# Guidance Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for victims of domestic abuse

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.

The government acknowledges that the 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.

The government supports and funds several charities who can provide advice and guidance and we are 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 that 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- being withdrawn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 to get help

If you believe you are being abused, or worried you may commit domestic abuse, please use the services on this page.

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. Then follow the instructions depending on whether you are calling from a mobile or a landline.

### If you call from a mobile

If prompted, press 55 to Make Yourself Heard – this will transfer your call to the police.

Pressing 55 only works on mobiles and does not allow police to track your location.

### If you call 999 from a landline

If only background noise can be heard and BT operators cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, then you will be connected to a police call handler.

If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick up again.

When 999 calls are made from landlines, information about your location should be automatically available to the call handlers to help provide a response.

## National Domestic Abuse Helpline

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'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 developed additional advice specifically designed for the current coronavirus outbreak. You can also find your local domestic abuse service on their website. They also provide information on the support helplines available in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## Men's Advice Line

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

Hestia provides a free mobile app, Bright Sky, which provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

## Chayn

Chayn provides online help and resources in a number of

languages about identifying manipulative situations and how friends can support those being abused.

## Sexual assault referral centres

Sexual assault referral centres continue to provide non-judgmental advice and support services to victims and survivors of sexual assault or abuse.

Interviews, forensic examinations and sexual health and counselling services are offered in a comfortable environment where staff will ensure that victims and survivors will be managed safely to comply with coronavirus guidance. Please call your local sexual assault eferral centre to arrange care and support, which may be provided in person or remotely depending on your needs.

## ‘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

# BME specialist services

## Imkaan

Imkaan is a women’s organisation addressing violence against black and minority women and girls.

### Southall Black Sisters

Southall Black Sisters offer specialist support, advocacy and information to Asian and Afro-Caribbean women suffering abuse.

## Disability specialist services

These services are run by deaf and/or disabled people.

### Stay Safe East

Stay Safe East provides specialist and holistic advocacy and support services to disabled victims and survivors of abuse.

### SignHealth

SignHealth provides domestic abuse service support for deaf people in British Sign Language (BSL).

WhatsApp or Facetime: 07970 350366

Telephone: 020 3947 2601

Email: da@signhealth.org.uk

## Economic abuse

If you are concerned about how coronavirus may affect your finances and leave you vulnerable to economic abuse, please see the advice provided by HM Treasury on what support is on offer.

The charity Surviving Economic Abuse has also provided additional guidance and support.

## Welfare benefits and housing advice

The Department for Work and Pensions has published up-to-date coronavirus-related welfare benefits information.

If you are concerned about your financial situation, you can contact Turn2us. They help people to access the money available to them through welfare benefits and grants. Their website has an income-related benefits checker enabling you to check that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

Shelter provide free confidential housing information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues. They also have an emergency helpline.

# 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

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

Childline 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

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

## Family Lives

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.

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# Princess Diana – Legend of the month

> *"They say it is better to be poor and happy than rich and miserable, but how about a compromise like moderately rich and just moody?"*
>
> *–Princess Diana*

Born Diana Spencer on July 1, 1961, Princess Diana became Lady Diana Spencer after her father inherited the title of Earl Spencer in 1975. She married heir to the British throne, Prince Charles, on July 29, 1981. They had two sons and later divorced in 1996. Diana died in a car crash after trying to escape the paparazzi in Paris on the night of August 30, 1997.

# Aristocratic Upbringing

British royalty Princess Diana Spencer was born on July 1, 1961, near Sandringham, England. Diana, Princess of Wales, was one of the most adored members of the British royal family. She was the daughter of Edward John Spencer, Viscount Althorp, and Frances Ruth Burke Roche, Viscountess Althorp (later known as the Honorable Frances Shand Kydd). Her parents divorced when Diana was young, and her father won custody of her and her siblings. She was educated first at Riddlesworth Hall and then went to boarding school at West Heath School.

She became Lady Diana Spencer after her father inherited the title of Earl Spencer in 1975. Although she was known for her shyness growing up, she did show an interest in music and dancing. Diana also had a great fondness for children. After attending finishing school at the Institut Alpin Videmanette in Switzerland, she moved to London. She began working with children, eventually becoming a kindergarten teacher at the Young England School.

Diana was no stranger to the British royal family, having reportedly played with Prince Andrew and Prince Edward as a child while her family rented Park House, an estate owned by Queen Elizabeth II. In 1977, she became reacquainted with their older brother, Prince Charles, who was 13 years her senior.
As the heir to the British throne, Prince Charles was usually the subject of media attention and his courtship of Diana was no exception. The press and the public were fascinated by this

seemingly odd couple—the reserved, garden-loving prince and the shy young woman with an interest in fashion and popular culture. When the couple married on July 29, 1981, the ceremony was broadcast on television around the world, with millions of people tuning in to see what many considered to be the wedding of the century.

## Marriage and Divorce

On June 21, 1982, Diana and Charles had their first child: Prince William Arthur Philip Louis. He was joined by a brother, Prince Henry Charles Albert David—known widely as "Prince Harry"—more than two years later on September 15, 1984. Initially overwhelmed by her royal duties and the intense media coverage of nearly every aspect of her life, she began to develop and pursue her own interests. Diana served a strong supporter of many charities and worked to help the homeless, people living with HIV and AIDS and children in need.

Unfortunately, the fairy tale wedding of Princess Diana and Prince Charles did not lead to a happily-ever-after marriage. The two became estranged over the years, and there were reports of infidelities from both parties. During their union, Diana struggled with depression and bulimia. The couple's separation was announced in December 1992 by British Prime Minister John Major, who read a statement from the royal family to the House of Commons. The divorce was finalized in 1996.

## Death and Legacy

Even after the divorce, Diana maintained a high level of popularity. She devoted herself to her sons and to such charitable efforts as the battle against the use of land mines. Diana used her international celebrity to help raise

awareness about this issue. She also continued to experience the negative aspects of fame—her 1997 romance with Egyptian film producer and playboy Dodi Al-Fayed caused quite a stir and created a media frenzy. While visiting Paris, the couple was involved in a car crash after trying to escape from the paparazzi on the night of August 30, 1997.

Diana initially survived the crash, but later succumbed to her injuries at a Paris hospital a few hours later. Al-Fayed and the driver were also killed, and a bodyguard was seriously injured. French authorities investigated the crash and the driver was found to have a high level of alcohol in his system at the time of the accident. The role of the pursuing photographers in the tragedy was also scrutinized.

News of her sudden, senseless death shocked the world. Thousands turned out to pay tribute to the "people's princess" during her funeral procession. The funeral was held at Westminister Abbey, which was broadcast on television. Her body was later buried at her family's estate, Althorp.

In 2007, marking the tenth anniversary of her death, her sons, Princes William and Harry, honored their beloved mother with a special concert to be held on what would have been her 46th birthday. The proceeds of the event went to charities supported by Diana and her sons.

Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton also remembered Diana when naming their second child, Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana, who was born on May 2, 2015.

Continuing her charitable efforts is the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. Established after her death, the fund provides grants to numerous organizations and supports initiatives to provide care to the sick in Africa, help refugees, and stop the use of land mines.











