

The following types of bruises are rarely accidental:

- bilateral bruising to the arms looking like a series of finger marks, indicating person has been shaken, grabbed or restrained
- Multiple bruises of different colours indicating that they were sustained over time

#### Material indicators

- A sudden change in an individual's financial situation; not having as much money as usual or being in debt
- Individual not having enough food

#### Behavioural indicators

- Injuries sustained which are unexplained, or explanations are implausible
- Family members provide different explanations of how injuries were sustained
- A history of similar injuries, or numerous or suspicious hospitalisations

#### Behavioural signs

- Individual becomes unusually quiet or withdrawn
- Individual is aggressive or angry which is out of character
- Individual looks unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual
- Sudden changes in individual's normal character
- Individual appears helpless, depressed or tearful
- Individual doesn't want to be left alone with a certain person
- Individual pretends to be cheerful when you can tell this is not the case
- Individual wears seasonally inappropriate clothing

#### Observing Children

It is important to also observe changes in the behaviour of children who either directly witness domestic violence incidents, or live in a household where domestic abuse occurs.

It is likely that children will display either overtly aggressive behaviour through play or may become withdrawn and insecure.

If you suspect children are at risk of harm from abuse, you must follow the Council's Safeguarding Children Policy

## Local Support

If your own personal safety is threatened, if someone you know is at risk of immediate harm, or in an emergency call 999 to contact the police.

For local help with issues of domestic abuse, information, resources and support contact one of the following organisations:

If you are a woman in Nottinghamshire experiencing domestic abuse call the local Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline provided by **Women's Aid Integrated Services** on 0808 800 0340 (free from landlines and most mobiles) or visit [www.wais.org.uk](http://www.wais.org.uk).

- Talk confidentially about your situation
- Talk about any form of abuse: emotional, physical, sexual or financial
- Find out what your options are and get practical support
- Help with planning to leave or finding emergency accommodation

If you are hearing impaired dial 18001 + helpline number for textphone, or 18002 + helpline number for a telephone call (instant language interpretation available).

**Broxtowe Women's Project's** outreach service is available for women living in North Broxtowe and Stapleford areas of Nottinghamshire. For support and information call 01773 719111 Text: 07914 634190 – both lines between 10am - 1pm: Mon – Fri or visit [www.broxtowewomensproject.org.uk](http://www.broxtowewomensproject.org.uk).

**Midlands Women's Aid** (South Broxtowe) provides an outreach service alongside refuge provision to provide a complete package of support to women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Call 0115 9257647 or visit [www.midlandswomensaid.org.uk](http://www.midlandswomensaid.org.uk).

If you are a man experiencing domestic abuse call Equation's domestic abuse service for men on 0115 960 5556 or visit [www.equation.org.uk](http://www.equation.org.uk).

- For men aged 18 or over living in Nottinghamshire County only
- Talk confidentially about your situation
- Find out what your options are
- Receive guidance and support

If you are worried about forced marriage call the **Forced Marriage Unit** on 0207 008 0151

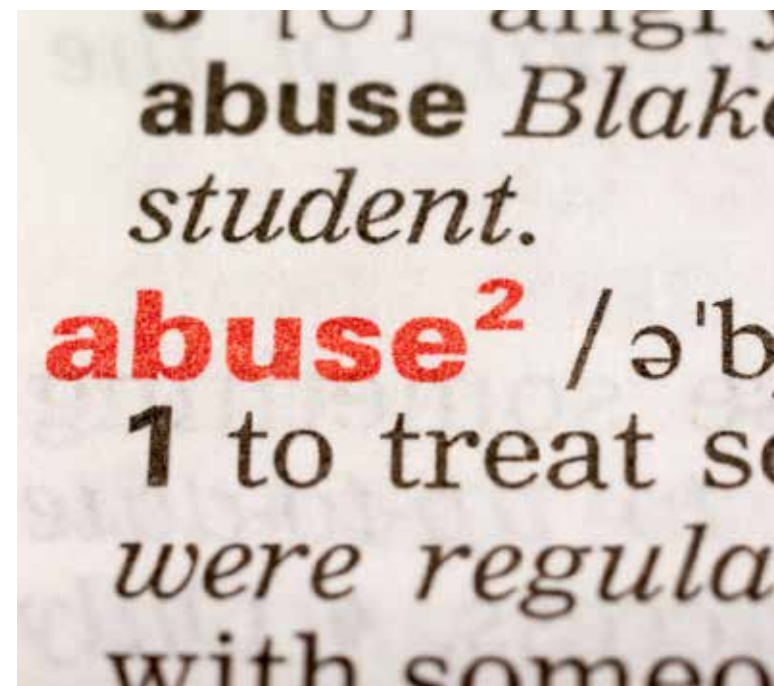
If you are worried about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) call the **NSPCC** on 0800 028 3550

If you are hurting your partner or being abusive call **Respect** on 0808 802 4040



# Domestic Violence & Abuse Awareness

An overview of domestic violence and abuse; what is meant by abuse, what the signs and indicators are and where to go for advice and support.



## What defines domestic abuse?

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

Domestic violence and abuse are terms which are often used interchangeably. It can include, but is not limited to, the following: psychological and/or emotional abuse, physical, sexual, financial, harassment, stalking, and coercive control.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 made amendments to the Protection from Harassment Act which made stalking a specific offence in England and Wales.

Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence) is also recognised in law and helps protect victims by outlawing sustained patterns of behaviour that stop short of serious physical violence, but amount to extreme psychological and emotional abuse.

Domestic violence doesn't discriminate: it can occur in every racial, socio-economic, ethnic, and religious groups.

## What we know

- Over time domestic abuse tends to become more frequent and more severe
- Domestic abuse used to be under-reported: in the past victims thought their treatment to be the norm. It is now a widely recognised crime
- Domestic abuse usually refers to violence between couples, but can also mean violence against other members of a household, such as children or elderly relatives
- It is believed that domestic abuse among same sex relationship couples occurs at roughly the same rate as that among heterosexual couples
- The term domestic abuse also includes behaviours which are known as 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage

## The scale of domestic violence

Domestic violence and abuse can have catastrophic outcomes.

### Female homicide

On average two women are killed every week by a current or former partner (Office of National Statistics, 2015). This represents around one-third of all female homicide victims.

### High risk

In 2011/2012, approximately 100,000 individuals were at high risk of serious harm or murder as a result of domestic abuse.

### How many suffer

In England and Wales it is known that 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence during their lifetimes and between 6 – 10% of women and 5% of men suffer abuse in a given year (Crime Survey of England and Wales, 2013/14).

### Male versus female incidents

7% of women and 5% of men reported domestic assault in 2010/2011. This is equivalent to approximately 1.2 million female and 800,000 male victims of domestic assault.

### Repeat victimisation

On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police.

### Children and domestic abuse

In 90% of domestic violence incidents in family households, children were in the same or the next room.

In 2012 alone, nearly 1 million children in the UK were exposed to domestic violence

### Violent incidents

In 2010/2011, domestic violence accounted for 18% of all violent incidents reported in England and Wales.

## Different types of abuse

Domestic violence is not just about physical abuse, but can encompass many different types of behaviours. These can include, but are not limited to, the following;

### Physical

- hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, biting, pushing
- misuse of medication such as over-medication
- poisoning
- scalding and burning

### Sexual

- rape and sexual assault
- any form of non-consensual or coerced sexual activity
- sexual exploitation

### Psychological

- threats of harm
- threats of abandonment
- harassment
- emotional abuse
- humiliation
- using physical size to intimidate

### Verbal

- isolation and withdrawal from services, support or social networks
- bullying
- threatening to kill or harm the individual or their children and family members

### Financial/Material

- using money to control the individual
- fraud
- exploitation; pressure applied in relation to wills, finances and property
- misappropriation of property, finances or state benefits
- rigidly controlling an individual's finances
- withholding money or credit cards
- making the person account for their spending
- withholding basic necessities such as food, clothes, sleep or medications

## Signs to look out for

Domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused or denied. This is especially true when the abuse is psychological, rather than physical.

The following indicators and examples of behaviour are not exhaustive and people may be subject to a number of abuse types at the same time. The first step to helping the individual is noticing and acknowledging the signs of an abusive relationship.

### Physical indicators

- sprains, dislocations, fractures, or broken bones
- burns from cigarettes, appliances, or hot water
- repeated injuries to the same parts of the body