



MEN'S ALLIANCE
NORTHERN IRELAND

Against Domestic Abuse

www.MensAllianceNi.co.uk

Handbook for Victims of Domestic Abuse

Are you a victim?

You will be believed
You will be supported

Produced by Men's Alliance NI
Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse

Red Warning Flags in a Relationship

Verbal – Are you subjected to shouting, name calling, use of language that demeans or frightens you?

Emotional Abuse – Is nothing you do ever good enough? Knowing however hard you try to please someone it's never going to make them happy. Are you questioned and accused?

Financial Abuse – Have you lost control of your own finances, access to bank accounts, wages and money?

Sexual Abuse – Are you forced into unwanted sex, or sexual acts? Is it used as a reward or punishment?

Coercive Control – Are you being controlled, blackmailed, bullied, isolated, threatened or pressured into doing something you don't want to do?

Violence – Have you been injured or hit, had things thrown at you or weapons used against you?

Isolation – Is it difficult for you to see your children, friends and family on a regular basis and maintain good relationships?

Control – Are you not allowed to decide what to wear, where to go, or do certain things without asking permission?

If the answer is yes to any of the above it is likely you are being abused. Please contact a specialist support organisation. Ask for help now!



Self Care

Let's face it, as men we sometimes find it difficult to ask for help, but there is no shame in putting self-care first. Please reach out when you need to. Isn't that what you would advise a friend to do?

Some practical steps include

Contacting your Doctor

If you are feeling low, not sleeping properly, have lost your appetite or are self-medicating, your doctor can help with advice, support and medication to lift your mood.

Connecting with a counselling agency

A Counsellor can support you with talking and other therapies. Remember, counsellors want to help and are on your side. Open up to them because nothing you say will either shock or be something they have never heard before.

Accessing Support Services

Contact one of the support services listed on the back cover. They can provide practical and emotional support in person, by phone, text or in online support groups.

Take care of yourself

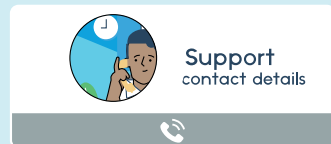
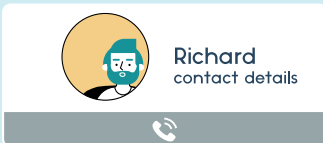
Eat properly and at regular times. Aim for eight hours sleep a night. Walking is proven to reduce stress. Research shows spending time in nature reduces blood pressure and improves wellbeing. A daily walk is good for your physical and mental health and worth half an hour out of your day.



What should I do if I intend to stay with my abuser:

If you are staying with your abuser you need to do what you can to protect yourself, remember the abuse is not your fault, there is help available where you will be believed and supported. Here is some advice to consider:

- Seek professional advice and support from local support and outreach organisations, domestic abuse services and helplines.
- Consider how agencies can make contact safely, e.g. through a work number or at a friend's address.
- Consider where you can quickly and easily use a telephone and try to establish safe people to contact – memorise a list of numbers for use in an emergency, such as friends, police or support organisations.
- If you are calling the police but it is too risky to speak the silent solutions system could help you alert them, dial 999, listen to the call handler and respond by coughing or tapping the handset. If prompted press 55, this lets the 999 call handler know it is a genuine emergency and you will be put through to the Police.
- Consider a signal (such as a codeword) with older children, family, neighbours, friends or colleagues which will alert them to call the police if help is needed.
- Think through escape routes in advance, avoiding rooms with no exit or rooms which may contain potential weapons (e.g. bathroom or kitchen) where possible.



- Try to put by some money for fares and other expenses.
- Seek and obtain medical help for any injuries ensuring that they are recorded and if possible photographed - these may be used at a later date to support court cases or rehousing applications.
- Consider changing online passwords regularly, especially for social networking accounts – this may not be appropriate where the perpetrator regularly accesses your accounts as part of coercive control as it may escalate risk.
- Avoid the use of satnavs and be aware that the perpetrator may monitor your movements by checking the satnav history if not deleted.



What should I do if I plan to leave my abuser:

If you are planning to leave your abuser it is your first step to a better life, remember the abuse is not your fault, there is help available where you will be believed and supported. Here is some advice to consider:

- Take care over whom to trust with any plans that you are making to leave.
- Avoid satnav use when travelling to a prospective new home or destination and always delete the history if you do – your abuser may check it to see where you have been and find out what you are planning.
- Consider whether or not a Civil Order such as a Non Molestation, Occupation or Restraining Order are viable options – seek legal advice.
- Make an extra set of keys for home and/or car and store them somewhere safe.

- Make up a bag with spare clothes, telephone numbers, keys, money and keep it safe so you can take it with you quickly, or keep it with a trusted friend.

Have the following available in case you have to leave quickly:

- Important papers such as birth certificates, social security cards, driving licence, divorce papers, lease or mortgage papers, passports, insurance information, school and medical records, welfare and immigration documents and court documents.
- Credit cards, bank account number online passwords, especially for banking and social media.
- Some money.
- Extra sets of keys – for car, house and work.
- Medications and prescriptions, including those for the children if they are leaving with you.
- Telephone numbers and addresses for family, friends, doctors, lawyers and community agencies.
- Clothing and comfort items for you and the children.
- Photographs and other items of sentimental value such as jewellery.
- Avoid making any unusual changes to routine which may alert your abuser that something is going on.

What should I do after I leave my abuser:

After you have left your abuser remember it is not your fault and that things will improve. There is help available where you will be believed and supported. Here is some advice to consider in keeping yourself safe:

- Seek expert legal advice about contact with your child. This could mean applying for a Court Order such as a Contact Order or Residence Order
- Change telephone numbers to ex-directory, screen calls and pre-programme emergency numbers into the telephone.





- Change all online passwords, especially for social networking accounts, and check privacy settings on social media sites so only friends can see your posts and maybe review your friends list too.
- Switch off your phone GPS and take your satnav with you or delete its history if you are leaving it behind.
- Change the locks and install a security system, smoke alarms and an outside lighting system.
- If there is a relevant injunction or other Court Protection Order in place notify neighbours, employers and schools and ask them to call the police immediately if they see the abuser nearby. Make sure that schools and others that care for your children know who has authorisation to collect them, ensuring it does not interfere with any child contact order.
- Employ safety measures before, during and after contact visits with children.
- Avoid banks, shops and other places frequented when you were living with the abuser.
- Make up a codeword for family, colleagues, teachers or friends, so that they know when to call the police for help.
- Keep copies of all relevant paperwork (including civil injunctions) and make written records of any further incidents as they may be vitally important at a later date.



POLICE
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The Police Service of Northern Ireland take reports of Domestic Abuse extremely seriously and officers are there to safeguard and support you. Domestic abuse can affect anyone, anywhere. It's important for you to know how you can reach out for help.

Who Can Help Me?

Police are here to protect, help and support anybody who is suffering domestic abuse. They will:

- Fully investigate any incident that has occurred and take action against the perpetrator, if there is sufficient evidence.
- Protect you and your children from immediate or further harm.
- Provide information in relation to criminal proceedings and police procedure.
- Provide information on local domestic abuse support agencies that can give emotional and practical assistance.

CALL 999

In an emergency where you need immediate assistance or feel threatened

CALL 101

In a non emergency but you need immediate assistance or advice

ONLINE

Quick and easy way to report non emergency incidents.

www.psnl.police.uk/makeareport

Silent Solution system

Calling '999' for help, but too afraid to speak?

The Silent Solution system could help you alert the police. Dial 999, listen to the call handler and respond by coughing or tapping the handset if you can. If prompted, press 55.

This lets the 999 call handler know it's a genuine emergency and you'll be put through to the police.

All Police Stations are designated Safe Places.

As a Safe Place Organisation the Police will:

- Support the Safe Place Campaign Pledge: never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence.
- Provide a safe place for victims of domestic violence to confidentially access information.
- Acknowledge domestic violence is a problem that impacts on all of us as a society, and will be prepared to play their part in supporting victims and state clearly to perpetrators that we will not tolerate abuse in our community.



Legal Support

You have a right to be protected from your abuser, which may include legal remedies such as a Non-Molestation or Protection Order, meaning that they cannot come near to or contact you. If they are not with you your children also have a right to see you, and you have a right to a family life.

When to Call

If you feel under threat, or child contact is difficult or being refused, speak to a Solicitor immediately.

What to Expect

Normally the first meeting will be free of charge where they will discuss your situation and what you are hoping to improve or address through legal action. Ask for an idea of costs, and if you qualify for Legal Aid which is a little more flexible if you are applying for a Non-Molestation Order.

Further information on Legal Aid can be seen at:

www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/legal-aid/members-public

Contact Details

Sometimes it is best to ask around for recommendations, or you can do so in the MANi Support Group. A list of Solicitors in your area is also available from the Law Society Website –

www.lawsoc-ni.org/solicitors





When to call

Are your children safe? Should you have any concerns please contact Social Services immediately.

Keeping Children Safe From Harm

A Gateway Team member will document what you tell them and assess if there is a need for a more in depth assessment for family support or because of child protection concerns. This will mean talking to you in more detail about your family situation and history. Any assessment will require them to speak to your ex-partner and your child(ren) (if appropriate).

We encourage full disclosure and being honest and open to any questions when seeking Social Services support.

Web - www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect

Keeping Adults Safe from Harm

Adults can also be harmed by abuse, exploitation or neglect. This can take a number of forms such as, physical, emotional, financial, sexual or institutional. Unfortunately, some adults are more at risk of harm than others and need help and support to protect themselves from others. If you are concerned or worried about an adult you know or about yourself the HSC Adult Protection Services will listen to your concerns and discuss with you the best course of action to support you to feel safer.

Contact Details

Gateway Team	Child Protection	Adult Protection
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	028 9050 7000	028 9504 1744
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	0300 100 0300	028 9250 1227
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	028 3741 5285	028 3756 4423
Western Health & Social Care Trust	028 7131 4090	028 7161 1366
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	0300 123 4333	028 9441 3659

Out of Hours number for all areas 028 95049999



Are you preparing to leave an abusive relationship, or have left already with nowhere to go?

When to call

Call immediately if you have nowhere to live, and especially if your children are with you.

What to expect

You will be referred to a Housing Advisor (during normal working hours) who will address your temporary accommodation requirements (pending investigation) by conducting a housing-solutions interview and homeless assessment. Let them know about your circumstances to help them prioritise your needs.

The Housing Executive provide an emergency out-of-hours service after 5pm, at the weekend and on bank holidays for those who have nowhere safe to stay and require emergency accommodation.

Contact Details

Telephone – 03448 920 908

Web – www.nihe.gov.uk/Housing-Help

You can also contact Housing Rights NI

Telephone – 028 9024 5640

Web – www.housingadviceni.org



Specialist Organisations to Help



Web

www.MensAllianceNI.co.uk



Support Group

www.Facebook.com/groups/manisupportgroupni



Email info@MensAllianceNI.co.uk



Telephone 028 7137 7777

Web www.man-ni.org

Email admin@man-ni.org



Telephone 0808 802 1414

Web www.dsahelpline.org

Email help@dsahelpline.org



Telephone 02890 243133

Web www.victimsupportni.com

Email belfast@victimsupportni.org.uk



Telephone 028 9024 3265

Web www.familymediationni.org.uk

Email enquiry@familymediationni.org.uk



Web www.assistni.org.uk

Twitter @assistni_

Email info@assistni.org.uk



Find a digital copy online at

www.MensAllianceNI.co.uk/Handbook

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