

Men's Advice Line



**Talk it  
over**

**Help and support  
for male victims of  
domestic violence  
and abuse**



# Men's Advice Line

## Help and support for male victims of domestic violence and abuse

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## Who we are, what we do

The Men's Advice Line is a confidential, freephone helpline for male victims of domestic violence and abuse.

The Men's Advice Line is managed by Respect, a registered UK charity (number 1141636). The Men's Advice Line is funded by the Home Office and the Scottish Government. We welcome calls from everywhere in the UK.

We know how difficult it is for men experiencing domestic violence to know who to approach for help, advice and support. You may feel that no-one will believe you and that no-one will take your fears seriously.

Our trained staff are here to listen and look at ways of helping you, which include:

- Providing you with emotional support
- Giving you time to talk through your experiences
- Providing you with relevant information and practical advice
- Signposting you to other specialist organisations such as: domestic violence units, mental health organisations, emotional support services, services for gay, bisexual and trans (GBT) men and organisations providing immigration, housing and legal advice, parenting advice and support, and assistance with child contact issues.
- We are not legally qualified so we cannot offer legal advice; also, we are not housing specialists but we can find legal advice centres and housing advice centres for you.

## How to contact us

The Men's Advice Line is a confidential and anonymous helpline. You can call us on freephone (free from landlines and most mobile phone networks – O2, Orange, T-Mobile, Three (3), Virgin and Vodafone):

**0808 801 0327**

**Monday – Friday 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm**

If you call outside of these hours please leave your name, telephone number and a convenient and safe time for us to call you back (we can only return calls during our opening hours and we aim to return calls within two working days').

You can also contact us by email:

**[info@mensadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadvice.org.uk)**

We aim to reply to emails within two working days or visit our website:

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

## Are you experiencing domestic violence?

Domestic violence takes place within an intimate relationship and forms a pattern of bullying and controlling behaviour. Domestic violence tends to get more severe and happen more often over time.

If you are being forced to alter your behaviour because you are concerned about or frightened of your partner's reaction, it is likely you are being abused.

Anyone can experience domestic violence – it can happen in all kinds of relationships, regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, geography and lifestyle. It is rarely a one-off event and it includes a variety of behaviours, as you can see on the next page.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Belittling, sulking, blaming you for the abuse, making you think you are crazy by denying the abuse, degrading you, isolating you from family and friends, minimising the abuse, making unreasonable demands for your attention, blaming you for all the arguments etc

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

Slapping, pushing, shoving, hitting, pinching, punching, grabbing, biting, kicking, using a weapon, burning, strangling, choking, throwing objects, holding down and ultimately, murder etc

## FINANCIAL ABUSE

Controlling all the finances, making you account for every penny you spend, making all the major financial decisions etc

## THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Threatening to hurt you, destroying objects that belong to you, threatening to kill you, standing over you, invading your personal space, threatening to kill themselves (and children), reading your emails, texts or mail, harassing you, following or stalking you etc

## SEXUAL ABUSE

Inappropriate and unwanted touching, unwanted sexual demands, hurting you during sex, pressurising you to have sex, sulking if they do not get sex, having unsafe sex, not informing you of any sexually transmitted infections, rape etc

## Domestic violence can damage the lives of all involved

- **Domestic violence is unacceptable and some forms of domestic violence are crimes**, eg criminal damage, common assault, harassment, actual bodily harm, grievous bodily harm, rape, murder.
- Domestic violence is very common. Statistics indicate that significant numbers of men experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. Male victims, like female victims, may live with domestic violence for years before they tell anyone or seek help.
- You have the right to live without fear of violence and abuse.
- The abuser is solely responsible for their abusive and violent behaviours, you are not to blame.
- Violence and abuse are choices that the abuser makes, it is not your fault.

### Myths about domestic violence towards men

**Myth: Domestic violence does not happen to men.**

**Reality: Domestic violence can happen to anyone.**

The Men's Advice Line has spoken to thousands of male victims of domestic violence and abuse. We have also spoken to many friends and relatives of men experiencing domestic violence, as well as professionals who called about male victims. Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

## **Myth: Men who experience abuse are weak or not 'real' men.**

### **Reality: It takes great strength and self-control to put up with long-term abuse without retaliating.**

Many first-time callers to the Men's Advice Line initially find it incredibly difficult to talk about their experience of domestic violence. Some feel that the very fact that they have suffered abuse somehow weakens them in their own or other people's eyes.

They fear the ridicule or disbelief of friends, colleagues and outside agencies, and worry they might fit the old stereotype of the 'hen-pecked' or bullied husband/partner.

They feel that they should be able to shrug off verbal, emotional, and sometimes physical violence from a partner, and that to talk about this or ask for help makes them less of a man. A 'real' man should be stoical, self-sufficient and able to cope in all situations.

The reality is that it takes great strength and self-control to put up with long-term abuse without retaliating when you are physically the stronger party. It takes strength to stay in a controlling unhappy relationship (sometimes for years), for the sake of your children, or because you still love your partner and hope that they might change. It takes more strength to admit that you are in an abusive relationship, and that you might need help from someone else.

## **Myth: The law only protects women who experience domestic violence but does nothing to help men.**

### **Reality: Men and women have the same rights to protection from domestic violence.**

You can find information about what to expect from the Police and how you can access legal advice in this booklet.

### **a. Call the Men's Advice Line**

Call the Men's Advice Line for confidential help, information, advice and support. Call freephone 0808 801 0327

### **b. Seek medical attention**

If you have been injured go to your doctor, an NHS Drop-In Centre or the Accident & Emergency department at your local hospital.

It may be that you are feeling depressed, stressed, ill, not eating properly or not sleeping and it would be a good idea to go and talk to your GP about your situation. Show any injuries to your doctor. Your doctor will be able to give you advice on your wellbeing and ensure that your health is taken care of. Any information you give to your doctor may help towards any future legal action that may be taken against your partner or ex-partner.

### **c. Think about your safety**

If you are experiencing domestic violence, you will need to consider reducing the risk to yourself from your partner or ex-partner. We recommend that you consider making a safety plan. This will help you to prepare in advance for times when you may be in danger or are being physically or verbally abused.

- Keep your mobile phone charged and with you at all times and your credit topped up
- Call 999 if you are afraid for your own (or your children's) safety
- Ask a friend, neighbour or relative to keep spare keys for your car (if you have one) and your home
- Keep your passport and copies of all your important documents in a safe place (eg with a friend or relative, or at work)
- Keep a record of dates and times of all incidents
- Report the violence, harassment and abuse to the police
- Tell a friend or family member about the violence
- Think about telling your employer about your situation

## .....A WORD OF CAUTION

Leaving a violent and abusive relationship is often an extremely dangerous time – abusers can feel that they have lost the power and control in the relationship. This sometimes results in their violence and abuse getting worse and could lead to you being at greater risk.

So if you decide to leave:

-  try to do so when your partner is not at home (unless your life is at risk)
-  make preparations with care
-  try not to involve any children in the preparations (in case they accidentally tell your partner)
-  if you are being prevented from leaving dial 999
-  ask a friend or relative to help you (only if it is safe to do so)
-  do not retaliate

### **d. Do not retaliate – it's not safe**

Always try to avoid retaliating as it might escalate things and someone might get seriously hurt.

Try to leave the situation when you recognise the signs and triggers from your partner and feel that they are about to become violent or abusive to you.

If you retaliate and the police are called it may be that they see you as the abuser and you could be arrested and charged, particularly if your partner has any injuries caused by your retaliation.

### **e. Call the Police**

Men who are victims of domestic violence sometimes feel that there is no point in calling the police or telling any one that they are being abused because they will not be believed, or people will think that they are 'weak' and 'not real men', if they disclose the violence and abuse they are experiencing from a partner.

- Report the violence to the police, you do not have to press charges if you do not want to but it may help with any future incidents and can help to build a case against the perpetrator, if you do decide to press charges at a later time. Please note that in some cases the police may decide to press charges without your consent.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICE FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN SCOTLAND**

The Police treat all incidents of domestic abuse as high priority. Their initial priority when domestic abuse is reported to them is the safety and well being of the victim, their family and any other person present. The Police will investigate all reports of domestic abuse and will rigorously pursue all lines of enquiry. The Police cannot use their discretion in regards to this therefore if you approach the Police and give your details and report any offence of domestic abuse they are obliged to follow this up and approach the alleged perpetrator and if there is evidence to charge him/her and to report to the Procurator fiscal. It is the Police that press charges not you.

This may not be what you want, however if you still want to speak to the Police in confidence for advice, you can do this in two ways:

- Firstly by phoning the local Domestic Abuse Unit and speaking with a Domestic Abuse Liaison Officer and not disclosing specific details such as your name, alleged perpetrator name, address etc
- Or by contacting a domestic abuse agency to ask about their remote reporting procedures, particularly if you want to report intelligence to police about an alleged perpetrator. You can remotely report to some police forces directly and anonymously via their website.
- You do not need to tell the police about alleged incidents in order to get housing support, legal aid, to get an interdict etc.
- Contact your local Community Safety Unit or Domestic Violence Unit (every police station should have one or be able to signpost you to the nearest one) and discuss the violence and abuse you are experiencing with a Domestic Violence Officer.

Some areas of the UK have Specialist Domestic Violence Courts that deal with domestic abuse and/or Independent Domestic Violence Advisors that can talk to you about your potential risk and give safety planning advice.

In Scotland, there are fewer specialist courts but there are some areas e.g. Glasgow where the service is similar to that in England and Wales.

If your area has an IDVA service the police should ask you if you want to be referred.

**Remember - if you are frightened  
or you are in danger call 999**

### **What you should expect from the Police when you report an incident of domestic violence:**

- Respond promptly to your call
- Speak to you and your partner separately
- Get a statement from you and any witnesses and thoroughly investigate what has happened
- Collect evidence, ie take photographs of any damage to property and injuries to you (or your children)
- Ensure that you (and your children) are safe ie arrest the perpetrator, escort him/her from the property or take you (and your children) to a safe place
- Give you information of services that can offer you support including the nearest Community Safety unit
- Give you a crime reference number and keep you informed of the progress of the case

### **f. Get legal advice**

Contact a solicitor or an organisation that can advise you on your legal rights.

The Men's Advice Line on 0808 801 0327 can give you information on how to access legal advice.

**Simple free law advisor online**

[www.sfla.co.uk/children.htm](http://www.sfla.co.uk/children.htm)

<p><b>Law Centres Federation</b> Free legal advice and representation to disadvantaged people. Searchable database of local centres.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.lawcentres.org.uk">www.lawcentres.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>CLS Direct</b> Free legal advice over the telephone for people on a low income in England and Wales. Advice about eligibility for legal aid.</p>	<p>Tel: 0845 345 4 345</p>
<p><b>Resolution</b> Umbrella organisation for family law solicitors in England and Wales. Useful website. Searchable database of 5000 members.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.resolution.org.uk">www.resolution.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Legal advice in Scotland</b> Scottish Association of Law Centres (SALC) Renfrewshire Law Centre 65-71 George Street Paisley PA1 2JY</p>	<p>Tel: 0141 561 7266</p>

## What the law can do for you

The information below has been reproduced with kind permission from the National Centre for Domestic Violence and it is relevant for people living in England or Wales. NCDV provide free, fast and efficient legal advice to all victims of domestic violence and they are available 24 hours a day on 0844 8044 999.

**You can take out an injunction.** What is an injunction? How do you go about taking out an injunction?

An injunction is an order made by a civil court (usually a County Court) that is used to protect a person at immediate risk of violence or threats of violence from a spouse, partner or other family member.

There are two main types of order that a court can make:

**Non-molestation order** - this prohibits a perpetrator from using or threatening to use violence, or intimidating, harassing, pestering or molesting the person applying for the order. This can also cover specific acts that put the applicant at risk of harm.

**Occupation order** - An occupation order is made to declare or regulate the applicant's and perpetrator's rights relating to a property that is or was intended to be the dwelling home. In most cases this will prohibit the perpetrator from staying at or returning to the family home.

**The non-molestation order and occupation order** are civil court orders that intend to secure future protection for the applicant (abused person).

It is important to note that an order is made at the discretion of the judge – there is no guarantee that an application will be successful.

It is also important to remember that, at least until an order is breached, power to initiate and pursue legal proceedings resides with the person being abused. An applicant (the abused person) may decide to discharge the injunction following a sustained period of personal security.

**Applications – On notice and without notice** An injunction application is made without notice when the court hears the initial application without the perpetrator being present. The law usually requires a recent use or threat to use violence to warrant this kind of unscheduled emergency application.

The court papers will then need to be served on the person whom the order is made against (perpetrator). An on-notice application is simply one heard with both parties present.

The National Centre for Domestic Violence offers free advice and assistance at court for victims of domestic violence – male and female. They can be contacted 24 hours a day on 0844 8044 999. [www.ncdv.org.uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk)

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE LAW FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN SCOTLAND

### **In Scotland you can take out an Interdict (sometimes with a power of arrest).**

What is an Interdict? How do you get one?

An Interdict is a court order that prevents your partner from carrying out certain actions and you should speak to a solicitor specialising in family law for specific advice. If your partner breaks the order, they can receive a fine or a prison sentence. The Interdict is made in a civil court by a Sheriff and only a solicitor can request this for you by preparing a legal document called an initial writ. Usually a power of arrest is attached to the Interdict, meaning the alleged perpetrator can be arrested by police officers if he/she is suspected of breaking the Interdict. If he/she breaks the interdict, he can be detained for two days by a criminal court to allow you to raise a Breach of Interdict action in the civil court.

If you have been living with your partner and you would like to exclude them from the dwelling home you can apply for an Exclusion Order; any married person, civil partner or cohabitee can do this. The Exclusion Order allows you to live in the dwelling home and will exclude your partner or ex-partner if they would normally have rights to live in the dwelling home i.e. they are joint tenants with you or you own the home together. You could apply for an Exclusion Order even if you are not the tenant or own the home; you will need advice from a solicitor who specialises in Family Law.

You may want to consider asking for an Interdict with a power of arrest and an Exclusion Order; you may need to pay for this fully or partly yourself, however you should ask for Legal Aid when you approach a solicitor.

### **You can take out a Non-Harassment Order**

What is a Non-Harassment Order? How do you get one?

If you get a Non-Harassment Order granted against your partner (or anyone else who is harassing you), this means that they are no longer allowed to carry out the action(s) specified in the order. If they do, they will be committing a criminal offence.

The behaviour you want to prevent must have taken place at least twice before you can raise an action for harassment. This may be behaviour which is not in itself unlawful or abusive, but which is making you feel distressed or afraid. For example, you may be able to take out a Non-Harassment Order to prevent your partner from phoning or texting you repeatedly, sending you letters or following you.

The burden of proof is stricter for a Non-Harassment Order as the consequences for breaking it can be up to five years in custody; your solicitor may advise you to seek an Interdict with a Power of Arrest.

## **g. Get housing advice**

Men experiencing domestic violence who call the Men's Advice Line tell us that they do not know what their housing rights are. It may be that you are not entitled to council accommodation or seen as 'homeless' if:

- you own the property
- you jointly own the property
- you rent the property together
- your name is not on the lease
- you both have tenancy of a council property

Your local housing authority will not necessarily have a duty to re-house you unless you are fleeing from domestic violence with your children, are over 60, or if you are seen as vulnerable due to a disability or mental health.

It may mean that you will need to look for private rental accommodation. If you are on a low income or benefits you may also be entitled to claim housing benefits. Some local housing authorities have rent deposit schemes and may be able to help you with the deposit on a property.

You can contact a housing advice organisation or your local housing authority for information on your housing rights, and/ or assistance with finding alternative accommodation. You do not want to be seen as 'intentionally homeless' by the local authority. It is important that you get good information and advice on your housing rights.

## Shelter

National helpline, very useful searchable database of local housing advice agencies, homeless person's units, local authorities by region.

Helpline: 0808 800 4444    <http://england.shelter.org.uk>

### INFORMATION ABOUT HOUSING FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN SCOTLAND

#### **What if I end up homeless and live in Scotland?**

At present there are no refuges for abused men in Scotland, but if you find yourself with nowhere to stay you should still contact your local council who will assess your needs and offer you advice and appropriate accommodation. You may want to approach the Shelter advice centre or Citizens Advice or call Shelter's free housing advice helpline on 0808 800 4444 to see what is available in your area.

You can also make a homeless application to your local council or a council in another area. Councils take domestic abuse situations very seriously, and your homelessness officer should never try to push you to return home if you are in danger there. Councils have 'tests' to decide whether you will be treated with priority, you can get more advice on these tests on <http://scotland.shelter.org.uk>

You can also access some support and advice from local advice centres on

<http://scotland.shelter.org.uk>

The helpline for Shelter is UK wide

## **Refuges for men (and their children)**

### **What is a refuge?**

A refuge is a safe, secure place for people who are fleeing from domestic violence. Refuges should only be used as a last resort when it is unsafe for you to stay under the same roof as your partner, or unsafe to stay in the same area as your partner and when you are in fear for your safety. Refuges offer basic living accommodation where you generally share all communal areas, including bathrooms and kitchens. It can be very difficult to access refuge space as there are only a handful of refuges for men fleeing domestic violence.

The Men's Advice Line on 0808 801 0327 can give you information about refuge space and arrange a referral.

## **Other organisations to contact for help**

### **Victim Support**

Independent charity which helps people cope with the effects of crime. They provide free and confidential support and information to help you deal with your experience. They offer a national helpline and network of local branches.

Helpline: 0845 30 30 900 [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

### **Samaritans**

Crisis support for anyone in emotional distress or thinking about suicide. Support by telephone, face-to-face at many branches, e-mail or letter.

Tel: 08457 90 90 90 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **MIND**

The leading mental health charity in England and Wales. National helpline and network of local branches:

Mind Infoline 0300 123 3393, email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk) ,  
website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **Help in Scotland**

#### **Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87**

Breathing Space is a free and confidential helpline service in Scotland for any individual who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to.

The Breathing Space helpline is open 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday - 6am Monday) and from 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday - Thursday). The telephone number is 0800 83 85 87 and the website <http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk/>

## How does domestic violence affect children?

We know that abusers and their partners will almost always not recognise that their children are being or have been affected by domestic violence. Children will almost certainly be aware of the violence and abuse and may witness it in many different forms.

They may for instance: see the violence, hear the violence, see the injuries after the violent incidents, see the broken furniture, smashed ornaments/crockery, smashed windows, holes in walls and doors. They may be coerced into taking part in the violence or abuse towards you.

Children can sometimes get caught in the 'crossfire' by going to help or protect you and this can result in the children being hurt or seriously injured.

Children witnessing domestic violence will be suffering from some form of emotional abuse and under new legislation may be considered at risk of 'significant harm'. If the police are called during or after an incident of domestic violence and the children were in the home the police should inform social services.

Some of the effects of domestic violence on children are:

- Not being able to sleep for fear of what might happen to them or fear of what might happen to you
- Having nightmares
- Taking responsibility for the abuse and blaming themselves
- Bed wetting
- Bullying or fighting
- Doing badly at school
- Playing truant
- Self-harming/taking drugs or alcohol
- Becoming withdrawn
- Always trying to anticipate the abuser's next move
- Living in constant fear of 'what might happen next'
- Being terrified

If you are concerned for the safety of your children you can contact social services and discuss your concerns with them. You can also get in touch with the NSPCC.

## **NSPCC**

Offer you confidential help, advice, guidance, support or take action on your behalf if you have concerns about a child who is either being abused or at risk of abuse.

Freephone 0808 800 5000, text 88858, 24 hours a day

They also offer a service in Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh'

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

You can also encourage your children to contact any of the following services:

## **ChildLine**

Free confidential helpline for children and young people in the UK.  
Freephone 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## **The Hideout**

Website to help children and young people understand domestic abuse

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

## Child contact disputes

If you are separated or divorced from your partner and there is a dispute over child contact, it may be that the family courts are involved.

Social Services or Cafcass (**Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service**), a statutory agency representing the interests of children involved in family proceedings, may also be involved.

The decision on residence and contact will be made by the Courts. Evidence of the domestic violence will be taken into account.

This can be a very lengthy process and will probably entail numerous risk assessments.

### INFORMATION ON CHILD CONTACT DISPUTES FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN SCOTLAND

If you live in Scotland and you are separated or divorced from your partner and there is a dispute over child contact, it may be that the civil courts become involved.

You or your ex-partner can ask the court to intervene in decisions about residency or contact disputes; you will have to approach a solicitor who is experienced in Family Law. If you or your ex-partner puts in a petition to the Sheriff Court you will need a solicitor and you may be entitled to legal aid, however you may have to make a financial contribution. This can be a lengthy process and if you can reach an agreement amicably with your (ex) partner it is best to do so.

Contact can be organised through Relationships Scotland, however supervised contact needs to be paid for privately or with legal aid. You can call Relationships Scotland on 0845 119 20 20 or visit their website: <http://www.relationships-scotland.org.uk/>

If social work or the Children's Hearing System is involved they may organise supervised child contact as part of a Child Protection Plan or Supervision; however this will only be in place if there are child care issues or issues about lack of parental care.

## **Useful numbers:**

### **Parentline**

Offer advice on all aspects of parenting, including contact following separation and divorce.

Helpline: 0808 800 2222    [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

### **Gingerbread**

Free information for lone parents on issues including: maintenance, tax credits, benefits, work, education, legal rights, childcare and holidays.

Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline: 0808 802 0925  
[www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)

### **Reunite**

Provide advice, information and support to parents, family members and guardians who have had a child abducted or who fear child abduction. They also have advice for parents who may have abducted their child as well as advising on international contact issues.

Helpline: 0116 2556 234    [www.reunite.org](http://www.reunite.org)

### **Family Rights Group**

A charity in England and Wales that advises, advocates and campaigns for families whose children are involved with, or require, social care services. Confidential telephone advice and support. Useful online information on parental responsibility and child protection procedures.

Helpline: 0808 801 0366    email: [advice@frg.org.uk](mailto:advice@frg.org.uk)  
[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

## Information for gay and bisexual men

Domestic violence happens in same-sex relationships too. Some surveys suggest there is domestic violence in 1 out of 4 same-sex relationships.

Gay and bi men who are experiencing domestic violence may decide not to seek help or support for a variety of reasons.

You may feel that:

- there is no point and that there is no help available to you
- no one will understand you or believe you
- you will be treated with contempt
- the violence is your fault and that you are to blame
- you hope that your partner will change because he said he is sorry and will never do it again

And you may stay in a relationship because you believe that:

- you will not be protected or entitled to legal protection
- abuse in same-sex relationships is 'normal'
- if you behave differently your partner will change
- your partner promises never to be violent again and you hope that 'this time' things will be different
- your partner promises to get help and says he will change

We know from research and experience that once someone starts to use violence and abuse, the abuse is likely to escalate and get worse. The abuser will sometimes make promises to change and stop the abuse. We know that sometimes even with the best intentions, abusers choose not to change their behaviour.

Calling the Men's Advice Line and talking through your situation and the violence you are living with may help you to begin to make some sense of your situation, enable you to look at your options, discuss your safety and find appropriate support systems (if available) in your area.

There are different ways men experience and are affected by domestic violence. On Page 4 of this booklet we have a list of examples of different types of abusive behaviours.

Some gay and bisexual men who have contacted the Men's Advice Line told us that their partners also used some of the following behaviours:

- Threatening to 'out' you
- Forcing you to say closeted if they aren't out themselves
- Threatening to harm themselves if you leave
- Threatening to disclose your HIV or sexually transmitted infection status
- Verbally abusing you about your HIV or sexually transmitted infection status
- Threatening to infect you (by not practising safe sex) if they have HIV or sexually transmitted infections
- Violating your boundaries, safe words and limits during sex
- Pressuring you into having sex with other men
- Pressuring you to take drugs or alcohol to 'get into the mood' for sex

## Services for gay and bisexual men

### National helplines

#### **Broken Rainbow**

National helpline - support for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) people experiencing domestic violence.

Helpline: 0300 999 5428    [www.broken-rainbow.org.uk](http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk)

#### **Survivors UK**

National organisation providing information, support and counselling for men who have been raped or sexually abused.

Helpline: 0845 122 1201    [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

### Further information

#### **Domestic Violence - A resource for gay and bisexual men**

Booklet for gay and bisexual men experiencing domestic violence. The booklet was funded by the Government Office for London and written by GLDVP (Greater London Domestic Violence Project) and Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Trust. You can download the booklet from our website:

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

## SERVICES FOR GAY/BI MEN IN SCOTLAND

### **Gay Men's Health**

Gay Men's Health is Scotland's charity for gay men. Their work involves and empowers gay and bisexual men to promote the health and well-being of all men who have sex with men. This includes men living with or affected by HIV. They offer a counselling service based in Lothians and Greater Glasgow. They have an office in Edinburgh – 0131 558 9444 and one in Glasgow – 0141 552 0112. They have a lot of information on their website: [www.gmh.org.uk](http://www.gmh.org.uk)

### **Lothian Gay and Lesbian Switchboard**

The Lothian Gay and Lesbian Switchboard is a help and support organisation, providing services to gay and lesbian people in Edinburgh and the Lothians, although these services are also available to people living throughout Scotland and abroad. Phone: 0131 556 8997.

### **Strathclyde Lesbian and Gay Switchboard**

Strathclyde Gay and Lesbian Switchboard is a support service for people in the West of Scotland experiencing problems relating to sexuality. The Switchboard offers a wide range of services to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and their families and friends. Phone: 0141 847 0447, the line is open every night of the year from 7pm until 10pm. All calls are confidential. [www.sgls.co.uk](http://www.sgls.co.uk)

## SERVICES IN THE GREATER LONDON AREA

### **Stonewall Housing**

Housing advice, advocacy and supported housing for LGBT people in London.

Advice number: 020 7359 5767

[www.stonewallhousing.org](http://www.stonewallhousing.org)

### **GALOP**

Helpline for LGBT people in the London area experiencing transphobic and homophobic hate crime. Free and confidential advice and assistance. Report a crime to the police. Advice about injunctions. Details of LGBT-friendly solicitors and police officers. Make a complaint against the police.

Tel: 0207 704 2040

[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

### **The Havens**

The Havens are specialist centres in London for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Anyone in London who has been raped or sexually assaulted can come to The Havens for assistance. [www.thehavens.co.uk](http://www.thehavens.co.uk)

### **If you think a man you know is experiencing domestic violence**

If you suspect or come to realise that a family member, friend or work colleague is experiencing domestic violence it may be difficult to know what to do. For parents and other close relatives it can be very upsetting to think that someone is hurting a person you love and your first instinct may be to protect your loved one and stop the abuse, but this isn't always possible. To intervene can be dangerous but to ignore it can be equally dangerous for the victim. If you witness an assault you can call the police on 999.

#### **What might an abused man be feeling and experiencing?**

- An abused man is often overwhelmed by fear, which can govern his every move – a fear of: further violence, the unknown, his safety and the safety of any children. Do not underestimate the effects of fear.
- Victims often believe that they are at fault and that by changing their behaviour the abuse will stop. Research shows that this is not the case
- He may experience a conflict of emotions. He may love his partner, but hate the violence and abuse. He may live in hope that his abuser's 'good side' will reappear. He may want to help his partner change.
- He may be dependent upon his partner, emotionally and financially.
- He may experience feelings of shame, guilt and embarrassment.
- He may feel resigned and hopeless and find it hard to make decisions about his future

#### **So what can you do to support him?**

- Talk to him and help him to open up. You may have to try several times before he will confide in you.
- Try to be direct and start by saying something like, 'I'm worried about you because .....' or 'I'm concerned about your safety...'

- Do not judge him.
- Listen to and believe what he tells you – often people do not believe a man when he first discloses abuse
- Reassure him that the abuse is not his fault and that you are there for him.
- Don't tell him to leave or criticise him for staying.
- Although you may want him to leave, he has to make that decision in his own time.
- Leaving an abusive relationship takes a great deal of strength and courage. An abused person often faces huge obstacles such as nowhere to go, no money and no-one to turn to for support.
- Leaving is often a very dangerous time when violence and abuse escalates – so careful planning is needed to offset these risks.
- Focus on supporting him and building his self- confidence.
- Acknowledge his strengths and frequently remind him that he is coping well with a challenging and stressful situation.
- An abused man is often very isolated and may not have much support – help him to develop or to keep up his outside contacts. This will help boost his self- esteem.
- If he has not spoken to anyone else, encourage him to seek help from a domestic violence agency that understands what he is going through and offers specialist counselling and support.
- Be patient. It takes time for an abused person to recognise they are being abused. Recognising that they are being abused is an important first step that only the abuser can make.

### **Helping a man and his children to keep safe**

- An abused man's safety and the safety of his children are paramount.
- Talk to him about how he and the children can keep safe.
- Help him to stay safe:
  - Agree a code word or action that is only known to you both so he can signal when he is in danger and cannot access help himself.
  - Don't make plans for him yourself, but encourage him to consider his safety more closely.

- Find out information about local services for him; offer to keep spare sets of keys or important documents, such as passports, benefit books in a safe place so that he can access them quickly in an emergency.
- Help him to keep the children safe. This may include discussing with him how to get help in an emergency, eg call the Police (using 999), go to a neighbour or someone he can trust, not intervening in the violence.

**Call the Men's Advice Line if you have any further questions or encourage him to call**

**0808 801 0327**

## Forced marriage and men

When we think of forced marriages most would think that this only happens to women – much like domestic violence. However, as with domestic violence, heterosexual men (and gay, bisexual and trans men) can also be victims of Forced Marriage. Some 15% of victims that are identified by the Forced Marriage Unit of the Foreign Office are men.

### **What is a forced marriage?**

A forced marriage is one where people are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure.

Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. It is, of course, very different from arranged marriage, where the consent of both parties is present. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time.

### **What can you do?**

If you fear you may be forced into marriage overseas, or know someone else who may be, there is help. Call the Forced Marriage Unit as soon as possible on 020 7008 0151 (or 0044 20 7008 0151 if you are overseas) .

## Resources

- Forced marriage protection orders

This leaflet describes how a Forced Marriage Protection Order could help you if you are being forced into, or are in, a forced marriage. It explains who can apply for an order, describes what you need to do and tells you what will happen once the court receives your application.

You can download the leaflet in the following languages: English, Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Punjabi and Urdu from our website:

[www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/male-victims-of-forced-marriage.html](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/male-victims-of-forced-marriage.html)

- Survivors' Handbook

Survivors' Handbook: If you have left a forced marriage and need help to re-build your life, you might want to read the Survivors Handbook. You can download it from the Men's Advice Line website:

<http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/male-victims-of-forced-marriage.html>

The Forced Marriage Unit have also recently produced a booklet aimed at members of the LGBT communities. This can be downloaded from:

[www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/forced-marriage-lgbt](http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/forced-marriage-lgbt)

- For posters, leaflets and DVDs about forced marriage please contact the Forced Marriage Unit by emailing them at:

[fmf@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmf@fco.gov.uk)

## What about the abuser?

We often get asked if there is any help for the abuser. People experiencing domestic violence hope that their abusive partner will change or that the problem will go away. However, we know that abusive people can only change if they accept responsibility for their behaviour, have a strong commitment to change and get specialist help. More information on this can be accessed on the Respect Phonenumber on

**freephone 0808 802 4040**

The Respect Phonenumber provides information and advice to abusive people looking for help to change their abusive behaviours and this can include signposting them to specialist, behaviour-changing programmes in their local area (where these exist). People experiencing domestic violence are welcome to call to find out what help is available for abusers.

Helpline workers on the Respect Phonenumber are trained and experienced in working with abusive people and will listen, support and talk through with them their abusive behaviours. They offer short-term solutions and will give the abusive people clear messages about being accountable and responsible for their abusive behaviours. They will also motivate them to get help and stop their violence and abuse.

**The Respect Phonenumber is on**

**freephone 0808 802 4040**

**(free from landlines and most mobile phone networks – O2, Orange, T-Mobile, Three (3), Virgin and Vodafone)**

**and is open Monday to Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm**

**[www.respectphonenumber.org.uk](http://www.respectphonenumber.org.uk)**





## Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327

Advice and support for men in  
abusive relationships

### Access for all

- **Telephone interpreting service available**

- **Text Relay**

The Helplines  
Association  
**Quality Standard**

The Men's Advice Line  
has been accredited by  
The Helplines Association

  
**Home Office**

  
**The Scottish  
Government**

The Men's Advice Line is funded by the  
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