

Spotting the signs: Increased risk of domestic violence through Covid-19

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is when a grown-up threatens, bullies or hurts another adult in the family. It might not always be obvious if what's happening at home is domestic abuse. But if somebody in your family uses bullying or violence to get another adult to do what they want, that's domestic abuse.

Why is there an increased risk of domestic violence through Covid-19?

As schools are closed and the government has advised that we only go out for essential purposes we are all spending more time at home with our families in a more confined space. Therefore, you and your families may be experiencing the following emotions in a more heightened state:

- Scared
- Worried
- Anxious
- Concerned
- Frustrated
- Angry
- Bored
- Lonely

What are the different types of domestic abuse?

- **Physical violence-** Like hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, hair-pulling.
- **Threats-** This includes threatening to hurt you, another person in your family, or a pet. Or threatening to stop money for food or bills.
- **Sexual violence-** Making another person do something sexual when they don't want to, or making someone watch sexual material on the internet or television.
- **Controlling someone's finances-** This includes not allowing somebody to spend their own money. Or not giving them money for basic things such as food, nappies for babies, or clothes.
- **Controlling someone's life-** This could include stopping someone from going to work or school.
- **Cultural or 'honour' violence-** This includes being hurt or abused as a punishment for something that's not seen as culturally acceptable by your community or family. It can include being forced to marry someone.

What can you do?

If you're being abused, witness any abuse or are made to feel unsafe at home, this can have a big effect on you. As schools are closed you might be worried about not getting support when you need it, or things getting worse.

Your safety and the safety of your family is the most important thing. We have included some useful advice and support below if required.

What support is available?

If you are feeling unsafe it is important to tell someone. You could try talking to an adult you trust, like someone in your family or a friend's parent or carer. You can also contact Childline or talk to your doctor if you're able to.

In an emergency, you should always call 999

- **Childline** is there to help anyone under the age of 19 with any issues they may have, no matter how big or small. They provide lots of information on a variety of topics including feelings and emotions
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- **Women's Aid** is a charity that is at the forefront of shaping and coordinating responses to domestic abuse. They offer support, advice and information
<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>
- **The Men's Advice Line** offer non-judgmental emotional support, practical advice and information
<https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>
- **Samaritans** are there, day or night, for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. They offer a listening and support service to anyone who needs it
<https://www.samaritans.org>

