

Domestic Abuse Awareness Month

October is most commonly known as 'spooky season' but it is also domestic abuse awareness month. The purpose of recognising this annually is to raise awareness about the signs of domestic abuse, how to report abuse and most importantly to encourage individuals to speak up.

Domestic abuse is a crime that is often hidden, with the victims too afraid to speak up and terrified of the consequences a report to the police will bring. Many individuals who report domestic abuse to the police, will often be met with more abuse which results in many victims withdrawing their original complaint. It is important to realise that domestic abuse is not always physical and is often financial and emotional, which is why the term domestic violence was replaced with domestic abuse. The Law recognises that emotional and financial abuse is just as damaging as physical abuse.

About Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of behaviour that is:

- Controlling
- Coercive
- Threatening
- Degrading
- Violent

In most cases domestic abuse is caused by a partner or ex-partner. It can also be caused by family members or carers.

Domestic abuse is widespread. It is important to know that domestic abuse can be experienced by adults and children of all genders.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Coercive control – a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence
- Physical and/or emotional abuse
- Physical or sexual violence and abuse
- Economic abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Online or digital abuse

Find more information about domestic abuse definitions in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/26/section/77).

Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour is when an abuser uses a range of behaviours and tactics to make a person subordinate and/or dependent.

It includes:

- Keeping them apart from friends, help and support
- Exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain
- Taking advantage of their money and things they have – stopping their independence, resistance and escape
- Controlling their everyday behaviour

Coercive Behaviour

Coercive behaviour is defined as an act or a pattern of acts used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim.

It includes:

- Assault
- Threats
- Humiliation
- Intimidation

Economic Abuse

Economic abuse means any behaviour that may affect a person's ability:

- To receive, use, or maintain money or other property
- Get goods or services

Get Support

If you think you are experiencing any type of abuse, it is important to remember that it is not your fault. If you are unsure but it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

You may feel alone and that no-one can help you. You are not alone, and support is available.

Speaking to someone about what you are going through can help you to feel less alone. They can support you in understanding your options.

Please refer to FHA Domestic Abuse Policy for various support links available for Victims of domestic abuse.

How to get help

Report domestic violence and abuse to the police:

- Phone 101
- In person at your local police station

Help in an emergency

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, phone 999 and ask for the police.

If it is not safe for you to speak you can use the Silent Solution system - call 999, and if you don't speak you will be diverted to an automated system. You can then press 55 to be transferred to the local police force.

Find out about your partner

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), or Clare's Law, is a way to find out if your partner has a history of domestic abuse and may pose a risk to you. [Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\) application.](#)

Find out where to get help if you, or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse.

[Report domestic abuse | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](http://www.police.uk)