

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse. The abuse can be psychological, physical, social, financial, or emotional.

Domestic abuse can happen between two people who are or were intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

If you are in fear of a partner, ex-partner or member of your family, you might be experiencing domestic abuse. Do they often:

- call you names and make you feel bad about yourself?
- make you afraid by threatening you or your children?
- behave violently towards you?
- stop you seeing your friends or family?
- keep you without money?
- harm you or make you feel you could be seriously harmed?

If the answer to some of these questions is yes you might be experiencing domestic abuse.

Get help now

Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre

Established in 1974 to provide safety and support for women and children experiencing Domestic Abuse.

The Refuge has living accommodation for up to 23 bed spaces. They offer temporary accommodation in a safe and supportive refuge where women and their children can recover from the traumatic effects of domestic violence and make informed choices. They also offer a range of community services, courses and counselling to support women to rebuild their lives after abuse.

Domestic Abuse Outreach Service

Domestic Abuse Outreach Service (DAOS) for Suffolk, working with individuals and families irrespective of whether they are living together or apart.

The service comprises of four elements which can be tailored to individual's needs, subject to their circumstances:

- crisis support
- intensive support
- advice and guidance
- specialist male victim support

Qualified staff will work alongside you and help you to access other organisations to make sure that you are safe and you get the support that you need. Services provided include emotional and practical support and will support your children if involved. Where legal matters are concerned, you will be supported to ensure the correct

professionals provide the appropriate help. Call Freephone support and guidance line: 0800 977 5690

You can contact the [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) on **0808 2000 247** if you're a woman experiencing domestic abuse. You can talk confidentially to someone about your situation and to find out what your options are.

If you are a man experiencing domestic abuse you can contact the [Men's Advice Line](#) on **0808 801 0327**.

If you are in a same-sex relationship you can call the [National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline](#) on **0800 999 5428**.

Call the [Samaritans](#) on **01284 750000** if you feel in despair and want someone to listen to you and provide emotional support.

Call the police on **999** if:

- your personal safety is threatened
- you are at risk of assault or injury
- in an emergency

Perpetrator programmes

Are you hurting the one you love?

Choose to stop.

Respect phone line **0808 802 4040**

Caring Dads (by referral only)

For parents of children aged 0 to 19 years.

17 week Intensive programme for men who have been perpetrators of domestic abuse. The programme raises awareness of the effects of this behaviour and supports fathers to build better relationships with their children and their children's mothers to enhance their safety and well-being.

parenting@suffolk.gov.uk

Leaving home immediately

If you feel you are at risk of harm there are alternatives you could explore such as the Sanctuary Scheme which can carry out safety works in your home such as changing locks, fire proof letter boxes and panic rooms. You can access this free service by calling Housing Options on 01284 763233. If however you think you need leave your home, try to arrange temporary housing from the council before you leave. Not everyone leaving home due to violence is entitled to emergency accommodation.

You could stay with friends or relatives while you think about what to do next.

If you're a woman leaving domestic abuse, try to find a place in a women's refuge The National Domestic Violence Helpline **0808 2000 247** can help you with this.

Take some essentials with you such as a change of clothes, toiletries and any medication you need to take regularly. Try to bring important items such as your passport, bank and credit cards and mobile phone.

Don't make a decision to give up your home permanently until you have spoken to an adviser and considered all your options.

Use [Shelter's directory](#) to find a Shelter advice centre or Citizens Advice in your area.

Get homelessness help from the council

You can apply to our Housing Options team as a homeless person if you can't stay in your home. The council has to give you advice about finding somewhere to live. Some people are entitled to emergency accommodation. If the council has a duty to find you somewhere to live you will be asked to provide details of your situation. You may be asked for supporting evidence, which could include details and dates of incidents. You can take a friend or an adviser with you for support.

Get advice immediately if the council says it won't help you because it believes it was reasonable for you to stay in your home. You could challenge its decision.

Contact Civil Legal Advice on <https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice> or **0345 345 4345** if you are entitled to legal aid.

Use [Shelter's directory](#) to find an adviser in your area.

Help from social services

Some people may be entitled to help from the council's social services department. Social services might be able to help if you:

- are elderly
- have children living with you
- are under the age of 18
- have left care (or are about to do so)
- are in poor health
- have a physical or learning disability

There are no rules about the kind of help social services have to provide.

Refuges for women

Women experiencing domestic abuse may be able to stay in a [women's refuge](#). Some refuges are specifically for women from certain backgrounds, such as Irish or Asian women. Staff at refuges can give you advice about your situation.

Contact the [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) on **0808 2000 247** for more information about refuges.

Refuges for men

If you are a man who has to leave home because of domestic abuse, you can make a homeless application to the council.

There is limited specialist housing for men experiencing domestic abuse. Contact a Shelter advice centre or Citizens Advice to check what help is available. Use [Shelter's directory](#) to find help in your area.

Help for children and young people

If you or someone else in your family is being hurt at home, you may not be sure what you can do about it. Domestic abuse is not your fault and you won't get into trouble for telling someone about it. The first thing is to tell someone else about what is happening to you. You can tell a teacher, a neighbour, a friend or a friend's parent.

You can call [Childline](#) on **0800 1111** for free. They won't tell anyone else you are calling unless you are in immediate danger. They can tell you about places where you can get help.

Get more help

If you need more help call the Shelter advice line on 0808 800 4444.

Confidentiality

The Housing Options Team confirms whatever you discuss with the service will always remain completely confidential.

Further help

Please contact the Housing Options Team on 01284 763233 or visit <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing>

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