

DOMESTIC ABUSE

YOUNG PEOPLE & ADULTS



What is domestic abuse?

The UK government's definition of domestic abuse is: **"any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional."**

Domestic abuse is usually a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their partner or a family member. It is rarely a one-off incident. It occurs across all of society. It also includes so called 'honour'-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

A new criminal offence was introduced in 2015 which closed the gap in the law around patterns of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate family relationship (Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015). This offence criminalises patterns of coercive behaviour where they are perpetrated against a family member. The behaviour, when viewed in isolation, may appear innocuous, but the cumulative effect on a victim may be significant, causing damage and distress.



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 and can include:



- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour

'We receive calls from male victims of domestic abuse across all age ranges and professions'. mankind.org.uk, 2024

Adoption and Children Act 2002 section 120

Amended the definition of 'harm' in Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 to include **'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another'**. This makes witnessing domestic abuse a reason to take action to protect a child from harm. Applies to England and Wales.

Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme – Clare's law

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (known as 'Clare's Law') allows an individual to ask police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent past and enables an agency or an individual to ask the police to release information concerning an individual being at risk of domestic violence.

If an application is made under the scheme, Police and partner agencies will carry out checks and if they show that the partner has a record of abusive offences, or there is other information to indicate that there may be a risk from the partner, the Police will consider sharing this information.



Your Parish Safeguarding Officer is: