

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse. The abuse can be psychological, physical, social, financial, emotional, or sexual.

Domestic abuse can happen between two people who are or were intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

If you are in fear of a partner, ex-partner or member of your family, you might be experiencing domestic abuse. Do they often...

- Call you names and make you feel bad about yourself?
- Make you afraid by threatening you or your children?
- Behave violently towards you?
- Stop you seeing your friends or family?
- Keep you without money?
- Harm you or make you feel you could be seriously harmed?

If the answer to some of these questions is yes you might be experiencing domestic abuse.

Get help now

You can contact Warwickshire Against Domestic Abuse at:

Free helpline: 0800 4081552

<http://www.talk2someone.org.uk/>

The domestic abuse support service provides support, advice and information for anyone concerned about domestic abuse. The service includes a helpline, support workers, sanctuary scheme and access to independent domestic violence advocates.

You can contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline on **0808 2000 247** if you're a woman experiencing domestic abuse. You can talk confidentially to someone about your situation and to find out what your options are.

If you are a man experiencing domestic abuse you can contact the Men's Advice Line on **0808 801 0327**. If you are in a same-sex relationship you can call the National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline on **0800 999 5428**.

Call the Samaritans on **08457 90 90 90** if you feel in despair and want someone to listen to you and provide emotional support.

Call the police on **999** if:

- your personal safety is threatened
- you are at risk of assault or injury
- in an emergency

Further information in relation to domestic abuse can be found on Warwickshire County Council website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/abuse>

You may wish to contact Refuge: <https://www.refuge.org.uk/> who can offer support for those experiencing abuse and information about available refuge spaces across the region.

Leaving home immediately

If you think you need to leave your home, try to arrange temporary accommodation before you leave. Contact the Councils Housing Advice Team for urgent advice in relation to the options. Not everyone leaving home due to violence is entitled to emergency accommodation from the Council, however if it is not reasonable for you to stay in your home and you are in “priority need” the Council may have to provide you with emergency accommodation. In the first instance this is likely to be bed and breakfast accommodation.

Alternatively you could stay with friends or relatives while you think about what to do next. If you're a woman leaving domestic abuse, you can try to find a place in a women's refuge. Warwickshire Against Domestic Abuse or Refuge can help you with this. Take some essentials with you such as a change of clothes, toiletries and any medication you need to take regularly. Try to bring important items such as your passport, bank and credit cards and mobile phone if it is safe to do so. Don't make a decision to give up your home permanently until you have spoken to a housing advisor and considered all your options.

You may wish to stay in your home if it is safe to do so, Warwickshire Against Domestic Abuse can offer advice on measures to take to protect you in your own home such as legal orders to prevent the perpetrator from coming near you or measures such as increasing security.

Homelessness assistance from the Council

You can apply to our Housing Advice Team as a homeless person if you can't stay in your home due to domestic abuse. The Council has to give you advice about finding somewhere to live. If you are eligible and you normally reside in the UK and you are either homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days the Council will have a duty to help you.

If you are threatened with homelessness the Council will have **a duty to help you to prevent your homelessness**. If you are actually homeless the Council will have **a duty to help you to relieve your homelessness**. People who are in “priority need” are also entitled to emergency accommodation. You can find out more information about priority need from the Housing Advice Team. If you are entitled to help from the Council you will be invited to complete a **Personalised Housing Plan** with a housing professional. This will outline the actions that both you and the Council need to take to resolve your housing situation.

If the Council has a duty to help you, you will be asked to provide details of your situation. You may be asked for supporting evidence, which could include details and dates of incidents, however if you are unable to provide these this does not mean the Council will not help you. You can take a friend, advocate or an advisor with you for support.

If the Council says it won't help you could challenge its decision.

You can contact Citizens Advice for independent advice:

www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk

Help from Social Care

Some people may be entitled to help from social care services in an emergency.

Social care might be able to help if you:

- are elderly
- have children living with you
- are under the age of 18
- have left care (or are about to do so)
- are in poor health
- have a physical or learning disability

You can find information about the Warwickshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub at:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mash>

Refuges for women

Women experiencing domestic abuse may be able to stay in a women's refuge.

Some refuges are specifically for women from certain backgrounds, such as Irish or Asian women. Staff at refuges can give you advice about your situation and offer support.

Contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline on **0808 2000 247** for more information about refuges. You can also contact the Housing Advice Team who can help you to find a refuge space.

Refuges for men

If you are a man who has to leave home because of domestic abuse, you can contact the Men's advice line: **0808 801 0327**. There is limited specialist housing for men experiencing domestic abuse but the advice line will be able to offer you advice and signpost you to services. You can also contact the Housing Advice Team for advice and to enquire about emergency accommodation.

Useful support services for single homeless people

Stratford Link project- Stratford Link Project runs on week day mornings 10am-1pm.

This service is a free drop-in centre where rough sleepers and vulnerable people who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness can get a hot drink, a snack and link in with support services. There are also shower, bathing and clothes washing facilities available.

The link is located at 14 Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6BA.

Stratford food bank

<https://stratforduponavon.foodbank.org.uk/>

You can obtain a food bank voucher by contacting Stratford-on-Avon District Council Housing Advice Team.

For information on housing related support and accommodation based services within Warwickshire contact the Housing Advice Team on the number below and see Warwickshire County Council Website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hrs>

Help for children and young people

If you or someone else in your family is being hurt at home, you may not be sure what you can do about it. Domestic abuse is not your fault and you won't get into trouble for telling someone about it.

The first thing is to tell someone else about what is happening to you. You can tell a teacher, a neighbour, a friend or a friend's parent.

You can call Childline on **0800 1111** for free. They won't tell anyone else you are calling unless you are in immediate danger. They can tell you about places where you can get help.

Confidentiality

The Housing Advice Team confirms whatever you discuss with the service will always remain completely confidential.

Stratford on Avon Housing Advice Team

The Council's Housing Advice Team can help you with either finding or keeping a safe and suitable home for you and your family. We have a team of housing advisors and homeless prevention coordinators who will work with you to explore all of your options.

Housing Advice Team

Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6HX

Phone: 01789 260861

Out of hours phone: 01789 267575

Email: housingadviceteam@stratford-dc.gov.uk