

Domestic Abuse: information and support

We believe that no one should live in fear of abuse from a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner, or from any other member of their household. We will, therefore, take the appropriate steps to assist anyone who is suffering from or threatened by domestic abuse.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve:

- emotional abuse
- the destruction of property
- isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support
- control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone
- stalking.

The definition used by Wiltshire Council is the same as the definition used by the government: "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality." Home Office, Domestic Violence: A National Report, March 2004.

Why it is important that we take action

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse. Although domestic abuse is more commonly carried out by men against female partners, it can also be carried out by women against men, and it can also occur in same sex relationships and between family members.

Some facts

Estimates suggest that one in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime

- One incident of domestic abuse is reported to the police every minute across England and Wales
- Abuse within the household was the fourth highest priority cause of homelessness in Wiltshire in 2009/10.

What you should do

We recognise that it can be difficult to talk about domestic abuse; however, it is important that you tell us what is happening. We will discuss the options that are available to you and provide you with information on support that can be provided by other organisations.

If you are a **Wiltshire Council tenant** you should contact your neighbourhood manager on **01722 434773**.

If you are not a Wiltshire Council tenant but would like advice about issues related to housing you should contact the Housing Options Team:

Chippenham on 01249 706666

Devizes on 01380 734734

Trowbridge on 01225 776655

Salisbury on 01722 434462

What we will do

We will provide information on advice and support available both within the council and externally and:

- Discuss the available options with you and take a victim-centred approach
- Offer an interview with an officer of the same sex
- Provide a confidential and sensitive service
- Establish if there are any special needs that should be taken into account, for example the need for an interpreter or a sign language translator
- Conduct interviews in private and if necessary in a place of safety.

Other sources of help

Local support services

<p>Splitz Support Service: offers a support service to victims of domestic abuse plus a men's community based perpetrator programme. All services are free, confidential and non-judgemental. Tel. 01225 777724. Web: www.splitz.org</p>	<p>Victim Support: provides free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, friends and anyone else affected. Services are independent of the police and courts and are available to everyone, whether or not the crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened. Tel: 01380 738888. Web: www.victimsupport.org.uk</p>
<p>New Swindon Sanctuary Sexual Assault Referral Centre: provides comprehensive, caring and compassionate services for those who have suffered rape or sexual assault. It is a one-stop service, free of charge for residents of Swindon and Wiltshire. Service includes pregnancy testing and medical treatment, counselling and follow-up care. Tel: 0808 1680024 (24hrs). Web: www.newswindonsanctuary.co.uk</p>	<p>Relate: provides relationship and family counselling to those who have experienced abuse in their relationship, and also through individual counselling supports children who have witnessed abuse. Tel: 0844 8261 788 (Mid Wiltshire, Tel: 01305 262 285 (Dorset and South Wilts), Web: www.Relate.org.uk or www.relatemidwiltshire.co.uk</p>
<p>Wiltshire Police, Tel: 0845 408 7000. Always call 999 in an emergency</p>	

National services

<p>Women's Aid: the main national charity working to end domestic abuse. It supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK. Tel: 0808 2000 247 (24hrs Freephone). Web: www.womensaid.org.uk</p>	<p>Refuge: provides a range of support services and a network of refuges across the county. Tel: 0808 2000 247 (24hrs freephone). Web: www.refuge.org.uk</p>
<p>Men's Advice Line: a confidential helpline offering support, advice and information to men experiencing domestic violence. Tel 80808 0327. Web: www.mensadvice.org.uk</p>	<p>National Centre for Domestic Violence Provides free, fast emergency service to survivors of domestic abuse. The service allows anyone to apply for an injunction within 24 hours of contact (in most circumstances). They work in partnership with the police, solicitors and other support agencies including Refuge and Women's Aid to help survivors obtain speedy protection. Tel: 0844 8044 999 (24hrs). Text for help text NCDV to 60777. Web: www.ncdv.org.uk</p>