

COVID-19/Coronavirus: Safety Advice for Survivors of Domestic Abuse

We know that COVID-19 will have serious impacts on the lives of women and children. 1.6 million women experienced domestic abuse last year, and self-isolation has the potential to aggravate pre-existing abusive behaviours by perpetrators.

While in lockdown or self-isolation, women and children are likely to be spending concentrated periods of time with perpetrators, potentially escalating the threat of domestic abuse and further restricting their freedom.

Domestic abuse isn't always physical – it's a pattern of controlling, threatening and coercive behaviour, which can also be emotional, economic, psychological or sexual. Abuse is a choice a perpetrator makes, and isolation is already used by many perpetrators as a tool of control.

In an emergency, always be ready to call 999 if you are in danger.

In the current climate, it is certainly more challenging for women suffering abuse. Lines of communication could be severely limited if women are unable to leave the home.

Try and keep a mobile phone with you at all times if possible. The police are a key service when in immediate danger. Do not be afraid to call 999 in an emergency.

Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge 0808 200 0247

National helplines, email, text and live chat support services, and local specialist services, are currently open for business as usual, although their delivery is likely to have to adapt over the coming weeks. 'If you are worried about a loved one, or about isolating with a perpetrator, please call **Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge 0808 200 0247**. To ensure your safety you can let us know how to contact you and what time to contact you.

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Online chat is available (if you cannot make a phone call)

- Women's Aid online live chat (if someone is not able to speak on the phone):
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 10:00am - 12:00pm
Live chat: <https://chat.womensaid.org.uk>
Or get help by email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Services in London

- If someone is based in London they can call Solace Women's Aid:
Solace Advice helpline: 0808 802 5565
Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm (and 6pm - 8pm on Tuesdays)
Email: advice@solacewomensaid.org

Services offered by domestic abuse helplines include:

- Safety planning around staying in the home, preparing to leave, or once you've left;
- Referrals to refuges or support to access other safe accommodation, such as hotels (and support to self-isolate in these settings);
- Referring you to a domestic violence advocate or caseworker to provide practical & emotional support;
- Advocacy for you around housing, benefits, employment, immigration, and finances;
- Support to access legal advice;
- Referrals to specialist caseworkers for marginalised groups;
- Linking you up with the best service for you and exploring your options;
- Listening and emotional support.

Other organisations who can help

Contact any of the following organisations to get help and advice about domestic abuse:

Galop (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people)

0800 999 5428

www.galop.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

0808 801 0327

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Rape Crisis (England and Wales)

0808 802 9999

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

0800 027 1234

sdafmh.org.uk

Scottish Women's Aid

0131 226 6606

www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 80 10 800

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>

Women's Aid Federation (Northern Ireland)

0800 917 1414

www.womensaidni.org