

Domestic Abuse Advice

HS03 Domestic Abuse Advice
Date Reviewed: September 2020

Introduction

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, in all kinds of relationships regardless of ethnicity, religion, culture, age, sexuality, disability or gender and can have serious consequences for individuals and families affected. If you are experiencing domestic abuse Hart District Council Housing Service will be able to offer help and support.

If you think you are in an abusive situation remember you are not alone. Every year around 1.4 million women (8.5% of the population) and 700,000 men (4.5% of the population) suffer some form of domestic abuse. One in four women, one in six men will be affected by domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. In addition, one in four same sex relationships will be abusive at some point.

It is important to remember that domestic abuse is about power and control, and responsibility for the violence and abuse lies entirely with the person committing these acts. It is important not to blame yourself. If you think you are experiencing domestic abuse there are 3 important steps you can take that will help you to change your situation:

- Recognise that it is happening to you
- Accept that you are not to blame
- Get help and support

This leaflet is designed to help you consider what action you can take, especially in relation to your housing situation. What is domestic abuse? Domestic abuse is defined by the government as “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

This can include but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological and emotional
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- verbal
- stalking and harassment

Controlling behaviour is “a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from 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.”

Coercive behaviour is “an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

This definition also includes ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

Where can I go to talk about my situation?

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service offers help and support services to victims and survivors of abuse, children living with domestic abuse, people who may be abusing and hurting someone and professionals seeking advice. This service can be contacted on 03300 165112

There are other organisations that you may also wish to contact for advice and support. We have listed some of these contacts at the end of this leaflet. These services can provide you with comprehensive and confidential advice so that you are better able to make an informed choice about what course of action is most appropriate to your circumstances. It is important to remember that the decision to take action and what action to take, is yours and no-one else should make it for you but getting help and advice can help you make informed decisions and provide practical and emotional support.

What help can I get to enable me to remain in my own home?

By taking action to protect yourself, you will also be taking steps towards ensuring that you are able to stay in your own home. Injunctions and security measures will help ensure your home becomes a safer place to be. There are also legal powers that can be used to let you return to your property if you have been forced out. These options apply whether you are a tenant of a Local Housing Authority or Registered Social Landlord such as a Housing Association, or if you own your own home or are renting in the private sector.

The Duty Engagement and Support Officer in the Hart District Council Housing Service will be able to offer advice and information about how to access the above remedies. The Housing Team will be able to make appropriate referrals to agencies that can offer support.

This includes Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service and Hampshire Making Safe Scheme, which will provide practical help in securing your home. You can speak to our Engagement and Support team whether you are a tenant, a homeowner or living with family or friends. You may also wish to discuss the options available to you with a solicitor.

Will the Council help me if I leave my home due to domestic violence?

If you are affected by domestic abuse and feel unsafe in your home, please do not hesitate to contact the Duty Engagement and Support Officer in the Hart District Council Housing Service. We will work with you in a sympathetic and confidential manner.

We will need to ask you questions about your circumstances to ensure you receive advice and assistance appropriate to your individual situation. The Council will not contact the perpetrator as part of our enquiries and you are not under any obligation to pursue any assistance you may be offered.

If you, or a member of your family, are affected by domestic abuse, the Council may have a duty to assist you under homelessness legislation. If the Council considers that you are eligible for assistance it may have a duty to ensure that temporary accommodation is made available to you, in a place where you are no longer at risk of violence. This accommodation could be out of the area to ensure your safety. Dependent upon your circumstances, family make-up, and where possible your preference, the accommodation you are offered may be a short term refuge placement. Hart Engagement and Support team is able to access refuge accommodation across Hampshire and we will work with other relevant services to ensure that you are placed appropriately to provide you with the best protection and support. You can approach any local authority in England and Wales for assistance if you are at risk in the area you are living.

The local authority to which you present may have a duty to ensure that alternative accommodation is available on a temporary basis, in a place where you and your household are not at risk.

I am in receipt of Housing Benefit/Universal Credit – If I leave my accommodation temporarily, how will I afford to pay rent elsewhere?

If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, you may be able to claim assistance with Housing costs on the property you move into, in addition to the accommodation to which you have fled if your intention is to return to your normal home at some point. For further advice regarding Housing Benefit entitlements, please contact Hart District Council's Housing Benefit Department on telephone number 01252 622122 option 1 or email hart.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk. If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, you will need to log into your Universal Credit account, update your changes and provide further details through your journal.

What can I do to protect myself?

Whatever your circumstances it is best to develop a safety plan to ensure that you keep yourself and any children safe. If you are thinking of leaving your partner it is important to get support and plan this carefully as this can often increase the level of abuse. There are a number of options available to help you make changes to your situation and provide protection.

These options include:

- Getting help and practical support to secure your own home and increase your personal safety
- Getting an injunction – this is a type of court order which can protect you (and any children you may have) against the person who is being abusive to you (known as the perpetrator).
- Using legal powers to remove the perpetrator from the property where they are not the tenant or co-owner of the property

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service can offer support and advice to help you develop a safety plan and increase the protection in your home. They will also help you explore your options for legal protection for yourself and your children.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau has access to the Law Society's 'Solicitors Regional Directory', which lists solicitors who specialise in matrimonial / family work. You may also be able to access this Directory at your local library or through the websites that are detailed at the end of this leaflet.

The National Centre for Domestic Violence provides free legal and injunction advice and can help you get injunctions in place within 24 hours if there has been a recent, violent incident or threat. Contact information for all of these organisations is given at the end of this leaflet.

"Our team can provide information, assistance and advice to help you protect yourself and plan the next steps to resolve a difficult situation"

What options are available to assist me to pursue alternative accommodation on a longer term basis where I will no longer be at risk?

Whether you have had to move to temporary accommodation or are able to safely remain in your own home, you may wish to consider what housing options are available to you in the longer term and the Engagement and Support team within the Housing Service will be able to assist you to explore your options.

If you are not already a secure, assured or introductory tenant of a local housing authority or registered provider, you may be entitled to join the Housing Register. If you are a secure, assured or introductory tenant of a local authority or registered provider you can also apply to the Housing Register for a transfer. For more information concerning these housing options please contact the Engagement and Support team within the Housing Service on telephone number 01252 774420 or apply online at www.harthomes.org.uk

You may also be eligible to apply to join waiting lists for accommodation in other areas, and we would recommend that you contact local housing authorities for the particular areas you may be interested in moving to directly, for further advice and assistance. We will be able to help you with this if you need assistance, and can help you find out more information about local qualifying criteria.

You may also wish to consider seeking alternative accommodation in the private rented sector. The Engagement and Support team will be able to offer advice and information about how you can access accommodation in the private sector.

You may also be interested in exploring the options available to you for affordable home ownership. The Engagement and Support team has information available on these options and can offer advice on the current schemes available. You can also find out more information through Help to Buy South, by visiting their website at www.helptobuysouth.co.uk

Organisation	Contact details
Police – in an emergency contact Police – non emergency	999 101
Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service An integrated service providing help and support to victims and survivors of abuse, children living with domestic abuse, people who may be abusing and hurting someone and professionals seeking advice. Services provided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop Domestic Abuse (support for victims, children and young people, and professionals) • The Hampston Trust (support for perpetrators) The YOU Trust Support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and children and young people	03300 165112 www.theyoutrust.org.uk www.stopdomesticabuse.uk www.hamptontrust.org.uk 01329 825930 www.theyoutrust.org.uk
Making Hampshire Safe Scheme Partnership scheme between You First Hampshire and Blue Lamp Trust to help secure your home	03300 165112
National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hours- women only)	0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
Women's Aid	0808 2000 247 www.womensaid.org.uk
Mankind Initiative Support for male victims of domestic abuse	01823 334244 www.mankind.org.uk
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327 www.mensadvice.org.uk

National LGBT Domestic Abuse helpline Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic abuse	0300 999 5428 www.galop.org.uk
National Centre for Domestic Violence This is a fast, free emergency injunction service which allows anyone to apply for an injunction within 24 hours if there has been a recent violent incident or threat of violence.	0800 970 2070 (Freephone) www.ncdv.org.uk 0844 8044 (24 hour emergency helpline) Text NCDV to 60777
Respect (help for offenders / practitioners advice)	0808 802 4040 www.respectphoneline.org.uk
Safer North Hampshire Local support services in North Hampshire	www.safernh.co.uk
Fleet and District Citizens Advice Bureau, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, GU51 4AE	03444 111306 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Farnborough Citizens Advice Bureau, Elles Hall, Meuden Avenue, Farnborough, GU14 7LE	03444 111306 www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Yateley and District Citizens Advice Bureau Royal Oak Close, Yateley, GU46 7UD	03444 111306 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Money Advice and Law Centres The website can help you find your nearest law centre.	www.lawcentres.org.uk
Ministry of Justice The website can help you find a legal adviser.	www.gov.uk/find-a-legal-adviser
Honour Network Helpline Advice for victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour based abuse.	0800 599 9247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk
Stalking Helpline	0808 802 0300 www.suzy.lamplugh.org
Action on Elder Abuse Confidential advice and information for older people who are suffering from violence and abuse.	0808 808 8141 www.elderabuse.org.uk

How can I contact the Engagement and Support team within the Housing Service at Hart District Council?

The Engagement and Support team within the Housing Service can be contacted as below:

- Telephoning our Engagement and Support Service on 01252 774420;
- Calling into the Civic Offices Monday to Thursday from 8.30am until 4.30pm and Friday 8.30am until 4.00pm
- Emailing housing@hart.gov.uk;
- In writing – address overleaf:

Useful leaflets

- 'Hart Homes – Information for applicants'
- 'Applying for a Home – How we assess your housing need'

All Housing Advice Leaflets are available via our website at www.hart.gov.uk

Contact Details:

Address: Hart District Council,
Harlington Way,
Fleet, Hampshire,
GU51 4AE

Tel: 01252 774420

Fax: 01252 626886

Email: housing@hart.gov.uk

Web: www.hart.gov.uk

Facebook: [/HartDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/HartDistrictCouncil)

Twitter: [@HartCouncil](https://twitter.com/HartCouncil)

Instagram: [@HartCouncil](https://www.instagram.com/HartCouncil)

All Housing Advice Leaflets are available via our
website at **www.hart.gov.uk/housing**