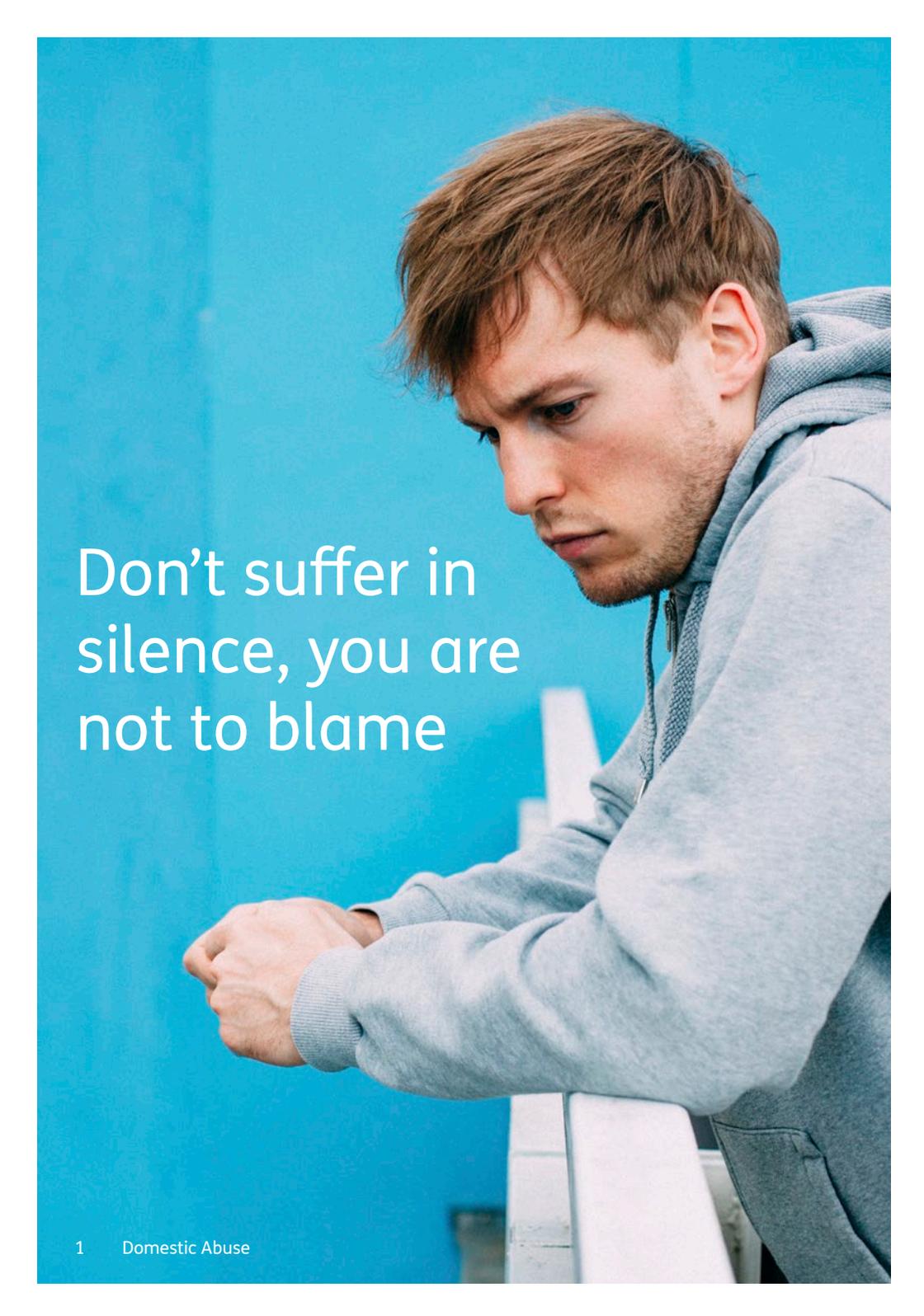




## Domestic Abuse

This guide explains how you can get advice, help and support if you are suffering from domestic abuse.



Don't suffer in  
silence, you are  
not to blame

# This guide explains how you can get advice, help and support if you are suffering from domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is an abuse of power, used by one person to control another with whom they often have a close relationship. It can affect all members of the community regardless of personal characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, transgender or religion. It also takes many forms and is not just about physical violence.

## What can you do for me?

As part of our service to you, we will:

- Treat all reports of domestic abuse seriously, in a sensitive manner and in confidence.
- Provide you with quality advice and support by trained staff. Where we can not help directly, we will signpost you to specialist agencies that can help.
- Where appropriate, take action against those who commit domestic abuse or support them to stop.
- Keep you updated regularly if we are supporting you or taking action.

## What types of domestic abuse exist?

### Physical abuse

This can range from a slap or shove to a black eye, cut lip, or broken bone. In the most extreme cases it can result in life threatening injuries or death.

### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is an attack on your personality rather than your body. Emotional abuse can be as harmful as physical abuse. It can lead to physical violence over time.

### Sexual abuse

You should not be forced or threatened into having sex or carrying out sexual acts if you are not comfortable with the situation.

### Financial abuse

There are many different forms of financial abuse. These could include: taking your money; stopping you from working; placing all the bills or debts in your name; or monitoring how you spend money and other financial resources. If you feel that someone close to you is limiting your financial independence, you are experiencing financial abuse.

**Whatever form of abuse you are suffering, in an emergency situation you should always dial 999.**

## Am I suffering from domestic abuse?

Here are some questions you might want to ask yourself if you are unsure if you are suffering from domestic abuse.

- Are you afraid of someone close to you?
- Do you feel isolated?
- Do they cut you off from family and friends?
- Are they jealous and possessive?
- Do they humiliate or insult you?
- Do they verbally abuse you?
- Do they say you are useless and couldn't cope without them?
- Have they threatened to hurt you or people close to you?
- Do they constantly criticise you?
- Do they have sudden changes of mood which dominate the household?
- Are they charming one minute and abusive the next?
- Do they control your money?
- Do you feel dominated and controlled?
- Do you change your behaviour to avoid triggering an attack?
- Are you unsure of your own judgement?
- Do they damage your possessions or smash up the furniture?
- Do they threaten to kill the pets?
- Do they threaten to kidnap or get custody of the children?
- Do they drive fast because they know it scares you?
- Do they lock you out of the house during an argument?
- Do they tell you what to wear or how to do your hair?
- Do they generally bully you?

## What can I do and where do I start in getting help and advice?

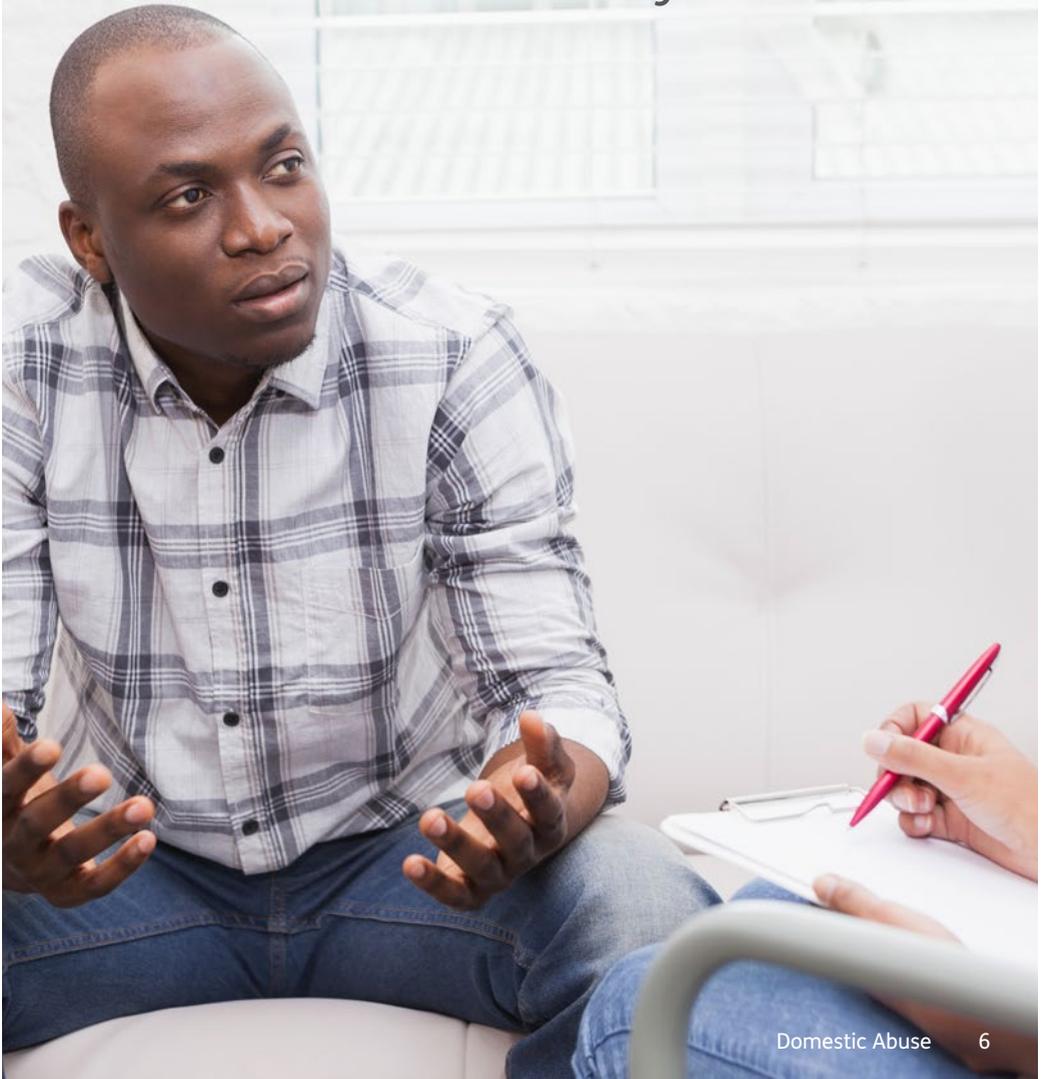
Firstly, remember that there is no excuse for any form of domestic abuse.

You are not to blame for the abuse and you are not alone.

**Don't suffer in silence.** If possible, talk to someone that you trust - maybe a friend or family member. If not, speak to us. Our staff are trained and will speak to you in confidence. Talk to your housing officer or call at our office.

If you are not a tenant of Bernicia, you can still contact the local authority and apply as homeless. They have a legal duty to help you. You could also call one of the specialist local or national domestic abuse agencies that are listed in this guide. It is important that you find out about some of the options that you have.

While it might not be easy for you right now, you do have options available to you.



## How can I keep myself (and my children) safe if I am still with my abuser?

- Be ready to call 999 if you or your children are in danger.
- Put some money and a set of keys in a safe place.
- Find out about your legal and housing rights, e.g. talk to a solicitor.
- Keep copies of important papers (passports, birth certificates, court orders, marriage certificate) in a safe place.
- Have a list of emergency numbers: police, relatives, friends, Refuge.
- Tell someone you trust about the abuse.
- Make calls from a phone box or a friend's house.
- Report any injuries to your GP so there is a record of the abuse.
- Talk to family / friends about staying with them in an emergency.
- Think about your escape routes.
- Do something you enjoy from time to time such as reading a book or magazine, walking in a park or listening to some music.
- Make a request under Clare's Law, also known as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, to the police which allows them to disclose to individuals details of their partners abusive pasts, allowing you to make an informed decision about your relationship and escape if necessary.

## I am planning to leave - what should I take?

- Identification and important papers (e.g. birth certificates, passports, benefit books, bank account details, medical cards, court orders, marriage certificate).
- Money.
- Phone numbers – emergency and personal.
- Spare set of house and car keys.
- Medicines and toiletries.
- Clothes for a few days.
- A few of the children's favourite toys.
- Proof of the abuse (e.g. notes, photos, crime reference numbers, diary, taped messages).
- If there is a residency or parental order in place, consult a solicitor before leaving, or as soon as possible afterwards. Leave a note saying you have left with the children, that they are safe, and that the solicitor will contact the non-resident parent in the near future. Keep a copy of the note.

Only pack these things if it is safe for you to do so

## I have already left my abuser but I still feel in danger. What can I do?

- Change the locks (including windows). Some local authorities can help with the cost of this.
- Ask the police for advice on making your home more secure.
- Think about escape routes.
- Tell school who can / can't pick up children.
- See a solicitor. They can help you with court orders to prevent further abuse and make you aware of your legal rights.

## Is there somewhere safe that I can stay?

If you have to leave your home quickly because it is not safe for you / your children to stay, there are places available in refuges or supported accommodation. These are commonly known as 'safe houses'.

- You can stay for one night in an emergency or crisis situation.
- You can stay for a few nights if you need to get away and get some space to think about the situation and the future.
- You can stay while you are taking any legal action.
- You can stay until you are re-housed / find longer term accommodation.

The address of such places are kept confidential and any visitors will only be allowed with your agreement. This is to ensure safety and protection for the residents staying there.

## How can I limit the affect the abuse is having on my children?

Children are often in the same or next room during domestic abuse. Even if you don't think so, your children are probably very aware of what is going on and they may even feel responsible.

By talking and listening to your children you can help them deal with what is going on. Abuse is a secret for them too and they may not even talk to those closest to them about their feelings or fears.

Children may feel insecure, frightened and confused.

They may have difficulty at school, become aggressive, have trouble sleeping or nightmares. Some become 'model' pupils because they have become anxious about 'conflict' or they may be worried about making things worse at home.

### You may want to:

- Talk openly with them and answer any questions they may have.
- Make sure they know the abuse is not their fault.
- Teach them abuse is not acceptable.
- Help them discuss their feelings. Listen to what they have to say and respond with respect and understanding.
- Avoid burdening them with adult responsibilities. As much as they may want to help, it is not their job to look after you.
- Encourage them to mix with other people. Contact with other people will make children feel less isolated.
- Help them to stay safe. Teach them to call 999 and speak to the police so they know how to get emergency help. But warn them that it is dangerous to intervene if you are being attacked. They are not responsible for protecting you.
- Teach them to reach out for help by doing so yourself. Show them that getting help is a positive step and that there is nothing to be ashamed of.
- Try to boost their self-esteem by letting them know you love them, praising them and encouraging their interests.



## Can the person abusing me change?

It's natural to hope the person abusing you will change, or the abuse will go away. It is possible for an abuser to stop abusing but please remember it's rare.

The first step for an abusive person is to face the truth and admit their behaviour is unacceptable. **They must stop blaming you** for what happens - or alcohol, drugs, stress or unemployment. These are not excuses. They must learn to respect you and they must recognise that being abusive is a choice.

Counselling of any kind will not work unless they accept the basic fact that their behaviour is about control. It is not the relationship that must change, but their behaviour.

There are perpetrator programmes for people who need help to change their behaviour.

## I am an abuser and I want to stop!

If you are reading this leaflet because you are abusing someone we understand it takes strength to admit what you are doing and confront your problems. If you really want to change then you can. You must accept responsibility and not blame drink, drugs, stress, employment or the person you are abusing. You can start by talking to your GP and counselling is available. Speak to us in confidence if you would like more information and support.

# What local support is available to me?

## Northumberland

### Cease24

Tel: **01665 606 881**

Support throughout Northumberland for women, men and children.

### Victim Support

First Floor  
Valuation Office Building  
Off Wagonway Road  
Alnwick  
Northumberland  
NE66 1QL

### Northumberland Women's Refuge

Tel: **01670 820 199**

## Newcastle

### Newcastle Women's Aid Refuge

Tel: **0191 265 2148**

Panah Refuge, Floating Support, Outreach Support for Black

### Minority Ethnic Women

Tel: **0191 284 6998**

PO Box 27  
Newcastle  
Tyne & Wear  
NE3 1EU  
North Tyneside  
North Tyneside Women's Aid

### Refuge and Floating Support

Tel: **0191 251 3305**

## South Tyneside

Places For People Refuge

Tel: **0191 454 8257**

## Sunderland

**Wearside Women in Need**

Male and Female Services, Refuges,

**Floating and Outreach  
Support Drop In**

Tel: **0191 416 3550**

Freephone: **0800 066 5555**

The Elms  
19 Front Street  
Concord  
Washington  
NE37 2BA

## Gateshead

Refuge & Floating Support

Tel: **0191 491 5700**

Aquila Way  
C4 Kingfisher House  
Kingsway North  
Team Valley Trading Estate  
Gateshead  
NE11 0JQ

**Gateshead Women's**

Service and Refuge

Tel: **0191 477 9309**

# What national support is available to women?

## National Domestic Violence Helpline

Tel: **0808 2000 247**

Web: [www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

A national domestic violence charity, Womens Aid **helps over 320,000 women** and children every year. Their helpline is run in partnership with Refuge and is available 24 hours a day.

## Refuge

Tel: **0808 2000 247**

Web: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

Refuge has fully trained female workers providing support and confidential advice **24 hours a day** to women experiencing domestic abuse.

## Rights Of Women

Tel: **020 7251 6577**

Web: [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

Rights Of Women is a voluntary organisation committed to informing and empowering women concerning their legal rights.

## What national support is available to women from multicultural backgrounds?

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Forced Marriage Unit

Tel: **0207 008 0151**

Web: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

Support forced marriage and repatriation issues.

### Muslim Community Helpline

Tel: **0208 904 8193**

Tel: **0208 908 6715**

Web: [www.muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk](http://www.muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk)

### Jewish Women's Aid Helpline

Tel: **0808 801 0500** (free from mobiles)

Web: [www.jwa.org.uk](http://www.jwa.org.uk)

### Chinese Information and Advice Centre

Tel: **020 7692 3697**

Web: [www.ciac.co.uk](http://www.ciac.co.uk)

### Black Association of Women Step Out

Tel: **02920 644 633**

Web: [www.bawso.org.uk](http://www.bawso.org.uk)

## What national support is available to men?

### Mens Advice Line

Tel: **0808 801 0327**

Web: [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

A national helpline for men suffering abuse from their partners.

### The Everyman Project

Tel: **0207 263 8884**

Web: [www.everymanproject.co.uk](http://www.everymanproject.co.uk)

Helping men to change their violent and abusive behaviour.

### Survivors UK

Tel: **0845 122 1201**

Web: [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

Counselling and support for men who have been raped or sexually abused.

## What national support is available for young people?

### Childline

Tel: **0800 1111**

Web: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

A free national helpline set up by the NSPCC for children and young people to talk about any problems they have.

### Asian Childline

Tel: **0800 096 7719**

### NSPCC

Tel: **0808 800 5000**

Web: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### Get Connected UK

Tel: **0808 808 4994**

Web: [www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)

Offers free confidential help and support for young people. It's free - they won't judge and they won't tell.

### The Muslim Youth Helpline

Tel: **0808 808 2008**

Web: [www.myh.org.uk](http://www.myh.org.uk)

A charity that offers free confidential help and support with cultural sensitivities for young people.

### The Hideout

Web: [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

A website with lots of information for young people living with violence or who have experienced violence in the past.

## What national support is available for gay, lesbian and bisexual and transgender people?

### The Broken Rainbow

Tel: **08452 60 44 60**

Web: [www.brokenrainbow.org.uk](http://www.brokenrainbow.org.uk)

Support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse. Staffed by people from the LGBT community.

### The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

Tel: **0845 330 30 30**

Web: [www.lgf.org.uk](http://www.lgf.org.uk)

A helpline to support people who have experienced abuse within a lesbian or gay relationship.

## What national support is available for older people suffering abuse?

### Action On Elder Abuse

Tel: **0808 808 8141**

Web: [www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

Works to protect and prevent the abuse of older vulnerable adults.

## What other national support is available?

### Samaritans

Tel: **0845 7909 090**

Web: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

### Asylum Aid

Tel: **0207 3549264**

Web: [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk)

### IHM Revenue & Customs

Tel: **0845 302 14798**

Web: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

### Rape Crisis

Web: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

Web: [www.truthaboutrape.co.uk](http://www.truthaboutrape.co.uk)

### Shelter

Tel: **0808 800 4444**

Web: [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

### Victim Support

Tel: **0845 3030 900**

Web: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

### Crimestoppers

Tel: **0800 555 111**

Web: [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

### Refugee Council

Tel: **0207 7346 6700**

Web: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

### Immigration Advisory Service

Tel: **0844 974 4000**

Web: [www.iasuk.org](http://www.iasuk.org)

Some helplines are 24 hours and others are open at certain times of the day so keep trying if you are calling. All details correct at time of printing and may be subject to change.

# Who to call?

Talk to someone you can trust...

You can tell a member of staff at Bernicia in person or by contacting us in any of the following ways:

Telephone us on:

**0344 800 3800**

Email: **info@bernicia.com**

Website: **www.bernicia.com**

In writing to:

**Bernicia**

**Oakwood Way**

**Ashwood Business Park**

**Ashington**

**Northumberland**

**NE63 0XF**

In an emergency...

If you are in immediate danger, you should contact emergency services by dialling **999**

Abusers must  
recognise that being  
abusive is a choice



All our publications can be made available on request in large print, braille, or audio and in other languages.

**Bernicia Group Ltd**

Oakwood Way  
Ashwood Business Park  
Ashington  
Northumberland  
NE63 0XF

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**T:** 0344 800 3800

**F:** 01670 819844

**E:** [info@bernicia.com](mailto:info@bernicia.com)

[www.bernicia.com](http://www.bernicia.com)

Information provided by the Bernicia Group:

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