155 1074**. The **Devon Domestic Abuse Support Service** offers support for men, women and children to improve safety and recovery. They also run programmes for perpetrators.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 200 0247 for women experiencing domestic violence

Men’s Advice Line – 0808 801 0327
for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse

Galop – 0800 999 5428 LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Childline – 0800 1111
for children/young people in distress

Bright Sky Free App/website with support advice for domestic abuse

Making a safety plan

Your safety is the most important thing. Listed below are tips to help keep you safe.

- Keep with you any important and emergency telephone numbers.
- Teach your children to call 999 in an emergency and what they would need to say.
- Are there family/friends/neighbours you could trust, and could go to in an emergency? Tell them about the abuse.
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself and your children, and keep it somewhere safe.
- Think about safer places in your home where there are exits and no weapons. If you feel abuse is going to happen try to get your abuser to one of these safer places.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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