

# DOMESTIC ABUSE AWARENESS

**Say NO to  
domestic  
violence**

## What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse consists of categories of behaviour that includes,

- ✓ **Violent or threatening behaviour**
- ✓ **Coercive or controlling behaviour**
- ✓ **Psychological or emotional abuse**
- ✓ **Economic or financial abuse**
- ✓ **Physical and sexual abuse**

## Domestic Abuse Act 2021

**Four years after the domestic abuse bill was first promised in the Queen's Speech, it finally became law on 30th April 2021**

Women's Aid pays tribute to the many survivors, campaigners and domestic abuse organisations who have made this new law possible. Campaigning by survivors, activists and Women's Aid secured many vital changes to the Act – it now goes beyond criminal justice reforms alone, to cover the family courts, housing, and health



These are the key changes the new Act will deliver:

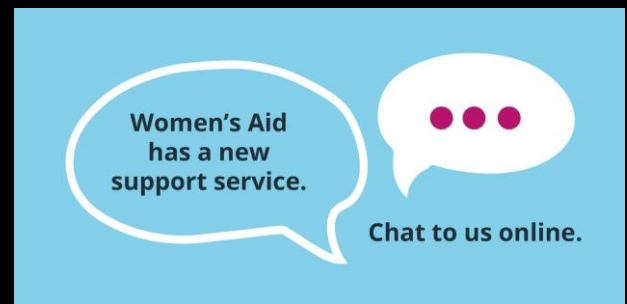
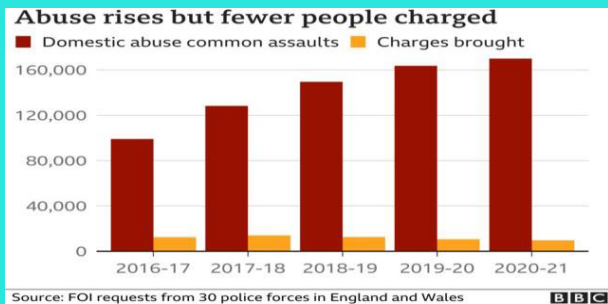
- ✓ A legal definition of domestic abuse which recognises children as victims in their own right;
- ✓ A Domestic Abuse Commissioner to stand up for survivors and life-saving domestic abuse services;
- ✓ A legal duty on councils to fund support for survivors in 'safe accommodation'
- ✓ New protections in the family and civil courts for survivors – including a ban on abusers from cross-examining their victims, and a guarantee that survivors can access special measures (including separate waiting rooms, entrances and exits and screens);
- ✓ New criminal offences – including post-separation coercive control, non-fatal strangulation, threats to disclose private sexual images;
- ✓ A ban on abusers using a defence of 'rough sex';
- ✓ A guarantee that all survivors will be in priority need for housing, and will keep a secure tenancy in social housing if they need to escape an abuser;
- ✓ A ban on GPs for charging for medical evidence of domestic abuse, including for legal aid;
- ✓ A duty on the government to issue a code of practice on how data is shared between the public services survivors report to (such as the police) and immigration enforcement.

Ref: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigning-and-influencing/campaign-with-us/domestic-abuse-bill/>

However, the new Act has significant gaps, and not all women will be protected by the new law. Despite the tireless campaigning of Southall Black Sisters, the Step Up Migrant Women campaign led by the Latin American Women's Rights Service and the End Violence Against Women Coalition, the government has failed to deliver equal protection and support for migrant women through the new law.

All survivors must have the right to seek support and safety, and live a life free from abuse. We will continue to campaign for the law to protect all women and children from domestic abuse, and provide safety from abusers regardless of immigration status.

Ref: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigning-and-influencing/campaign-with-us/domestic-abuse-bill/>



## If you need to talk to someone...

If you want to access support over the phone, you can call:

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247 – [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/) (run by Refuge)**

**The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327 (run by Respect)**

**The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994**

**National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428 (run by Galop)**

**Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123**

**Rights of Women advice lines, there are a range of services available**

Ref: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>

## The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people

**Domestic violence has a devastating impact on children and young people that can last into adulthood. Domestic abuse services offer specialist emotional and practical support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.**

- One in seven (14.2%) children and young people under the age of 18 will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood.
- 61.7% of women in refuge on the Day to Count 2017 had children (aged under 18) with them (Women's Aid, 2018 – data from Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017).
- Between January 2005 and August 2015 (inclusive) 19 children and two women were killed by perpetrators of domestic abuse in circumstances relating to child contact (formally or informally arranged) (Women's Aid, 2016). A Women's Aid review of SCRs published since August 2015 highlighted at least one more case falling into this category (Women's Aid, 2017).
- Research published by Cafcass in 2017, in partnership with Women's Aid, analysed a sample of 216 child contact cases that closed to Cafcass between April 2015 and March 2016. It found that more than two thirds of the cases in the sample involved allegations of domestic abuse, yet in 23% of these cases, unsupervised contact was ordered at the first hearing.

Ref: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/impact-on-children->