

Domestic Abuse

See it. Hear it. Report it.





Introduction

Approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse at some point in their life – that is a fact.

On average, 2 women are killed each week in the UK as a direct result of domestic abuse.

62% of children living in households where there is domestic abuse are directly hurt by the abuser – *Chartered Institute of Housing, 2017*

These figures are staggering and the impact, both physical and psychological, on the survivor and their families can last throughout their lives.

Public-facing housing teams, maintenance staff and care staff spend their days in residents' homes and may be in direct contact with survivors and perpetrators of physical, psychological, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. We may also be working alongside colleagues who are victims of domestic abuse.

As housing professionals, we all have a part to play and can take effective steps in identifying, reporting and supporting those who are affected by domestic abuse.

This Toolkit has been developed by The Guinness Partnership in collaboration with MD Group and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) to raise awareness within the housing sector so that we can identify, report and help prevent domestic abuse within our homes and communities.

Together we can help put a stop to domestic abuse.



The Guinness Partnership

Abuse and violence of any sort are terrible, but abuse or violence at the hands of families and loved ones who we trust to look out for us – or look after us – are particularly abhorrent. Family and home should provide sanctuary – they should never be sources of fear.

Domestic abuse can occur in any household and in any relationship, and has many forms. Because it most often takes place in the home it can be hidden, and as a consequence prolonged and difficult to escape from. The impact on those living in an abusive environment can be devastating, and abuse can have a long-lasting effect on survivors, both those who experience the abuse directly and those – including children – who witness it. It can also be fatal.

Housing providers and those delivering services in homes, including our maintenance contractors, are uniquely positioned to identify domestic abuse, as we more than anyone see inside the home. We therefore have a moral responsibility to do everything possible to identify, provide support and tackle domestic abuse.

This work is fundamentally important to Guinness, and I am proud that we are part of the Chartered Institute of Housing's Make a Stand Pledge. In working towards this, we have continued to improve the support we offer both to our residents and to any member of staff who is experiencing domestic abuse.

Partnership working has been an important aspect of this. We have worked closely with the MD Group, the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and Resolve ASB to produce this Domestic Abuse Toolkit. It seeks to educate and inform and so enable our colleagues and contractors spot the signs of a relationship that may be abusive. By providing guidance on what to do if we have concerns about abuse, and by providing information about the help and support available to those who need it, we can make a real difference to people's lives.

I hope this toolkit will become an essential guide for every housing professional, tradesperson, carer and every other person who has the opportunity in their day to day work to tackle domestic abuse.

Catriona Simons
Group Chief Executive



Footnote: During the Covid-19 lockdown, reports of domestic violence have increased. Whilst some families valued the opportunity to spend more time together, for those experiencing domestic abuse, lockdown will have been the most frightening of times. With the UK now in recession, the stresses on families and relationships will be more acute than ever. This makes our work tackling domestic abuse more important and more urgent than ever.

MD Group

Domestic abuse takes place in homes of all types and across the country. Maintenance contractors are well placed to support social housing providers in doing something about it and MD Group has been delighted to work with The Guinness Partnership and DAHA in the production of this helpful and important booklet.

Many survivors of domestic abuse pay testament to the intervention of neighbours and passing strangers for reporting what they have seen and heard. Domestic abuse is everyone's business and the simple act of reporting a concern may very well be life-changing for a suffering resident and also have a long-lasting, positive impact on the children in the home. Maintenance operatives, tradesmen and tradeswomen, will visit more homes in a few days than housing officers will visit in a year, making them a large army of potential 'Knights in Shining Armour', as one survivor put it.

The Guinness Partnership's encouragement to contractors to 'see it, hear it and report it', and the advice given in this booklet on the signs of domestic abuse, may very well lead to a life being saved. I commend it to all maintenance contractors and hope it sparks a lot of discussions and Tool Box Talks.

Jane Nelson
Former Managing Director

Preventing and ending domestic abuse must be everybody's business. Two million people are subjected to domestic abuse each year and the home is often the most dangerous place for them. The housing sector have an absolutely critical role to play in tackling this issue. Frontline housing teams, going in and out of people's homes come into direct contact with survivors and perpetrators every day and are therefore uniquely placed to identify physical, financial and coercive abuse. I warmly welcome the work that the Guinness Partnership have been doing to raise awareness and train staff to spot the signs of domestic abuse among both their residents and their workforce. This toolkit will make a real difference to the lives of those people working for, and living in a home managed by, the Guinness Partnership.

Nicole Jacobs
Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

Our support



Make a Stand pledge

Make a Stand pledge – developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and Women's Aid – was created to encourage housing organisations to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation

The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance is a partnership between three leading agencies - **Standing together against domestic abuse**, **Gentoo** and **Peabody** who are leading change for cohesive policies and strategies for tackling domestic violence within housing, globally.

DAHA Accreditation is THE benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. It is part of the Government's **Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy: 2016 to 2020** and DAHA are leading this change.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and/or violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer.

Domestic abuse is common. In the majority of cases it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men but men can also be victims of abuse, it affects all types of relationships.

This section of the Toolkit explores different types of domestic abuse, which can include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Financial abuse
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Online or digital abuse
- Adolescent to adult abuse
- Elder abuse
- Honour based violence and forced marriage



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Physical and sexual abuse

Physical abuse encompasses a broad range of behaviours including actions such as punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair, pushing, shoving, burning or strangling.

Signs of physical and sexual abuse could include when a person:

- Has visible bruises or injuries that could be consistent with being physically hurt.
- Makes excuses for injuries saying they are clumsy.
- Wears clothing that is inappropriate for the weather i.e. sunglasses indoors and scarfs in summer.
- Is being called names, pinched, pushed or being verbally abused by their partner.
- Is shaky, subordinate or timid, in front of their partner/parent/relation/carer.
- Appears to be living a life of servitude.
- Discloses that they have been subject to unwanted sexual demands by their partner.
- Discloses that they have been forced into unwanted sexual activity.

Coercive control

Coercive control is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten victims. Controlling behaviour like this makes a person dependant by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Signs of coercive control could include when a person:

- Is being watched by their partner - almost like they are monitoring their every move.
- Appears isolated or mentions that they are not allowed to see certain members of their family or friends.
- Does not have control of their digital devices and their partner has control instead.
- Has to share their passwords for their phone and social media accounts with their partner.
- Is put down by their partner and spoken to in derogatory terms.
- Is quizzed on how much they have been spending in an aggressive manner.
- Has to give their money to the partner.
- Is told where they can go, what they can wear and who they can meet.
- Is constantly being texted by their partner asking where they are and what they are doing.
- Is told to keep phone with them at all times so that their partner can constantly check on what they are doing.

Strangulation

is the most common method of intimate partner homicide

45%

of all rape is committed by a current partner

See it

Hear it

Report it

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is an aspect of 'coercive control' – a pattern of controlling, threatening and degrading behaviour that restricts a victim's freedom. Financial abuse involves a perpetrator using or misusing money which limits and controls their partner's current and future actions and their freedom of choice. It can include using credit cards without permission, putting contractual obligations in their partner's name and gambling with family assets or doling out 'pocket money' to the victim.

Signs of financial abuse could include when a person:

- Has to ask their partner for money to buy essential items such as food or supplies for the children.
- Asks their partner if they have taken money which was left on the side.
- Has credit card statements lying around in their name.
- Is told they cannot work and earn their own money.
- Is given an allowance to do the shopping, and asked for receipts.
- Questions a number of transactions on their bank account.

52%

of women surveyed living with an abuser said they had no money to leave

1/5

adults are victim to financial abuse in relationships

Don't walk by.

Is this normal behaviour?

Should this be reported?



Psychological and/or emotional abuse

Domestic abuse doesn't always mean the abused is being physically hurt. Psychological and/or emotional abuse includes insults and attempts to scare, isolate, or control an individual. Psychological and/or emotional abuse can have short-term and long-lasting effects that are just as serious as the effects of physical abuse. This type of abuse is often a sign that physical abuse may follow.

Signs of psychological and/or emotional abuse could include when a person:

- Is regularly shouted at, belittled or called names by their partner.
- Appears to be living in a household where there is extreme jealousy.
- Is shouted at in an intimidating way.
- Is threatened with members of the household or pets being harmed.
- Is told that they have done something stupid by their partner but the person cannot remember this.



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Gas lighting

Emotional abuse which makes the abused feel like they are losing their mind or memory.

Direct link

There is a direct link between psychological abuse leading to physical abuse

Common symptoms

Someone who is psychologically abused can often be depressed, anxious, withdrawn or suicidal

Don't walk by.

Is this normal behaviour?

Should this be reported?

Harassment and stalking

Stalking is a criminal offence and it involves a person becoming fixated or obsessed with another. Victims are often subject to persistent unwanted attention that makes them feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed.

Signs of harassment and stalking could include when a person:

- Experiences someone persistently turning up at their home uninvited, and with unwanted gifts.
- Mentions that they wish he/she would stop calling or texting them.
- Reports that an ex-partner or even a current partner, constantly drives past the property to check on the customer's whereabouts.
- Experiences threatening behaviour within the property.
- Has damage to their property which could be consistent with someone trying to gain entry.
- Always closes blinds and curtains during the day, perhaps in a way that suggests they are trying to hide away.



80.4%

of stalking victims are female

Don't walk by.
Is this normal behaviour?
Should this be reported?

Online or digital abuse

Online platforms are increasingly used to perpetrate domestic abuse. Online domestic abuse can include behaviours such as monitoring of social media profiles or emails, abuse over social media such as Facebook or Twitter, sharing intimate photos or videos without your consent, using GPS locators or spyware.

Signs of online or digital abuse could include when a person:

- Tells you that their partner or ex-partner has shared sexual images of them online. (Sometimes referred to as revenge porn).
- Becomes withdrawn or upset after spending time on their mobile phone or other digital devices.
- Is threatened with information or photographs being shared online.
- Tells you that their partner is monitoring their social media accounts, hacking in to their accounts or monitoring their text messages.

Revenge porn

Sharing explicit or sexual images or videos, without the consent of the person in the image. This is illegal and the perpetrator can be prosecuted for this.

Don't walk by.

Is this normal behaviour?

Should this be reported?

Adolescent to parent violence and abuse

Adolescent to parent violence and abuse (ADVA) is a form of behaviour by a young person to control and dominate over their parents. The aim is to instil fear, threaten and cause intimidation. Although there is no clear definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse, it is recognised as a form of domestic abuse.

Arguments are a natural part of family life and can happen more often as children enter their teenage years. Sometimes it can mean blazing rows with shouting and swearing. A certain level of anger is common from teenagers, it is not acceptable for young people to use aggression, threats or violence against their parents.

Signs of Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse could include when a person:

- Has visible injuries or bruises that look suspicious.
- Has damage to walls, doors and furniture in a young person's bedroom.
- Appears extremely tense around a young person.
- Discloses there is evidence that the young person is involved in substance or alcohol misuse.
- Discloses that their child has been involved in violence at school or in a public area.



Elder abuse

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

Both older men and women can be at risk of being abused, and this can potentially happen wherever they live or visit. This may include: someone's own home, in a carer's home, in a day centre, in a residential home, in a nursing home, or in a hospital. The key issue is not about where someone lives or visits, but about whether or not the opportunity exists for another to abuse the relationship of trust and exploit or harm them.

Examples of elder abuse include:

- Not caring for someone properly (neglect)
- Pressuring someone to give away money or property
- Psychological (e.g. threats, harassment or forcing someone to live somewhere they don't want to)
- Physical (e.g. violence)
- Sexual (e.g. forcing someone in to unwanted sexual activity)

Signs of elder abuse could include when a person:

- Notices items missing from the customer's home i.e. ornaments, pictures and items of value?
- Is asked for money by family members.
- Appears to be extremely nervous around family members or carers?
- Has bruises or unexplained injuries?
- Tells you they feel uncomfortable around certain people or in certain situations.

See it

Hear it

Report it

Honour based violence and/or forced marriage

In some communities, certain things are considered as compromising a family's honour or bringing shame on the family. In extreme cases, the response to this and the emotional or physical abuse, family disown and in some cases even murder.

In most honour-based abuse cases there are multiple perpetrators from the immediate family, sometimes the extended family and occasionally the community at large. Mothers, sisters, aunts and even grandmothers have been known to be involved in the conspiring of honour crimes.

Honour based violence and abuse is linked to controlling and coercive behaviour.

Forced marriage comes in all forms of abuse not just physical abuse. It is when people are forced to marry partners against their will, often involving young women and can sometimes involve being taken outside the UK without them knowing they are going to be married.

Signs of honour based violence could include when a person:

- Is always absent from school. (Teenage or young girls particularly).
- Is from a family where there is a history of girls leaving education early to get married.
- Lives in a home where there is excessive parental control, i.e. restricting movements.
- Is isolated from family and friends
- Is denied access to the telephone, internet or their house keys.
- Discloses that they are being forced to go abroad.
- Tells you that they are being disowned by their family or being emotionally/ physically abused.

See it

Hear it

Report it

Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults

Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations.

An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:

- Has a learning or physical disability
- Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity
- Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare
- Is detained in custody
- Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability
- Is living in sheltered or residential care home
- Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Disabled children and young people are particularly vulnerable to abuse in any form. Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children.



Children and vulnerable adults can experience abuse in a number of ways. Forms of abuse that may affect children and vulnerable adults include:

- Abuse of trust
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Financial or material abuse
- Grooming
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Modern slavery
- Neglect
- Online abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Self-neglect
- Sexual abuse



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What prevents people from leaving?

There are many barriers that prevent someone from leaving abusive relationships.

- Financial dependence (no access to money)
- Danger and fear – statistics show that 76% of women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse between January 2009 and December 2015 were killed within the first year that followed their separation (Women's Aid).
- Isolation – weak support links
- Shame and embarrassment
- Trauma and low confidence
- Concern for children
- Concern for pets

With the correct help, survivors of domestic abuse can be empowered to make the best decisions for them, whilst holding the abuser solely accountable for their behaviour.

Safeguarding

In the event that there is a serious safeguarding issue that needs immediate attention please call **999** and report it straight away.

Don't walk by.

Is this normal behaviour?

Should this be reported?

All concerns regarding safeguarding vulnerable children and adults should be reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, (MASH) as per your organisation's procedure.

How to report suspected domestic abuse

If you suspect domestic abuse is happening or if a person discloses they are a victim of domestic abuse please do not ignore it. Even if you are not sure, it is better to take action than to ignore it.

Questions to encourage conversation (if the person is on their own and it is safe to do so):

- I haven't seen much of you recently, is everything okay?
- I notice you seem a little down, has someone upset you?
- They text you a lot. How frequently do they contact you? What do they contact you about? How does that make you feel?
- You seem anxious when they enter the room – are you okay?
- Do you feel safe in your own home?
- Has anyone ever been violent towards you? Who?

If they start to talk to you about their experience with domestic abuse, listen with an open mind and believe what you are being told. Explain to them that you are concerned and worried about what has happened and tell them that we have a specialist team who can assist and support going forward. Ask them when the best time is for someone to contact them and ensure we have an up to date telephone number for them. You must not offer opinions about the situation or the abuser.

All domestic abuse incidents must be reported to your organisation via their current procedures or to your line manager. Your organisation will work with the victims to ensure that they are fully supported and work with all relevant agencies to reduce risk to the victim and members of their household.

Reporting

If you witness physical violence please remove yourself from the premises as soon as it is safe to do so. Call **999** for assistance and then report the issue to your line manager.

Don't walk by.

Is this normal behaviour?

Should this be reported?

Brightsky

Brightsky is a free to download mobile app providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those who are concerned about someone they know.

The app is available to use in English, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. It features:

- Contact details and the ability to call national helplines providing support for those affected by domestic and sexual abuse across the UK.
- A UK wide directory of local domestic abuse support services
- Questionnaires to assess the safety of a relationship, plus a section dispelling myths about domestic and sexual abuse
- Information about domestic abuse, the different kinds of support available, tips to improve online safety, and how to assist someone you know who is experiencing domestic abuse.
- Advice and information on issues around sexual consent, stalking and harassment.
- Links to further resources and information on topics around domestic abuse

Please note:

- You must always advise the person to call 999 if they feel in immediate danger.
- For the person's safety, it is advised they only download the app onto a device they feel safe using and which only they have access to. They should only use the questionnaires in a private place, preferably on their own so nobody is able to influence the outcome.
- Before using the app's My Journal feature, the person should make sure that they have an email address which is secure and that no one else has access to.
- Any calls made to support agencies will show on the phone's call history and on the bill payer's phone bill.



Useful contacts

National Centre for Domestic Violence:

Free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic abuse.

📍 www.ncdv.org.uk

☎ (freephone) 0800 970 2070

National Care Line: Works to challenge and prevent the abuse of older people

☎ 0808 8088 141

Childline: Information and advice for children and young people.

📍 www.childline.org.uk

☎ (freephone) 0800 11 11

Forced Marriage Unit: Help and advice for those worried they may be forced into marriage or worried about friends or relatives.

📍 www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

☎ 020 7008 0151

Galop: Homophobia, Transphobia or Biphobia Anti-LGBT hate crime charity.

📍 www.galop.org.uk

Karma Nirvana Supporting victims of Honour based violence and forced marriages:

☎ (UK Helpline) 0800 5999 247

@ info@karmanirvana.org.uk

LGBT Foundation: support for domestic abuse within LGBT+ Community

☎ 0345 330 3030

@ dasupport@lgbt.foundation

Mankind Initiative: Helping males victims of domestic abuse.

📍 www.mankind.org.uk

☎ 01823 334 244

Men's Advice Line:

📍 <http://mensadvice.org.uk/about-us>

☎ 0808 801 0327

Refuge: The national charity for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Refuge can help and support women with disabilities fleeing domestic abuse.

📍 www.refuge.org.uk

Respect Men's Advice Line: Support for men experiencing domestic abuse.

📍 www.mensadvice.org.uk

☎ 0808 801 0327

Respect: For people who are worried about their own abusive behaviour or for professionals or others looking for help for an abuser.

📍 www.respectphone.line.org.uk

☎ 0808 802 4040

Rights of women: Legal advice for women experiencing domestic abuse.

📍 www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

☎ 020 7251 6577

Southall Black Sisters: Provide support for survivors of Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Domestic Abuse.

☎ 0208 571 9595

The Hideout: Online support and information for children and young people to help them understand domestic abuse and violence and how to seek help.

📍 <http://thehideout.org.uk>

Victim Support: Provides follow-up support and advice for people experiencing domestic abuse.

📍 www.victimsupport.org.uk

☎ 0808 1689 111

Women's Aid: for women who experience domestic abuse.

📍 www.womensaid.org.uk

@ helpline@womensaid.org.uk

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