COVID-19

Support for victims of domestic abuse

This guidance is correct at the time of publishing. However as it is subject to changes, please ensure that the information at time of issue is accurate and correct.
Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19) have seen people’s day to day lives drastically altered. These changes are essential to beat coronavirus and protect our NHS, Health Service, key workers and the wider Community.

The government acknowledges that the requirement order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. There is never an excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what the circumstances are.

For anyone who feels they are at risk of abuse, it is important to remember that there is help and support available to you, including police response, online support, helplines, refuges and other services. You are not alone.

The household isolation instruction as a result of coronavirus does not apply if you need to leave your home to escape domestic abuse.

Friends, family, neighbours and community members can be a vital lifeline to those living with domestic abuse. If you are worried that someone you know may be a victim of domestic abuse, reassure them that the police and support services are still there to help and direct them to sources of support.

Government works with a number of charities who can provide advice and guidance and in regular contact with the charity sector and the police to ensure that these support services remain open during this challenging time.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence. It can also include, but is not limited to:

- coercive control and ‘gaslighting’
- economic abuse
- online abuse
- verbal abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

What signs to look for

If you believe that you or someone else could be a victim of domestic abuse, there are signs you can look out for including:

- being withdrawn
- having bruises
- controlling finances
- not being allowed to leave the house
- monitoring technology use such as social media platforms
Where can you get help?

If you believe you are being abused, or worried you may commit Domestic Abuse, please use the following services which may help you.

If you suspect that your neighbours or those in your community are victims of domestic abuse, we encourage you to report it to the police.

Call 999

If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the Police - the Police will continue to respond to emergency calls.

If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, dial 999, listen to the questions from the operator and respond by coughing or tapping the handset if you can.

The Emergency Services Joint Control Room will pick up and record your call and help will be provided. Police will get to you, even if you can’t keep the line open. Police are able to respond to “dropped” 999 calls.

If you are not in an urgent situation, but would like some advice and/or support in relation to Domestic Abuse, current or historic, then you can contact:

Isle of Man Police

For non-urgent calls contact (01624) 631212

The Isle of Man Constabulary also have a dedicated Domestic Abuse Officer, who can be contacted on 631495.

If, however, you are in immediate danger, you should call 999 and ask for the Police. The Police will respond to emergency calls and reports of domestic abuse, at any time of the day or night.

For more details visit: https://iompolice.im/advice/domestic-abuse/

If you suspect abuse

Report the matter to the Adult Protection Team, telephone: (01624) 685969.

If you have an emergency after office hours and need to contact a social worker urgently:

In case of an adult ring Noble’s Hospital and ask for the on call social worker for adults, telephone: (01624) 650000

In the case of a child ring Douglas Police Station, telephone: (01624) 631212

Victim Support

Continues to offer support and advice during COVID-19 and can be contacted on 679950 or by email enquiries@victimsupport.im.

For more detail visit: http://www.victimsupport.im/domestic-abuse
**Women’s Refuge**
The Women’s Refuge is open and available to victims of domestic abuse, should they need somewhere to stay.

The Women’s Refuge can be accessed via the Police or Victim Support.

Follow their Facebook page at: [https://www.facebook.com/womensaidiom/](https://www.facebook.com/womensaidiom/)

Locally the Women’s Refuge has a plan in place to respond to COVID-19 – including short term accommodation for people who have fled abuse – subject to space being available. Women’s Refuge cannot accept self-referrals but they can take referrals from Police and other agencies such as the Department of Health and Social Care, Probation and Victim Support.

**Useful website links**

**Isle of Man**

Safeguarding and vulnerable women - during pregnancy

**Economic abuse**

If you are concerned about how COVID-19 may affect your finances and leave you vulnerable to economic abuse, please see the guidance on budgeting, available in the form of a free booklet and provided by the Isle of Man Government Debt Counselling Service. This can be found online at [www.gov.im/media/1359928/complete-debt-booklet.pdf](http://www.gov.im/media/1359928/complete-debt-booklet.pdf)

The Debt Counselling Service, run by the IOM Government’s Office of Fair Trading will remain open and provide a service during this lockdown period. You can contact the Debt Counselling Service by emailing [debt@gov.im](mailto:debt@gov.im), by calling (01624) 686500 or through their website [www.gov.im/oft/money](http://www.gov.im/oft/money)

The UK charity [Surviving Economic Abuse](https://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org.uk) has also provided additional guidance and support

Note: some of these UK links may not be available or apply to the Isle of Man.

**Welfare benefits and housing advice**

**Isle of Man Government benefits and financial support**

**COVID-19 Funding and support**

**Public Sector Housing Division**

**Housing matters**
[http://housingmatters.im](http://housingmatters.im)

Call **0808 1624 100** or **01624 675507**
Manx Citizens Advice Service (Douglas, Onchan, Ramsey and Southern branches)
https://www.citizensadvice.im/

Safeguarding

If you have any safeguarding concerns in relation to children please contact:
(01624) 686179 during office hours
(01624) 631212 out of office hours

Contact arrangements for children

Family mediation
https://www.courts.im/court-procedures/mediation/family-mediation/

UK Sites

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which you can call for free, and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which you can book a safe time for a call from the team.

Refuge
https://www.refuge.org.uk/

Refuge’s Website includes a range of resources on identifying the signs of domestic abuse, and a safety guide for women and children who are living with a perpetrator. It also features a tech abuse chat-bot with step-by-step instructional videos on how to secure devices such as phones and laptops. Look for the pink button in the bottom-right corner.

Women’s Aid

Women’s Aid has a range of direct services for survivors, including a live chat service and an online Survivors’ Forum. They have also developed additional advice specifically designed for the current coronavirus outbreak.

Men’s Advice Line
https://mensadviceline.org.uk/

The Men’s Advice Line is a confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and those supporting them.
Telephone: 0808 801 0327

Galop - for members of the LGBT+ community

Galop runs the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse specialist helpline.
Telephone: 0800 999 5428
Email: help@galop.org.uk
Hestia
https://www.hestia.org/domestic-abuse
Hestia provides a free mobile app, Bright Sky, https://www.hestia.org/brightsky
This mobile app provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

Chayn
https://chayn.co/
Chayn provides online help and resources in a number of languages, ranging from identifying manipulative situations and how friends can support those being abused. Their “get help” tab offers some helpful and thought provoking self-help options and guidance.

‘Honour’-based abuse
If you are suffering abuse from your family or community because they say that you have compromised their ‘honour’, or if they are trying to force you into marriage, you can get help. Karma Nirvana runs the national honour-based abuse helpline.

Telephone: 0800 5999 247
Email: support@karmanirvana.org.uk

Support for children and young people
Witnessing and experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious impact on a child’s long-term health. It is a top priority that vulnerable children and young people remain safe during this uncertain period. If you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm, you should refer this information to children’s social care or to the police if you believe the child is in immediate danger.

NSPCC
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/
The NSPCC has issued guidance for spotting and reporting the signs of abuse on their website.
The NSPCC Helpline Is available for anyone with concerns about a child to contact for professional advice and support.

Telephone: 0808 800 5000
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline
https://www.childline.org.uk/
Is available for children and young people to reach out for help and support by phone or using their online chat service. They also provide specific guidance for young people on how to get help and what to do if they are worried about a friend.

Telephone: 0800 1111
Barnardo’s  
https://www.barnardos.org.uk/domestic-abuse

Barnardo’s provides support to families affected by domestic abuse.

Family Lives  
https://www.familylives.org.uk/

Family Lives also provide support through online forums.

**Information on child contact arrangements**

Rights of Women  

Provides guidance about child contact arrangements relating to coronavirus.

**Support for employers**

If you are an employer, it is important that you signal to all your workforce that if they are facing domestic abuse you want to help them to get help. Keep in regular contact with employees you know, or fear, may be facing abuse and if you lose contact with them, take swift action to visit them. If you believe there is an immediate risk of harm to someone, or it is an emergency, you should always call 999.

Encourage employees to look out for others who may be facing domestic abuse and signpost them to support. Your staff may also be worried about their own abusive behaviour at this time. There is no excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what stresses you are under and support is available.

The **Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse** website has a range of resources to support employers. Business in the Community also have a **toolkit with information for employers**

**Support for professionals**

**SafeLives** is providing guidance and support to professionals and those working in the domestic abuse sector, as well as additional advice for those at risk.

**Support if you are worried about hurting someone**

If you are worried about hurting the ones you love while staying at home, call the **Respect Phoneline** for support and help to manage your behaviour. This is an anonymous and confidential helpline for men and women who are harming their partners and families. It takes calls from partners or ex-partners, friends, and relatives who are concerned about perpetrators.

Telephone: 0808 802 4040

**More information**

For more advice and guidance on domestic abuse, please see **Domestic abuse: how to get help.**
This document has been localised for Isle of Man use and adapted using wording taken from the Public Health England Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19) support for victims of domestic abuse