



Domestic Abuse

This leaflet explains what Domestic Abuse is and what you can do about it.

We have also published other leaflets about adult safeguarding.

Who is at risk of Domestic Abuse?

Abuse is when someone does or says something which harms you or makes you upset and scared.

Domestic abuse is much more common than people think; one in four women and one in six men will experience it at some point in their lives.

It can happen to anyone, in all types of relationships, regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, class, disability, sexuality, lifestyle, nationality or age.

It is rarely a one-off occurrence, but usually a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour

What is Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can include the following types of abuse that we have also produced leaflets on:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or Emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse

It can also include:

- Controlling or coercive behaviour

Who could be a victim of Domestic Abuse?

Anyone aged 16 or over who is:

- A husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend or partner (including from relationships that have ended)
- A parent
- A child aged 16 or over (including adult children)
- Anyone else who is 'personally connected' with the person carrying out the abuse

- Abusive behaviour towards a person under 16 is child abuse rather than domestic abuse.

Controlling behaviour

This includes things to make a person subordinate and/or dependent on the person carrying out the abuse by isolating them from their family, friends and other sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour

Signs can include when a person:

- Is unable to make decisions, no matter how big or small without first checking with the person causing them harm
- Is criticised publicly or talk of being criticised and 'can do nothing right'
- Is not allowed to speak for very long on the telephone or meet with people
- Feels that being cared for or loved is "conditional". The person might say they are not good enough right now, but if they do something for then they will (or might) be

- Has lots of gifts, holidays, a new car or another treat. Creating a 'guilt' that because the person causing harm has provided this, then the survivor is beholden to them

The person carrying out the abuse may be jealous, snooping, spying or wanting constant disclosure of where someone is, what they are doing and why they are doing it.

Coercive behaviour

This can include an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim. Signs can include when a person is:

- Controlling who someone can speak to, monitoring them online and/or offline, creating drama when they want to go out preventing them from making their own choices about when they go out, preventing access to transport and limiting their time with others
- Making someone feel bad for wanting to make their own decisions, so making them feel guilty about wanting to wear something or go somewhere

- Taking over someone's relationships, or telling other people not to speak to them
- Undermining someone, putting them down, criticising them or their friends and family
- Gaslighting. This means distorting reality to manipulate someone to make them think that something they know is not true
- Threatening someone or their friends, family or pets
- Threatening or attempting suicide or self-harm if someone tries to leave or does not do a certain thing
- Creating rules to live by that just apply to the person they are abusing, and micro-management of their life
- Stalking – following someone, monitoring them online/offline, appearing in places they go to, watching them or using others to watch them

Who to contact if you are worried that about abuse or neglect:

Somerset County Council's Adult Social Care service has the lead for adult safeguarding for all adults with care and

support needs in Somerset, and works closely with other organisations including the police and NHS. If a crime has been committed you should always contact the police.

Adult Social Care:

- **Telephone: 0300 123 22 24** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturday and Sunday closed.)
- **Email: adults@somerset.gov.uk**

The phone number for Adults and Mental Health out of hours is **0300 123 23 27**

Police:

101 or in an emergency 999

Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service:

- **0800 69 49 999** (8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm Saturday and Sunday)
- **Email: ParagonSIDAS@theyoutrust.org.uk**
- **Website: www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk**

Further information:

Please use the following link to view other leaflets on our website: bit.ly/SSABLeaflets

