



University of
Nottingham

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Let's be clear on domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can affect anyone. Domestic abuse doesn't always include physical violence. Whatever the form of abuse, it's never acceptable.



This booklet provides information about domestic abuse, including what it is, the myths, the law and where to go for help and support.

The University of Nottingham is committed to promoting and providing a safe and respectful environment for every member of its community, by challenging harassment and abuse, underpinned by the Dignity at Nottingham Policy and Code of Conduct Policy.

Domestic abuse is a serious issue. We all have a role to play in advocating and promoting a safe environment.

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1. How prevalent is domestic abuse in our community?

The 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales reported that 10.5% of full-time female students and 4.8% of full-time male students had experienced domestic abuse. The HARM Network calculated that 162,073 students (full time and part time) experienced domestic abuse in 2019/20 and 23,760 university staff experienced domestic abuse in the same time frame.

Studies suggest that 60% of domestic abuse crimes go unreported (2020 Crime Survey England and Wales).

On average the police in England and Wales receive over 100 calls relating to domestic abuse every hour (HMIC, 2015).

For the year ending March 2018, only 18% of women who had experienced partner abuse reported the abuse to the police (Crime Survey England and Wales).

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on children and young people that can last into adulthood. Women's Aid estimates one in seven (14.2%) under-18s will have lived with domestic abuse at some point in their childhood.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines that children who have lived in abusive households are victims in their own right. Coming to university might be the first time you share your childhood experience of domestic abuse, seek help and support or report it.

If you have concerns about a child, you can report through the university.

 reportandsupport.nottingham.ac.uk



2. What is domestic abuse?

The UK legal definition of domestic abuse is:

Any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Intimate partners can include people you are sharing accommodation with (such as university halls or shared houses). The abuse can include psychological, physical, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse.



It can be hard to recognise that you are experiencing domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is always about the other person having power and control over you, and can take different forms:

Coercive control

The abuser acts in a way that makes you feel controlled, dependent, humiliated, intimidated, and isolated for instance the abuser might repeatedly put you down by saying you are worthless.

It is a criminal offence in England and Wales for someone to subject you to coercive control. If you experience this kind of abuse, you can report it to the police.

Physical abuse

Can include hitting, punching, kicking, choking and threats of violence.


Sexual abuse

Can include non-consensual or forced sexual contact, including rape.

Economic and financial abuse

Can take many forms and involves an abuser restricting a person's ability to acquire, use and maintain money or other economic resources. It includes controlling your money or other financial assets, spending your money, damaging your possessions or property, putting debt in your name, preventing you from accessing education or work and withholding child maintenance payments (Refuge).

More information about economic abuse can be found here:

 co-operativebank.co.uk/values-and-ethics/people/know-economic-abuse/what-is-financial-abuse/

Harassment and stalking

Is persistent and unwanted attention that makes a person feel pestered and harassed. They may worry about their safety or fear violence might be used against them.

Digital / online abuse

Includes behaviours such as monitoring social media accounts, sending threatening emails and calls, online harassment and sharing intimate images without consent (revenge porn).

So-Called Honour Based Abuse

The crown Prosecution Service definition of 'honour' based abuse is, "an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has, or may have, been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/ or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community's code of behaviour."

Forced marriage

When coercion is used to enforce the marriage. It can include psychological, sexual, financial or emotional pressure and physical violence.

Forcing someone to marry without their consent is a criminal offence.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is abuse and is illegal in the UK.

Tech abuse

Controlling behaviour that involves the use of common devices such as smartphones and tablets to coerce, stalk or harass another person it includes putting trackers on a mobile phone, installing cameras, using security devices to monitor who enters and leaves residences.

3. Understanding why domestic abuse happens

Abusive behaviour is a deliberate choice to gain control. Abusers use a variety of tactics to manipulate and exert their power, including:

Dominance:

Abusers need to feel in charge of the relationship. They may make decisions on behalf of the abused person and family.

Humiliation:

Constant put downs are intended to wear down a person's self-worth and make them feel helpless. This means they are less likely to want to leave or seek help.

Threats:

Prevent people from leaving, reporting, or getting help. Other family members or even pets can also be threatened. It's a form of control.

Isolation:

Isolating someone from family, friends and the outside world increases dependence on the abuser and limits access to support and people that can help.

Intimidation:

Intimidating behaviour is intended to frighten an abused person, sending a message that there will be consequences if they don't obey.

Denial and blame:

Abusers may deny that the abuse ever happened or downplay the severity of their actions.

4. The Law

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Act "aims to ensure victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that the state will do everything it can, both to support them and their children and pursue the abuser" (November 2021 Government Policy Paper).

The Act recognises that domestic abuse is not just physical abuse. It has created new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to prevent abusers having access to their victims. The provisions of the Act increase access to local authority accommodation for those who leave domestic abuse situations (only applies to British citizens).

For the first time children who are affected by domestic abuse (see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse and are related to the person being abused or the perpetrator) are also regarded as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right.

More information about the act can be found at

[gov.uk/government/publications/
domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/
domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-
factsheet](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet)



5. Myth-busting

There are lots of myths surrounding the issue of domestic abuse. Unfortunately, many people believe them to be true. This means that people don't understand what domestic abuse is and how it impacts the people being abused. Here are some common myths.

Myth:

'Domestic abuse only affects women'

Reality:

Office for National Statistics figures show every year that one in three victims of domestic abuse are male equating to 757,000 men (1.561m women). One in 6 to 7 men and one in 4 women will be a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime.

More information can be found here

 safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Free%20to%20be%20safe%20web.pdf

Myth:

'Alcohol, drugs, stress and mental health problems cause domestic abuse'

Reality:

Blaming drink, drugs, stress, and mental health problems is an excuse and a way of denying responsibility. These can all be factors in an abuser's life and can certainly make an abusive situation more complicated, but they do not cause domestic abuse.

Myth:

'Domestic abuse only happens in poor families'

Reality:

Anyone can be abused. It's not about where you live or how much money you have. Both abused and abusers come from all walks of life.

Myth:

'A person could leave if they are being abused'

Reality:

There are many reasons why it can be difficult to leave including:

- fear of what the abuser will do if they leave
- practical considerations including access to finances, accommodation, no emotional support. Isolated from friends and family
- concerns about impact on, and safety of, children
- concerns about safety of pets
- women from certain cultures can find it particularly difficult to leave an abusive situation because this could bring shame on both themselves and their family
- low self-esteem
- hope that their abuser will change

Myth:

'Domestic abuse always involves physical violence'

Reality:

Domestic abuse does not always include physical violence. There are other forms of abuse including emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, isolation, threats, and intimidation are all forms of domestic abuse.

Myth:

'She provoked him'

Reality:

The truth is, abuse or violence of any sort is never the abused person's fault. Responsibility lies with the abuser.

Myth:

'Domestic abuse is a 'crime of passion' – a momentary loss of control'

Reality:

It's rarely about losing control but rather about taking control. Abusers rarely act spontaneously when angry.

6. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse

Both women and men can experience domestic abuse. However, there are significant differences.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales reported that in the year ending March 2020, an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. 1.6 million women and 757,000 men.

Women's Aid say that "domestic abuse is a gendered crime which is deeply rooted in societal inequality between men and women. It is a form of gender-based violence, violence, "directed against a woman because she is a woman"

"Any woman can experience domestic abuse regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, sexuality, class, or disability but some women who experience other forms of oppression and discrimination may face further barriers to disclosing abuse and finding help."

Female students are twice as likely as male students to experience domestic abuse (*Harm Network and University of Central Lancs, Domestic Abuse, Policy Guidance for Higher Education*)

Abusers learn to be violent from the society within which they grow up. Inequality between the genders means that men have more power than women – inevitably some men abuse or exploit that power.

Further information can be found at:

👉 [womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/)

Other protected characteristics

Age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, can also mean there are additional barriers to accessing support.

Trans individuals may be at an even higher risk. Stonewall (2018) found that more than a quarter of trans people (28%) in a relationship in the last year, have faced domestic abuse from a partner.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2022 says:

LGBT victims can have a similar experience of domestic abuse to heterosexual victims. Crime Survey for England and Wales data for the year ending March 2020 suggests that LGBT+ victims were more likely to report being victims of domestic abuse. 8.4% of gay men and lesbian women were victims of domestic abuse in the previous year, as were 15.2% of bisexuals. This compares to 5.2% of heterosexual respondents.

People who have entered the UK from overseas may also face difficulties when attempting to escape domestic abuse relating to their immigration status. Some victims may not have access to public services or funds which can lead to greater dependence on their partner or family, particularly if they are their only support network in the UK.

Further information about the impact of these issues is available at:

👉 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007814/draft-statutory-guidance-2021-final.pdf

👉 safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub/spotlights/spotlight-2-disabled-people-and-domestic-abuse

👉 safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Free%20to%20be%20safe%20web.pdf

7. What stops people leaving an abusive relationship and getting help and support?

Here are some reasons

Danger and fear of the consequences, including risk of more abuse.

Isolation, making it difficult to seek support. Isolation can also make it difficult for others to recognise that domestic abuse is happening.

Shame, embarrassment and denial can prevent access to support. The abuser may minimise, deny, or blame the abuse on the person being abused, who may blame themselves and make excuses to others to cover up the abuse.

Practical reasons, including no access to money and accommodation.

Not recognising a partner as abusive, because they are isolated from friends and family. Abusers may change their behaviour slowly over time and this can make it difficult to recognise what is happening.

Low self-esteem and confidence, because the abused person is constantly being put down and made to feel worthless.

Gender: males feel concerned they will not be believed, or that they will be perceived as less masculine if they report abuse.

Sexuality may prevent people in same sex relationships accessing support because there may be a perception that domestic abuse is a female/male issue – not a same sex issue.

Threats to children and pets, abusers threaten to harm children or a beloved pet.



8. Signs someone you know may be experiencing domestic abuse

- Unexplained bruising and signs of possible physical violence
- Loss of confidence/change in behaviour
- They have become isolated from friends and family
- They have stopped attending lectures, completing work
- They receive high numbers of messages and calls from their abuser when not together and constantly check their phone or must respond immediately and check in
- They seem very controlled by their abuser
- Their abuser may put them down and humiliate them in front of others
- Limited or no access to finances

Recognising abuse

Domestic abuse: recognise the signs:

- gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-recognise-the-signs/domestic-abuse-recognise-the-signs

Recognising domestic abuse:

- womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/recognising-domestic-abuse/

Friends can tell:

- yourbestfriend.org.uk/friendscantell

Help a friend:

- equation.org.uk/category/campaigns/help-a-friend/

9. How can you help?

Starting a conversation

- Be non-judgmental
- Never blame, criticise, or make the abused person feel guilty or that it's their fault for not understanding what's happening to them
- Acknowledge the fear of potential danger they may be feeling
- Be informative about services, but let them make their own decisions
- Educate yourself so you have a better understanding of domestic abuse
- Remember, you are there to support and guide
- When to intervene – if someone is at immediate risk of harm contact security if on campus, or the police if off campus (see below)

If you are concerned that another student is experiencing domestic abuse, remember that this is a crime and can result in serious harm. Where it is safe to do so, please encourage them to seek support through **Report and Support** or other agencies below. You can also report on the student's behalf through **Report and Support**. If you feel the student is at immediate risk of harm, please contact the emergency services.



10. Getting help

Remember it is not your fault, you are not to blame and you're not alone. You will be listened to and believed.

Support in an emergency if you are at risk of harm.

Try to find somewhere that feels safe to stay.

On Campus – if you live on campus and are at **immediate risk of harm** contact Security on **0155 9518888**. They will take any action necessary including contacting the police

Off campus – contact the police by phoning **999**.

University of Nottingham report and support

If you or someone you know has experienced or witnessed an incident (domestic abuse, harassment, discrimination, sexual assault or hate crime) you can tell us anonymously, or ask to speak to an adviser. Speaking to an adviser does not mean that you are making a formal report to the university, it is to enable you to access the support you need to make an informed decision.

- reportandsupport.nottingham.ac.uk

The Police

If you are experiencing on-going domestic abuse:

You can phone the UK non-emergency number 101 if you need non-emergency advice and support. You can:

- talk to someone about what has happened
- you might not want to report it immediately, but you can report it later

If you have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse, there are specialist services that can help you.

Support in Nottingham/ Nottinghamshire

Juno Women's Aid

Services include information and advice, drop-in service, refuge and emergency accommodation.

Freephone Domestic and Sexual Violence helpline

 **0808 800 0340**

 junowomensaid.org.uk

Equation

Nottingham based specialist charity that works with the whole community to reduce the impact of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and gender inequality.


 **0115 9623 237**

 info@equation.org.uk

 equation.org.uk

BWP – based in Eastwood, BWP offer services across the Borough

Help people living in the Borough of Broxtowe (Beeston) who are experiencing domestic abuse.

 **07914634190**
(Text phone)

Confidential phonelines 9am-5pm


 **0177 3719111**
(Domestic Abuse helpline)

 **01773 718555**
(General enquiries)

 enquiries@broxtowewp.org

Support in Derby/Derbyshire

The Elm foundation

 **08000 198 668** (available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week)

 theelmfoundation.org.uk

Derby Women's Centre

Offer support and guidance, signposting, counselling, legal advice and social activities and courses.

 derby-womenscentre.org.uk/what-we-do/domestic-violence-support

Support in Leicester/Leicestershire

United against violence and abuse (UAVA)


UAVA provides support for anyone who has been affected by Domestic Abuse and / or Sexual Violence living in Leicester, Leicestershire, or Rutland.

 **0808 80 200 28**

 uava.org.uk

National Support

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

 **0808 2000 247**
(24-hours a day)

Women's Aid

Support for women, girls, and children.

 womensaid.org.uk


Refuge

Support for women, girls, and children.

 refuge.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

For male victims of domestic abuse.

 **0808 8010 327**
(Mon–Fri 9am–8pm)

 mensadvice.org.uk

Mankind initiative

Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence across the UK as well as their friends, family, neighbours, work colleagues and employers.

 **01823 334244**

 mankind.org.uk

Galop (previously known as Broken Rainbow National Helpline)

Emotional and practical support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse.

 galop.org.uk

Karma Nirvana

Support for forced marriage and honour crimes.

 **0800 5999 247**
(Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

 karmanirvana.org.uk

You can also call 020 7008 0151 to speak to the GOV.UK Forced Marriage Unit.

 gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

NHS

Information about domestic abuse and support.

 nhs.uk/live-well/getting-help-for-domestic-violence

Bright Sky


Is a free NHS mobile app providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

The app is also available in Polish, Punjabi, and Urdu.

 england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/bright-sky/

The National Stalking Helpline provides guidance and information to anybody who is currently, or has previously been affected by harassment or stalking.

 suzyamlplugh.org/Pages/Category/national-stalking-helpline

 **0808 802 0300**
(Freephone)

Further resources for support

 gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help#get-help-and-support



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