

## Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures

<b>Contact Name and Details</b>	Karen Allen, Safeguarding Caseworker Supervisor
<b>Action Required</b>	Approval of policy
<b>Resolutions</b>	16/1. The Council receives the report. 16/2. The Council appoints a scrutiny group as follows to undertake the detailed scrutiny of the Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures, and delegates authority to that group to approve the text on its behalf: Mrs Jill Baker (chair), the Revd Dr Andrew Fox, Mrs Heather Lovelady, with the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt as consultant.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	Domestic Abuse - This document will help the Methodist Church to highlight, understand and respond appropriately to incidents of domestic abuse. It will help to increase knowledge and understanding in this area, so victims feel able to come forward knowing they will be treated with compassion and dignity.
<b>Main Points</b>	Policy Statement Understanding Domestic Abuse Theological Understanding Responding appropriately to incidents of domestic abuse The Legal Context Contacts and Resources
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)</b>	This document will replace the 'Practice Guidelines To Support The Report <i>Domestic Abuse And The Methodist Church Taking Action</i> '. This document is dated 2010 and there have been many changes in practice and policy.
<b>Consultations</b>	Survivors, District Safeguarding Officers, the Connexional Safeguarding Team, Superintendent, Restored (a Christian domestic abuse charity), Women's Aid, the Safeguarding Committee

### Summary of Impact

<b>Faith and Order</b>	There has been consultation with the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee regarding the section 'Theological Understanding'.
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- 1.0 The introduction was written by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Methodist Church Safeguarding Committee who have endorsed the document. The objectives are clearly defined and advice is given to help readers utilise the document.
- 1.1 There is statistical information which helps to highlight how domestic abuse is a widespread problem throughout the whole of society which needs to be addressed. Data includes statistical information about children and young people and abuse within church settings.
- 1.2 To help the reader understand domestic abuse a model of domestic abuse is introduced which discusses the perpetrator in relation to the power and control they exercise. The model helps to explain the victim's perspective and how they can be caught in a cycle of abuse, which is difficult to escape. Information is presented to help readers identify whether a person may be a victim of domestic abuse.

- 2.0 The 'Theological Understanding' section explains how some theology may be misinterpreted to support a male being dominant over a female. It highlights how this is not acceptable or in keeping with teaching with the Bible.
- 2.1 There is a large section giving practical tips and advice on how to manage allegations and disclosures of domestic abuse, how to support the victim and deal with the perpetrator. Advice is also given to readers to help them to maintain their own safety and well-being.
- 2.2 There is a number of practical and useful charts that can be used as a quick reference guide to deal with both victims and perpetrators. Readers are strongly encouraged to seek advice and work with their District Safeguarding Officer. In addition, readers are discouraged from working with victims and perpetrators and to leave this to specialist agencies.
- 2.3 The document examines and offers suggestions about how the Methodist Church can tackle domestic abuse and ensure that victims feel able to make disclosures and have confidence they will receive a positive and compassionate response. There are also suggestions to help end the stigma around domestic abuse that victims often feel.
- 3.0 There is a Charter for Churches and a Model Policy for Churches/Circuits. Both set out simple and clear guidance for churches to adopt which will help to show the Methodist Church's determination and commitment in addressing domestic abuse.
- 3.1 There is a comprehensive section on the legislation in the jurisdiction of the Methodist Church in Britain. This will help people understand how the law can help to prevent domestic abuse and support its victims.
- 3.2 There is a number of support organisations and resources listed in the document. This will enable swift access to a wide range of support services.
- 4.0 The Council is asked to approve the Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures. To assist the Council in this work, it is proposed that it appoints a small scrutiny group to undertake the detailed scrutiny. The group will take account of any general comments made at the Council meeting, and have delegated authority to approve the Policy and Procedures on the Council's behalf.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**16/1. The Council receives the report.**

**16/2. The Council appoints a scrutiny group as follows to undertake the detailed scrutiny of the Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures, and delegates authority to that group to approve the text on its behalf: Mrs Jill Baker (chair), the Revd Dr Andrew Fox, Mrs Heather Lovelady, with the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt as consultant.**

# Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures



# **The Methodist Church: Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures**

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Updates to this document will be made on the Methodist Church in Britain website:  
[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) Please check this regularly.

February 2021

## Introduction

This introduction was written in November 2020, at the start of the UK's second 'lockdown' in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the first seven weeks of the initial lockdown, one call relating to domestic abuse was made to police every 30 seconds. This shocking statistic was revealed by the BBC's *Panorama* programme, in its joint investigation with Women's Aid. The programme highlighted the emotional and physical dangers that exist for people in situations where 'escaping' and seeking help are difficult.

Domestic abuse is widespread. It continues to affect people from all walks of life, including churchgoers and those with whom we come into contact through our activities.

In 2002, the Methodist Conference received the report *Domestic Violence and the Methodist Church – The Way Forward*. This was followed, in 2005, by the *Domestic Abuse* report which was received and commended by the Conference to all members and parts of the Church for study, prayer and action. The change of language (from 'violence' to 'abuse') recognised a wider definition of domestic abuse; one which is reflected in this policy and procedures. This document forms part of the Methodist Church's commitment to safeguarding, with its unequivocal determination to create "safer spaces for all".

The Policy and Procedures here are intended to help us understand the nature and complexity of domestic abuse. They also underline that there have been some serious misunderstandings about the nature of personal and family relationships, and outlines how these are linked to the theological themes of forgiveness, grace and the love of God.

The document seeks to answer more than "What to do if...?" It offers to help us:

- understand more about domestic abuse and its (often) lasting impact.
- consider how we respond when we encounter situations within and outside our church communities.
- think about how we relate to people in the context of Church, so that worship and fellowship are experienced as safe spaces. The Methodist Church "begins with the belief that God wants human beings to flourish and grow in loving relationship with one another and God."

We are very grateful to those who felt able to share their personal experiences, as well as to those who listened and have spoken out when necessary – not least in the Church. Our thanks to those who have produced this policy to make it accessible to every church within the Methodist Connexion. We commend it not only to be read but also to influence all our relationships, so that Methodists become known as people who will not tolerate abuse by anyone, anywhere.

**The Revd Henry Lewis and the Revd Anne Brown**

Chair and Deputy, Methodist Church Safeguarding Committee

## Objectives

The Methodist Church seeks to offer a safe place for all people in its worship and community life. This requires there to be clear boundaries safeguarding acceptable behaviour and that these are respected. Inappropriate or harmful behaviours and attitudes have to be addressed.

The objectives of the *Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures* are:

1. To raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse in districts, circuits and local church communities.
2. To increase awareness of, and access to, support services for victims of domestic abuse and, where appropriate, for perpetrators.
3. To help make churches places of safety.
4. To encourage collaborative working with other denominations and agencies.
5. To encourage training in the area of domestic abuse protection.

## Adopting the policy in different legislatures

Churches must follow the Methodist Church [Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_sept_2020.pdf) ([www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding\\_policy\\_procedures\\_and\\_guidance\\_for\\_the\\_methodist\\_church\\_sept\\_2020.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18740/safeguarding_policy_procedures_and_guidance_for_the_methodist_church_sept_2020.pdf)) of which these *Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures* are part. It is recommended that churches also adopt the Model Policy for a local church/circuit (Appendix 1). This enables churches to think through how the policy can be applied in their own context.

The *Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures* cover the Methodist Church in Britain, which includes England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Malta and Gibraltar. Legal arrangements and requirements vary in these areas. Please check with your District Safeguarding Officer for more detailed information about the differences in your legislature.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Domestic Abuse Working Group. To Mandy Marshall, co-founder of Restored (Now Director for Gender Justice at the Anglican Communion); the Revd Eleanor Hancock, coordinator of the Churches Together in Cumbria Domestic Abuse Steering Group; and Brec Seaton, Learning and Development Officer. With particular thanks to Restored for their expertise and professional input; Maureen Hudd, Chair of District Safeguarding Group for Southampton and Channel Islands' Districts, and all those who have contributed to the creation of the *Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures*.

## How to use this document

For procedures to follow when an allegation of domestic abuse is made, please see p. X-X, and p. X for the basic principles of good practice. For further information to support this process – how to respond to survivors and perpetrators – see p. X-X. You will find p. X-X helpful for understanding the nature of domestic abuse. Resources can be found at the end of the document. Other sections offer further depth.

# Domestic Abuse policy, definitions and statistics

## Policy statement

Domestic abuse should never be excusable or tolerated, and yet it remains a scourge in our society and in our Church. The Methodist Church holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable, inconsistent and incompatible with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living. The Church is committed to being a safe space for all. This means ensuring that the Church has an awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and knows how to respond appropriately and effectively. When they disclose abuse, victims can expect to be listened to, taken seriously and supported, and referred to local professional services when appropriate. Local churches can receive advice and support from their Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer and the District Safeguarding Officer.

This *Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures* document reflects changes in the law, namely the *Domestic Abuse Bill, England (2020)* and legislation in other jurisdictions. It also reflects the increasing number of tools available to local churches, victims and survivors. The terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ are used interchangeably, depending on the context, as are the terms ‘domestic abuse’ and ‘domestic violence’.

## Definitions

### **Domestic abuse**

According to the *Draft Statutory Guidance Framework*, Home Office, July 2020, domestic abuse is defined as the abusive behaviour of one person towards another, if the persons involved are 16 years of age or over and personally connected in some way. Behaviour is considered to be abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

It is important to note that domestic abuse does also occur in relationships between young people under 16 years of age.

Domestic abuse can include forced marriage and honour crimes. It may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently violent. Whatever its form, domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident; rather it is usually a pattern of incidents that build up in severity and frequency over time. The abuser seeks to hold power over the person and control them.

### **Coercive control**

This is a specific form of domestic abuse and can involve an act, or pattern of acts, of assault, threat, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim (Women’s Aid 2020). Coercive control is a criminal offence. The controlling behaviour is designed to make a person subordinate and dependent on the perpetrator. The victim can be isolated from the support of family and friends, may not have access to independent finances and may be reliant on the perpetrator for their everyday needs. The perpetrator works to regulate their victim’s behaviour. This can result in the victim having low self-esteem and low resilience, making it difficult for them to leave the relationship. Coercive and controlling behaviour makes it easier for

an abuser to hide their abuse behind closed doors. This may make it hard to identify, so clues and signs need to be recognised.

Domestic abuse results from unequal power within relationships and the control of one individual by another. This is rooted in a sense of entitlement and privilege, often reinforced by a patriarchal culture – which is found in society and in our churches. The abuse of power and control stem from choice but are underpinned by a belief that one person is superior to the other. In essence, the abuser is at the centre and the survivor is there to serve their needs, subjected to whatever abusive tactics work to achieve that. If we are to see an end to domestic abuse, this attitude has to be addressed. This will have implications for the theological beliefs of individuals and for the Church.

Domestic abuse occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, wealth or geography. It is important that the specific circumstances of the victim are taken into account. We should not assume, for instance, that the experience of someone with a disability or impairment would be the same as someone in a same sex relationship or from a different ethnic or cultural background. Each situation needs to be addressed with sensitivity.

We do know that women are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than men and less likely to leave an abusive relationship at an earlier stage. Children are also affected – they can be traumatised by what they have seen and heard, and there is a strong connection between domestic abuse and child abuse.

## Statistics

### Adults

- In the year ending March 2018, there were 2 million adults aged 16-59 in the UK who had experienced domestic abuse; 1.3 million women and 695,000 men (UK Gov 2019).
- According to the Crime Survey of England and Wales 2013, one-in-four women and one-in-six men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.
- Two women a week are murdered by their partner or former partner. (This statistic has seen little change in the last 10 years.)
- Between 2000 and 2018, there were 1,870 domestic murders in England and Wales. This compared with 126 terrorism-related murders. According to *The Guardian* in 2019, ‘Domestic violence kills 15 times as many as terrorism in Britain’.

There are important differences between male violence against women and female violence against men, namely the amount, severity and impact. Women experience higher rates of repeated victimisation and are much more likely to be seriously hurt or killed than male victims of domestic abuse (*Walby & Towers, 2017; Walby & Allen, 2004 and Office for National Statistics, 2019*). Further to this, women are more likely to experience higher levels of fear and are more likely to be subjected to coercive and controlling behaviours (*Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Hester, 2013; Myhill, 2015; Myhill, 2017*).

Intimate partner violence among lesbian and gay couples, and its incidence is comparable to or higher than that among heterosexual couples (*Turell, 2000*). Bisexual women are almost twice as likely to be abused as straight women. 80% of trans people had experienced emotional, sexual or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner (*National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2010*, released 2013)

### Children and domestic abuse



Research has shown that one-in-five children in the UK has experienced domestic violence by the age of 18 (Radford et al, *Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK Today*, 2011). More recent research shows that up to 692 children a day are assessed as being at risk of domestic violence in England, although this figure is thought to be a gross underestimate since many incidents do not gain the attention of statutory services. In addition, research has found that young people who lived through domestic violence between their parents at the age of three were likely to demonstrate higher than average antisocial behaviours at age 14. Furthermore, the research has shown that the coercive and controlling behaviours of perpetrators often prevent children from spending time with their other parent, grandparents, visiting their friends' houses and taking part in other activities (*Patch, Piecemeal and Precarious*, Action for Children, 2019). This study also concluded that children exposed to domestic abuse tend to develop more mental health problems and behavioural difficulties including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal tendencies.

### **Young people and domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse is not solely a problem in adult relationships. Young people experience domestic abuse too. The NSPCC found that 25 per cent of young women (aged over 13) experienced physical violence, and 72 per cent emotional abuse, in their relationships. In 2009, Action for Children found that 25 per cent of girls, and 18 per cent of boys, aged 13-17, reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner.

In 2015, the Crime Survey of England and Wales identified that 6.6 per cent of men, and 12.6 per cent of women, aged 16-19, had experienced domestic abuse in the past year. This was the highest rate of any age group and markedly higher than the second highest age group (20-24-year-olds). Although a young person, under 18, will find protection under the remit of safeguarding, there is a significant gap in support available for young people who experience domestic abuse.

There are other issues that can compound young people's experience of domestic abuse, such as problems at home, at school and with peer or family relationships. These can increase barriers to support. If young people are not experiencing healthy relationships at home, it is important that they can find these in school and other settings. Young people may not have been equipped to identify unhealthy and abusive behaviours in their own intimate partner relationships. Indeed, their model of a relationship may be one where domestic abuse is thought acceptable or at least tolerated. Children and young people need to be able to talk about their experiences so that they can recognise when a relationship is abusive and receive support just like their adult counterparts.

In September 2020, the Department for Education made relationship education compulsory in primary schools in England. The Department for Education also introduced compulsory relationships and sex education (RSE) into the curriculum of all secondary schools in England.

### **Domestic abuse and older people**

Older people can be particularly vulnerable to certain forms of domestic abuse, including abuse by a carer. Older people can face significant barriers to leaving abusive situations, especially if those abuses have taken place for many years, if the survivor has long-term health conditions or disabilities, or if they rely on their abuser for their care or money. If a carer is employed to provide care, they will be subject to additional adult-safeguarding procedures.

There are no reliable figures for the domestic abuse of people over 74 years. The number of older people experiencing domestic abuse is, therefore, currently unknown.

### **Abuse within church settings**

For some people, it is hard to think that domestic abuse is happening in our churches too. But with statistics of one-in-four women and one-in-six men, there can be no doubt that there will be domestic abuse taking place among both our congregations and our staff. Indeed, the Methodist Church's own survey, in 2002, found that one-in-four respondents had suffered domestic abuse. More recently, in 2018, Christian charity Restored, together with the University of Coventry, the University of Leicester and Churches Together in Cumbria, conducted research into experiences of domestic abuse among churchgoers across the region ([In Churches Too: Church Responses to Domestic Abuse – A case study of Cumbria: restored.contentfiles.net/media/resources/files/churches\\_web.pdf](https://restored.contentfiles.net/media/resources/files/churches_web.pdf)). This study found that one-in-four churchgoers reported experiencing abuse in their current relationship and, when previous relationships were taken into account, the figure rose to 42.2 per cent of churchgoers reporting experience of at least one abusive act. In these cases, 56.7 per cent involved Christian perpetrators and 90.8 per cent of the cases involved male perpetrators. Of the respondents, 71 per cent were aware of domestic abuse in their community, but only 37.6 per cent thought it was a problem in their church. Most concerning was that the research found that (at the time of the survey) six women in the sample reported living in fear of their lives.

Both these pieces of research strongly suggest that domestic abuse is happening and being perpetrated by both men and women within our churches. It is a serious issue and we need to recognise, tackle and respond to it appropriately and effectively, whenever it is seen or disclosed.

*“Churches need to encourage reality of life, that they are there as 'hospitals for the broken' and not 'palaces for the perfect'. A place where the broken and insecure can feel safe and find healing, filled with real people and not perfect/plastic people.”* Words of a female survivor from *In Churches Too*, Dr Kristin Aune and Dr Rebecca Barnes, 2018)

# Understanding Domestic Abuse

## Models for understanding abuse

### The Duluth Model

The Duluth Model outlines the varied aspects of domestic abuse, which is based on power and control. The model offers a method for communities to coordinate their responses to domestic abuse and its primary goal is to protect victims from ongoing abuse. It was developed from women's experiences of domestic abuse but is applicable to all genders.

The wheel shows the types of abuse that may be used to keep a survivor within the power and control of an abuser. The different tactics are not used in rotation, but are often switched between, depending on what works to maintain power and control over the victim. If the tactics do not work, physical and sexual violence is often used to maintain that same power and control. Again, this is not a linear process. Physical and sexual abuse can be used intermittently with other forms of abuse, depending on what achieves control of the victim.



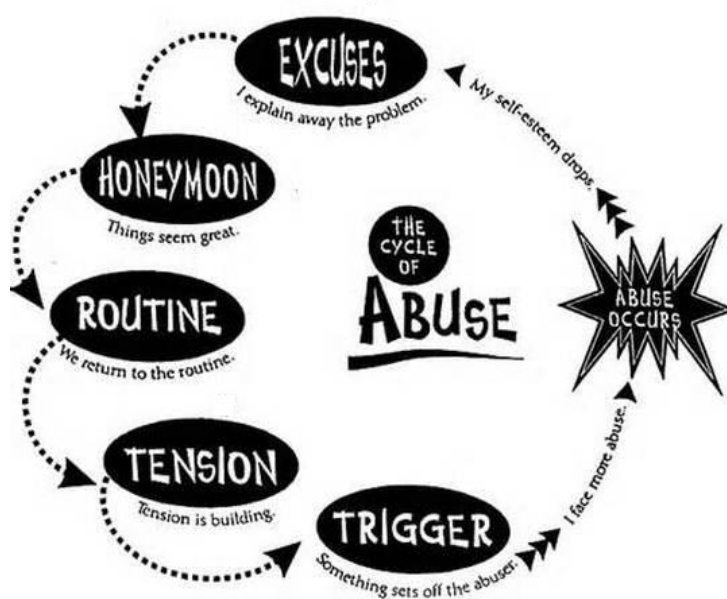
The Duluth Model

The model has different adaptations, including 'The Dominator' form, developed by Pat Craven in the Freedom Programme (1999), which takes the Duluth Model, humanises it and gives examples of the types of abuse and how they manifest themselves.

## The cycle of abuse

There is a general pattern of domestic abuse known as the ‘cycle of abuse’: In the calm period, everything is routine and seems reasonable. The abuser appears loving and at their best (often the person that is fallen in love with at the start of the relationship). After a time, tension builds and the victim tries hard not to do anything to annoy the perpetrator. “Sometimes the tension in the air is palpable” stated one Christian survivor of domestic abuse. At some point there is then a trigger, in which an action, words or even a look by the victim will trigger an abusive episode. It could be a very small thing, such as buying the ‘wrong’ shower gel or laughing at the ‘wrong’ moment in a TV programme. The trigger is the excuse for the abuse to occur. Finally, the abusive act occurs. (It is important to note that the time spent in the different stages can vary between couples – running over a matter of seconds or over months – and some stages of the cycle may be omitted.)

The type of abuse depends on what achieves power and control. It could be threats, shouting, manipulation, verbal abuse, intimidation, and/or physical violence (this is not an exhaustive list). Once the abuse has happened, the abuser can immediately regret that they have exposed who they really are, and sometimes the abuser does not like the fact that they appear to have lost control (although, in fact, they are very much in control). This leads to soft apologies, gifts and promises never to do it again. All of this is aimed at maintaining a relationship of power and control over the victim.



The cycle of abuse

## Warning signs of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is often unseen. It is perpetrated in multiple ways and may not be obvious or easily identifiable. Some victims try and hide the abuse they are suffering and protect their abuser because of fear and/or embarrassment. However, those who know the victim well are most likely to notice that something is wrong and are often best placed to do something to help. Warning signs of abuse taking place can include any of the following:

The victim is *never alone and is always accompanied by their partner*

The victim seems very isolated from friends and family

The victim does not have any friends or gradually withdraws

The victim stops attending church

The perpetrator may talk for or over the victim

The victim may look or act nervous or anxious in front of their partner

The victim may have bruises or injuries with no plausible explanation

The victim may justify the perpetrators' behaviour

The victim may be reluctant to give their home address and discourage visitors

The victim does not have access to money or other necessities

The perpetrator is always checking up on the victim

The victim becomes withdrawn, loses confidence, and changes their appearance

## Theological understanding

The Methodist Church's theological reflections begin with the belief that God wants human beings to flourish and grow in loving relationship with one another and with God. God does not intend people to perpetrate or suffer from domestic abuse and God works with us to end the damage and harm it does. Members of the Methodist Church are encouraged to reflect on how theological resources may be used for the sake of women and men caught up in domestic abuse.

## Misappropriation of Theology

The Methodist Church recognises that sometimes theology has been used as a tool to justify domestic abuse. This is an abhorrence and contrary to God's love and grace. Churches should be aware of the tactics that abusers use to justify their behaviour, and the ways in which theological thinking has been misappropriated.

Survivors have spoken of various aspects of theology that through distorted thinking have contributed to domestic abuse, especially the abuse of women. These include:

**Submission:** The idea that wives should submit to their husbands is often drawn from a narrow, literal interpretation of Ephesians 5:22 ("Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord"), without reference to the preceding verse (which speaks of being 'subject' to one another) or to the context in which the verse was written. This verse is part of other material in the New Testament, the 'household codes' (Ephesians 5:22-6:9, Colossians 3:18-4:1 and 1 Peter 3:1-7), which closely resemble codes for social behaviour from non-Christian philosophies of the period when these texts were written. The standards referred to were part of the culture in which the New Testament writers lived. It can be argued, however, that this material is used in the New Testament to enshrine a standard that demands a greater responsibility for care by the powerful in society than would have been demanded outside the Church. They can therefore be interpreted as requiring more of Christians in terms of love and respect, responsibility and care than is expected by wider. The idea of 'submission', in this context, is something that is freely chosen within mutual, equal relationships of care. In contrast, if submission is demanded or required then there is control and abuse.

**Head or 'headship':** Particular passages in the New Testament (including, for example, Ephesians 5:23 – "For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour") have shaped notions of male 'headship' in relationships which have sometimes then been misused to justify domination, control and abuse by a husband/male partner over a wife/female partner. Christ's 'headship', however, is from his self-emptying of all but love and the model is one of loving service. Significantly, the Methodist Church has not required, or perhaps even deemed it appropriate, for women to promise to 'obey' their husbands in the marriage services it has produced since 1932.

**Divorce and marriage vows:** Marriage is a gift of God. The Methodist Church's understanding of marriage emphasises mutuality, self-giving and commitment to growth for oneself and the other, in the image of the self-giving, desire and delight of God. The marriage vows include a promise of life-long commitment, but the insistence that permanence, rather than mutual delight and joy, is the foremost aim of marriage, has caused much damage. The marriage promises can be broken in many ways, but an insistence on permanence over the safety and well-being of one of the partners cannot

be right within a Christian theology of marriage. An abusive, controlling partner, who does not love and cherish, is the one who breaks the marriage vows; not the survivor of abuse. A survivor who is divorced from their abusive partner, is not responsible for the breaking of a marriage covenant. Abuse within a marriage is an act of will, a choice. The Church has significant work to do to support survivors of domestic abuse, including when they feel the deep hurt and guilt of a broken marriage.

**Self-sacrifice, suffering and guilt:** The idea of bearing suffering as Jesus did, even to death on the cross, is deeply embedded in Christian thinking and patterns of discipleship, but it has sometimes been misused by perpetrators, compounding the trauma experienced by survivors. Christ's suffering and human suffering are radically different. It is not healthy or life-giving Christian theology to say that people must suffer because Christ suffered, or to imply that suffering is good in and of itself. In contexts of abuse, coercion and control, suffering can never be understood as redemptive. This is very different from contexts where there is proper self-affirmation, self-esteem and alternative choices when someone may be willing to accept, and have the resources to bear, the suffering that can be a part of challenging violence and injustice and working for peace. Suffering should never be used as a justification for abuse. Survivors should be encouraged to see themselves as valuable to God and loved, and not to feel guilty. People who remain with an abusive partner can be in danger of serious harm or even death.

**Repentance and forgiveness:** Forgiveness, repentance and new life in Christ are central to the gospel, but some simplistic understandings, or misunderstandings, of forgiveness have prompted actions and statements that have caused further harm and damage to those who have experienced abuse. For example, the idea that forgiveness involves forgetting persists, but a new start does not mean that the past is forgotten and there are no consequences. Indeed, forgiveness may well mean that offenders have a greater sense of obligation than before, as they are encouraged to recognise and take responsibility for the profound harm and trauma that resulted from their actions. Repentance does not mean that someone is wholly reformed and good, that previous patterns of behaviour have been left behind, or that there is no risk of reoffending. Through God's grace there is the possibility of change for all, but for trust to be re-established, the change has to be demonstrated in the context of a community that exercises discipline and demands accountability. Safeguarding procedures are a part of this.

Forgiveness is also sometimes spoken of in terms that give inappropriate emphasis to the relationship between two individuals. Forgiveness is a gift of God. It is not a right and cannot be earned. We cannot, therefore, expect another to forgive. When survivors have been told to forgive the person who abused them, further damage has been caused. Forgiveness is primarily about God's mercy and not human action. Whether or not someone is able to forgive is secondary to the willingness to trust in the healing and liberating process of God's love at work in their lives.

"I believe forgiveness is a process by which it is possible to break the bonds of abuse and find the strength within that helps us to become transformed...in which we can slowly and painstakingly find ourselves."

The Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, (*A Spirituality of Survival – Enabling a Response to Trauma and Abuse*, 2009).

## Procedures of good practice

## Responding to disclosure of abuse

Research shows that victims find it difficult to disclose abuse and they may approach a member of the congregation rather than a minister or pastoral worker. In addition, research suggests that women may approach a number of individuals before finding someone who believes and reassures them. Often survivors will sound out a relative or friend before approaching anyone in authority (*In Churches Too*, Dr Kristin Aune and Dr Rebecca Barnes, 2018). Male survivors of abuse find it particularly difficult to confide in anyone. Perpetrators should be responded to appropriately if they are seeking help (see page 23).

### **Assessing the situation**

When someone discloses domestic abuse, there will be many questions, but it is very important, first, to listen. One survivor may be fearful for their safety and need encouragement to call the police or specialist services, another may be experiencing abuse but just want to be able to talk freely or to find guidance; another may disclose long-standing abuse that has now ended but left them traumatised and needing counselling. Degrees of risk and therefore urgency of action will vary, depending on what is disclosed. The role of the Church is to offer pastoral support.

### **Taking what is said seriously**

Taking what is said seriously is vital when someone makes a disclosure about domestic abuse. If someone is not believed or listened to, and/or if appropriate information and support is not given, a survivor's progress can be hindered and they may be reluctant to open up again. Because anyone within the church community might be approached by a victim, we need to spread awareness about domestic abuse and ensure that our church communities know how to respond appropriately.

### **Confidentiality**

It is very important that those who listen understand confidentiality, appreciate when specialist help may be required and when to speak with other authorities, for example, if children are at risk of harm.

Trust and confidentiality are crucial for the safety and well-being of the survivor. The role of the church is to walk alongside the survivor on the journey to recovery. A church culture that is transparent can offer real support at times of isolation and crisis, and the individual can start to feel safe. Once a supportive relationship has been established between survivor and listener, with the survivor's consent other agencies should be contacted for more specific advice and help. It is important to note that, from the moment of disclosure, the survivor can usually only cope with taking one step at a time.

Continued confidentiality is vital to ensure the safety of the survivor and their family. Keep addresses, information about children, where they attend school and where it is safe to contact the survivor, confidential. Do not pass on letters from the perpetrator – the survivor will know where to contact the perpetrator if they wish to do so.



## **Children**

Children are at risk of harm in situations of domestic abuse. They usually know much more than their parents suspect and research shows that 90 per cent of the time they are in the same or next room when abuse is occurring.

Children who see a parent being abused may be physically hurt when trying to intervene. They are at a high risk of suffering from emotional abuse, which can lead to mental health problems. In addition, there is increasing evidence of a high correlation between perpetrators of domestic abuse also being perpetrators of other forms of child abuse. It is therefore crucial that a referral is made to children's services when domestic abuse has occurred and there are children in the household. In such cases, a child may be at risk of harm. This needs reporting and confidentiality around disclosure should not be upheld.

## **Involving others**

There are occasions when consent to involve other agencies is not required (**see page 24**). However, you should always try to obtain this. A survivor should not be put under pressure to involve the police (unless there are children involved). If they decide that they do not want to report abuse to the police, they should receive a response from the Church that respects their right to privacy.

Pastoral support workers can find themselves in complicated situations and the involvement of the wider Church (Circuit or District) and designated Safeguarding Officer offers invaluable support.

## **Risk for victims**

The greatest risk for survivors of domestic abuse is at the time of separation or immediately after separation. This is one of the most significant reasons for women remaining in an abusive relationship. There is a huge increase in the likelihood of violence after separation and the danger women feel is very real. 41 per cent of the women killed by their male partner/former partner in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2018 (37 of 91 women) had separated or taken steps to separate from them. Periods of contact between the children and the perpetrator can be very distressing for the survivor, and perpetrators sometimes use these times to continue to exert control and harass their ex-partners.

## **Safety of ministers and church workers**

When responding to someone affected by domestic abuse, a quiet, confidential space should be made available for meetings. It is important to ensure that a third person is aware of when such a meeting is taking place and is also present on the church premises. This offers a level of protection (and support) for both the listener and the person seeking help. It is important that those supporting survivors or perpetrators are mindful of their own and others' safety and well-being, and themselves receive supervision and support.

## Basic principles for dealing with victims of domestic abuse

<b>PRIVACY</b>	Ensure that there is a private place, where someone wanting to talk will feel comfortable to speak. Do not put yourself at risk.
<b>RESPECT</b>	Allow enough time to talk and LISTEN. It is important to be NON-JUDGEMENTAL; people may fear they will be condemned by the Church. Treat people with respect and sensitivity – it is difficult to talk about these issues. Do not ask what they did to provoke abuse.
<b>CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	Treat what is said in confidence. Let the individual know that they can trust you, but also ensure that they are aware of the limits of confidentiality. It might be necessary for safety reasons, either for the individual or for a child, that some information is shared. Be prepared to ask the survivor's permission for you to talk to a third party/third parties who can offer help, should that be needed (for example if child abuse has occurred or safety is compromised).
<b>TAKE WHAT IS SERIOUSLY</b>	Survivors of domestic abuse need to be taken seriously and fear they <b>SAID</b> will not be. They may be discouraged from ever speaking out again if they sense disbelief.
<b>REASSURANCE</b>	It may be necessary to reassure someone who is suffering or has suffered from abuse that the abuse is not their fault.
<b>KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS</b>	Recognise the work of other agencies and work with them. Signpost people to services that can help and encourage them to use support that is available. Offer to accompany them to appointments if that will help them seek support.
<b>SAFETY</b>	<p>Safety is the first priority for the survivor and any children. Consider your actions carefully, so that they are not placed in a dangerous situation. Take sensible precautions to avoid putting yourself or colleagues in danger.</p> <p>It is not safe to 'check the story' with the perpetrator, or to challenge them directly. If it is necessary to raise the issue with the perpetrator, you should plan carefully and obtain professional advice before doing so. Always consult your Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer and the District Safeguarding Officer.</p>

## Practical steps

### Recognise, respond, record, refer



**Recognising barriers to disclosing abuse**

- Have tried to tell before but not believed
- Being unable to communicate
- Being dependent upon the perpetrator
- Being fearful of the consequences
- Feeling ashamed / embarrassed / guilty
- Fear of not being listened to / understood / taken seriously / believed.
- Not recognising their experience is abusive

**Respond: what to do**

- Listen
- Don't promise confidentiality
- If it's not clear what is being said you can ask open questions to clarify (TED – Tell, Explain, Describe)
- Explain what happens next

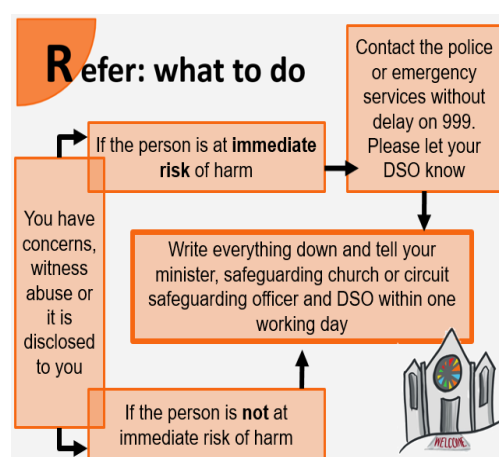
**Respond: what stops us doing it well?**

1. As individuals?
2. As a church?
3. What might the impact be on the person who has experienced abuse if we do not respond well?
4. What might the impact be on the wider community if we do not respond well?

X

**Record: What to do**

- Who was involved
- What happened
- Where it happened
- When it happened
- Whom you referred it on to
- Signed and dated



[Credit] How to respond to survivors (from the Methodist Foundation training module, [Safeguarding: Creating Safer Space \(2020\)](#)).

### Questions to ask yourself:

<b>Is anyone in immediate danger?</b> Call the police.	<b>Is the person directly affected or are they concerned on behalf of someone else?</b> If the latter, is the victim aware this is being raised? It may be important to protect the confidentiality and/or safety of the person raising the concern.	<b>Has there been a complaint to the police, and if so what action has been taken?</b>	<b>Is there likely to be a formal complaint under the Church's Complaints and Discipline procedures or is support needed to do this?</b>
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The safety and well-being – spiritually, physically and emotionally – of the survivor and any children must be the priority at all times.

### Creating an emergency plan

Talk with the survivor about an emergency plan to ensure they can escape safely if they decide to leave their abuser, but also try and obtain their consent for you to seek advice and support from specialist domestic abuse agencies. More information on making a safety plan is available at [www.restored-uk.org/i-need-help/making-safety-plan/](http://www.restored-uk.org/i-need-help/making-safety-plan/). A safety plan includes how the victim keeps safe while still living at home.

The keys points for emergency planning are as follows:

- 1) Plan an emergency escape and encourage the survivor to get the support of their neighbour or someone else they can trust who lives nearby.
- 2) Ask the survivor to keep money safe for taxis, bus fares and payment for telephone calls.
- 3) Make sure they have their own key to the house or one that they leave one with a neighbour/friend.
- 4) Ensure the survivor has clothes ready for themselves and their children should they need to leave the house quickly (a 'quick run bag').
- 5) Give the survivor telephone numbers for their nearest Women's Aid group, the police, Samaritans, social care and their GP. There may be other relevant local services in the area.
- 6) Encourage the survivor to have as many as possible of the following documents to hand, should they need to leave the house quickly: child benefit documents, rent book, bank book/cards, marriage and birth certificates, passport and driving licence. Encourage them to take a phone and charger if it is unlikely the perpetrator will track this. If not, get them to keep a list of five key numbers to call in an emergency.

## Dos And don'ts in responding to victims

<b><u>DO</u></b>	<b><u>DON'T</u></b>
Find a safe place to talk and, if acceptable to the survivor, have someone else present.	Don't try to be an expert or do the job of someone who has specialist skills.
Take what you are told seriously. A survivor may be discouraged from talking about the abuse again if they sense disbelief.	Don't be judgemental as the survivor may be afraid of being condemned by the church.
Give priority to a survivor's immediate safety and that of any children involved. Check if they feels they are in immediate danger and discuss options.	Don't suggest that the survivor should leave or that they should try and work things out with the perpetrator.
Let the survivor know that what the abuser has done is wrong and completely unacceptable.	Don't promise to keep a secret.
Reassure the survivor that it is not their fault and that it is not God's will for them.	Don't blame the survivor for the abuse, minimise the severity of their experience or the danger they may be in.
Protect the survivor's confidentiality without compromising their or other people's safety.	Don't ask whether, or suggest that, the survivor did anything to provoke the abuse.
Explain why you may need to contact other services to help protect the children.	Don't make decisions for the survivor or tell them what they should do unless children are at risk.
Help the survivor to make their own decisions, and support and respect their choices based on informed consent, if there is no danger to children or a vulnerable adult.	Don't encourage the survivor to forgive the person and take them back.
Give information about relevant support agencies offering to contact them on the survivor's behalf.	Don't contact the survivor at home unless they have agreed that you can do this.
Ensure the survivor has continued pastoral support.	Don't approach the perpetrator to get their side of the story.
<b>Record what you have done and contact your Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.</b>	Don't give information to the abuser on the survivor's whereabouts or to anyone else who might pass this on.
	Don't discuss the situation with church staff without consulting with your District Safeguarding Officer.
	Don't encourage the survivor to become dependent on you, or to become emotionally involved.

### Domestic abuse cases involving ministers

When the victim or perpetrator is a minister, or the partner of a minister, there can be additional complications, including those associated with their accommodation, ie the manse, if either of them

wants or has to leave the property. This can present further difficulties for the victim, but should not preclude them from seeking help.

### Responding to perpetrators and providing pastoral support

Work with perpetrators should only be undertaken by someone with specialist training (see **Appendix 3**). Before providing pastoral support to perpetrators, the Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. A [risk assessment](http://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/leaflets/) ([www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/leaflets/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/leaflets/)) may need to be carried out by the District Safeguarding Officer. Recommendations from this may result in a safeguarding contract.

If the perpetrator is in a leadership or authorised role within the Methodist Church, their position will need to be reviewed as part of the risk assessment process and suspension may be necessary.

Caution is required if the perpetrator is already subject to a criminal investigation or a court order. Please seek advice and support from the Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer or District Safeguarding Officer. If this is not possible for any reason, liaise with local specialist agencies, but always inform your Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer and District Safeguarding Officer.

It is important to remember that the survivor and the perpetrator cannot both be supported in the same church community, unless that is the express and independent wish of each person and it is safe to do so. They should not both be given pastoral support by the same person. If someone has to leave the church, it should be the perpetrator and not the survivor.

DO	DON'T
Only speak to perpetrators about the abuse if they are no longer in the relationship, their ex-partner is in a safe environment and has given you permission.	Don't approach a perpetrator with a view to confirming a survivor's story.
Treat the safety of the survivor (and that of any children or individuals involved) as the highest priority.	Don't meet the perpetrator alone or in private, because of safety implications.
Ensure any actions you take are survivor-centred and never lose sight of the abuse the perpetrator has allegedly committed.	Don't give a perpetrator any information about their partner or their partner's whereabouts.
Stay aware of the danger a perpetrator may pose to you, to the survivor, any children, wider family and others.	Don't accept the perpetrator blaming the survivor, or anything or anyone else.
Address any religious rationalisation that may be offered as an excuse for the abuse.	Don't suggest 'working out' the relationship or couples counselling.
Be particularly alert if a perpetrator claims they are also a survivor, no matter how	Don't approach the perpetrator to let them know that you are aware of the abuse they have committed.
	Don't allow a perpetrator to use religious excuses for their behaviour.

<p>plausible they may seem. Perpetrators can use this as a tactic to maintain control.</p> <p>Take seriously any threats of violence and inform the police, seeking their advice on informing the survivor or any others named in the threats.</p> <p>Offer pastoral support, work alongside other agencies and share any concerns.</p>	<p>Don't let a perpetrator minimise the abuse.</p> <p>Don't act as an advocate for the abuser or provide a character reference for any legal proceedings.</p> <p>Don't confuse their guilt, sadness or remorse with true repentance.</p>
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## How can the Church help to prevent domestic abuse?

### Raising awareness through teaching and worship

- Leaders of worship can use the resources in this document to make clear statements that domestic abuse is wrong and challenge the myths that allows domestic abuse to continue.
- Careful thought should be given to the way the Bible is used and to how theological interpretations can affirm or damage those caught up in abusive relationships.
- Leaders of worship can include the resources here in their preaching, teaching, prayers, hymns and liturgies throughout the church year.
- The language used in worship and teaching should reflect the Church's beliefs about equality and dignity and not marginalise those who may already feel they are not valued.

### Work with children and young people

- Disclosures of domestic abuse by children and young people must be taken seriously. It is important to listen, make clear that what they have experienced is wrong and not their fault. You should let them know that in order to make sure they (and others) are safe you will have to tell someone else who can help. The Church/Circuit Safeguarding Officer or District Safeguarding Officer should be contacted for advice.
- Leaders should affirm and model positive relationships in their work with children and young people.
- Youth leaders should be encouraged to invite a guest speaker on domestic abuse from the police, local domestic abuse agency/charity or Women's Aid to inform and encourage discussion and awareness about the impact of domestic abuse and sources of support.
- Leaders can link discussions with healthy relationship education, which is now compulsory in primary schools, and relationship and sex education (RSE) which is taught in secondary schools (England only).



## Sharing information about local agencies

- Churches should display posters and information about local and national support agencies (**Appendix 3**). This is a sign to a survivor that they can get support from their local church and to a perpetrator that abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Links can be made with relevant ecumenical organisations such as Churches Together in England (CTE) at [www.cte.org.uk](http://www.cte.org.uk), Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) at [www.acts-scotland.org](http://www.acts-scotland.org), Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN) at [www.cytun.co.uk](http://www.cytun.co.uk), and Restored at [www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)
- MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) operate across the UK in the highest risk cases of domestic abuse. Key agencies, including the police, probation, social care, housing and voluntary sector organisations, attend these meetings. Discussions take place that consider the risk of harm to those suffering domestic abuse. An action plan is then developed to help manage the risk and keep the victim safe. The action plan is monitored and reviewed.

Churches cannot refer directly to ask for a MARAC. Therefore, contact your District Safeguarding Officer who may decide to carry out a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) risk assessment prior to liaising with the statutory authorities who then decide if a MARAC is warranted.

## Training people at all levels in the Church

- All those with leadership roles in the Methodist Church should undertake training to recognise and deal with domestic abuse. Training will help the Church respond appropriately, reinforce the seriousness and impact of domestic abuse, and help minimise any potential harm suffered by others. Domestic abuse training is now a part of the Connexional Safeguarding Training Strategy.
- It is important to recognise the value of joint working with statutory and voluntary agencies. This can involve the sharing of good practice and the provision of expertise. It also enhances the positive role that churches play in their communities.
- Circuits could consider setting up a study day on domestic abuse to help raise awareness in local church congregations. This should be planned in consultation with the District Safeguarding Officer and input from specialist professionals. During such an event, both survivors and perpetrators might be present. Careful consideration is needed to decide how this will be handled and what support should be in place.

## Further training

The Methodist Church has a Learning Network, which is a point of contact for all training. The network offers training in various specialisms and is able to facilitate training from outside agencies on how to recognise and deal with domestic abuse.

Many agencies, both statutory and voluntary, provide free training in this area. Participating in training with other organisations is an excellent way of finding out how they work and a good opportunity to network and develop positive working relationships. This can make it easier to work with and access their support when it is required.

**Please note:** Specialist training is required for those addressing abuse and abusive behaviours with victims, survivors, children and perpetrators.

## Appendix 1: A Charter for Churches and a Model Policy for a Local Church/Circuit

### Domestic Abuse: A Charter for Churches

#### **The Charter**

Domestic abuse is extremely serious, and unacceptable in all its forms. This church seeks to support those affected by domestic abuse, and their families.

This Church/Circuit:

- holds that domestic abuse, in all its forms, is unacceptable and inconsistent and incompatible with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living
- acknowledges that domestic abuse is a serious and widespread problem that occurs in church families as well as in wider society
- undertakes to listen to, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse
- makes the safety of survivors and children affected by domestic abuse a priority
- works with specialist agencies, learning from and supporting them in appropriate ways, and publicising their work
- will play its part in teaching that domestic abuse is sinful and contrary to the teachings of the Bible

#### **Contact**

**Numbers:**.....  
.....

National Domestic Abuse Helpline : 0808 2000 247 – This is a freephone, 24 hour service.

Local  
Number:.....  
.....

## Model Policy for a Local Church/Circuit

### **Aims and intentions**

This policy aims to ensure that domestic abuse is acknowledged and responded to appropriately within the Methodist Church. To do this we will:

- 1 Adopt the Methodist Church's Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures.
- 2 Raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community.
- 3 Ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority, and be aware of the need for confidentiality (unless there are safeguarding concerns).
- 4 Consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help, including working with specialist agencies.
- 5 Encourage discussion of how our churches can ensure those who feel marginalised are made welcome.
- 6 Discuss implementation of the Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures and the theology and principles that underpin it.
- 7 Adopt the Domestic Abuse Charter and display this in our churches and on social media.
- 8 Discuss domestic abuse with Church Leaders including at the Church Council and Circuit Meetings.
- 9 Review this policy annually and monitor it continually.

This policy was adopted

by.....on.....

Next review date

is.....

## Appendix 2: The legal context

Across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, comprehensive provisions for responding to domestic abuse, are available through the courts and through protection orders and notices. These cover matters dealt with in the criminal, civil and family courts. Advice about any of these matters should be without charge from solicitors, using public funding.

### Domestic abuse and the law (England)

#### **Criminal law**

Many acts that are commonly perpetrated by an abuser, such as physical violence, sexual abuse and threats of violence towards a victim, are criminal acts. If enough evidence can be gathered, the police may be able to build a case and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) proceed to prosecute an abuser for criminal actions, even if the victim withdraws their consent or does not want to press charges.

There is a high standard of proof in most criminal cases and although the police and CPS work hard to investigate reported incidents, they are subject to limited resources and for unfortunately cannot pursue every case. If there is an element of domestic abuse in a criminal case, a criminal court can impose a ‘restraining order’ on an offender, which makes it an automatic offence for them to contact or visit their victim and/or children for a specified period of up to five years.

#### **Civil law**

Some types of abuse are not crimes in themselves, for example if an abuser tries to control a survivor by continuously contacting them and communicating with them in a way that causes emotional or psychological damage, or by refusing to leave the property. However, repeated unwanted contact can amount to harassment or malicious communications, which are both criminal offences. Where such issues are present, or where there is stronger evidence of abuse but it has not led to criminal prosecution, the family court can grant a ‘non-molestation order’. This order can be phrased to forbid an abuser from contacting, abusing or visiting a survivor or a child of the family, or from approaching the family home. Once the order is served on an abuser it is then an automatic criminal offence for them to breach it. This then means that actions such as repeatedly calling the survivor, which would not normally be considered criminal, could become sufficient for the police to bring a criminal prosecution. Acts that were already criminal, such as violence towards the survivor, can also be punished more severely, if the abuser was subject to the order and is found guilty.

If a perpetrator is still living with their victim, the civil courts have the power to order the abuser out of the family home. The civil courts have to balance the housing options available to both parties and be satisfied that the level of risk to the victim justifies the risk of making the perpetrator homeless.

#### **National Centre for Domestic Violence (0800 970 2070)**

Survivors of domestic abuse can call this organisation for free, confidential advice. The organisation can make referrals to numerous organisations across the country that offer support and guidance. They can also refer survivors to a panel of solicitors who specialise in dealing with emergency cases to obtain civil non-molestation orders or occupation orders at short notice. An occupation order allows the court to decide who should live, or not live, in the home or any part of it. The order can also exclude the other person from an area around the home. They can advise on

whether or not a survivor is eligible to have their legal costs, for obtaining the protection of the courts, paid for by the state.

**Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA)** are advocates who focus on high-risk clients by providing support to people who have been assaulted or abused by their partner or a family member. The IDVA can explain the criminal justice process, attend court, and provide support on a range of things such as the emotional impacts of domestic abuse, housing and legal matters. The IDVA service is central to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). A MARAC is a victim-focused meeting set up to help ensure the safety of victims and their dependents.

**Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA)** are trained to provide emotional and practical support to survivors of rape, sexual abuse and sexual assault who have reported to the police or are considering reporting to the police.

**Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)** is a special facility where victims of rape or sexual assault can receive immediate help and support. This includes access to a forensic medical examination, which is carried out by an experienced and qualified doctor, and the opportunity to speak to the police about what has happened.

### **Clare's Law or the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme**

Under this scheme, launched in March 2014, parties have the right to ask the police whether a new or existing partner has a violent past. If police checks show that a person may be at risk of domestic abuse from their partner, the police will consider disclosing the information. Clare's law has two functions:

- 1) The 'right to ask' – This enables someone to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts. A precedent for such a scheme exists with the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme.
- 2) The 'right to know' – Police can proactively disclose information, in agreed circumstances.

NB It is important to note that the police do not know most perpetrators of abuse, because the abuse has not been reported or they have not been prosecuted.

### **Protection orders and notices**

If someone has suffered from, or been threatened with, domestic abuse, the police can issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice and then apply to the magistrates' court for a Domestic Violence Protection Order. This can protect the survivor from further abuse and, if they live with the perpetrator, ban the abuser from returning home and contacting them. If the perpetrator does not keep to the order, they can be arrested and brought before the court. A Domestic Abuse Protection Order lasts for up to 28 days and can give the survivor time to explore their options and obtain further support.

### **Third party reporting centres**

There are many barriers to reporting domestic abuse. Third Party Reporting Centres (TPRC) aim to overcome these barriers. They are based in community locations where the survivor can make a report of domestic abuse without having to visit a police station. Staff at the centres are trained to deal sensitively with survivors and the report they complete will be forwarded to the police and/or council on the victim's behalf if they request this.

### **Stalking and harassment**

There is no strict legal definition of stalking, but it includes following a person, watching/spying on them, or forcing contact on them through any means, such as social media. The effect of the

behaviour is to curtail a survivor's freedom, leaving them feeling they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct may appear innocent (particularly if taken in isolation) but when carried out repeatedly it may cause significant harm, harassment or distress to the survivor.

Harassment of an individual can also occur when a person is harassing others connected with the individual, knowing that this behaviour will affect the survivor as well as the others involved. This is known by the CPS as 'stalking by proxy'. Family members, friends and employees of the survivor may be subjected to this.

### **Revenge porn**

This is the umbrella term for the sharing of private sexual material, either photos or videos involving another person, without their consent and for the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress. It is now illegal to share such material without the consent of the person involved. They may have agreed to be filmed but may not have consented to it being made public. If a person is concerned about an abuser threatening to release materials of this nature, a non-molestation order may be obtained from the courts that could include a condition forbidding an abuser from releasing material and making it an offence to do so. If such material is placed on any social media platform this can also be reported directly to the provider who should assist with removal of the images.

### **People with no recourse to public funds**

Many people come to the UK legally, in the hope of improving their lives. One of the conditions for permitting immigration into the UK can be that the person arriving is not permitted to use public funds, and this can be stamped on their passport on arrival as part of their visa. This can deny them access to certain state benefits, including housing benefit and income support, even if the person marries a UK citizen. If the person is ever subject to violence, then the lack of those benefits can deny them the ability to live independently should they be forced out of their home and needing to seek refuge.

Those on a UK partner visa who entered the UK as a partner of a British citizen or person settled in the UK, can access the destitution domestic violence (DDV) concession:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-benefits-for-visa-holder-domestic-violence](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-benefits-for-visa-holder-domestic-violence). This provides time-limited access to financial and housing support, while they apply for indefinite leave to remain under the domestic violence concession rule. This enables them to access a place at a refuge or other form of safe accommodation. These provisions are not, however, accessible to people on other types of visa and it is important to understand the significant barriers to escaping and accessing safety that face people in this position.

### **Legal aid**

A victim of domestic abuse might be able to get legal aid if there is evidence that they or their children have been victims of domestic abuse or financial control (for example, if they are stopped from accessing a joint bank account). A survivor does not have to produce evidence before talking to a legal aid solicitor or getting Civil Legal Advice (CLA) ([www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice](http://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice)), but it will need to be shown before they can be granted legal aid. Evidence could come from a number of sources, including the courts, police, a refuge, a health/social care professional or a church minister.

### **England**

#### Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 (England)

In 2020, the new Domestic Abuse Bill was passed in the House of Commons and is due to become law in 2021. This bill enshrines in law the 2013 definition of domestic abuse and makes domestic abuse a crime in its own right.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will:

- enshrine the definition of domestic abuse in law and make it a criminal offence
- establish a Domestic Abuse Commissioner to drive the response to domestic abuse issues
- introduce new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders
- prohibit the cross-examination of survivors by their abusers in the family courts
- provide automatic eligibility for special measures to support more survivors to give evidence in the criminal courts
- ensure that a local authority grants a new secure tenancy to any social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy
- extend the jurisdiction of the UK criminal courts so that, where appropriate, UK nationals and residents who commit certain violent and sexual offences outside the UK may be brought to trial in the UK. (See the Istanbul Convention: [www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention](http://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention)).

The Government's response to the domestic abuse consultation set out 123 commitments to help tackle domestic abuse. The majority of these commitments do not require legislation. The non-statutory commitments include:

- introducing regulations and statutory guidance on relationship education, relationship and sex education, and health education
- investing in training for responding agencies and professionals
- developing national guidance for the police on serial and repeat perpetrators
- improving awareness and understanding of coercive control offences
- continuing to develop means to collect, report and track domestic abuse data.

Lack of recourse to public funds has been raised for debate as the bill passes through Parliament.

Further detailed information can be found on the Women's Aid website ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)). The Rights of Women website ([rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://rightsofwomen.org.uk)) provides a detailed, downloadable Domestic Violence Injunctions Handbook ([www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/RoVHandbook-DVViolenceWebinarPresentation.pdf](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/RoVHandbook-DVViolenceWebinarPresentation.pdf))

## **Northern Ireland**

### Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill (2020)

This bill will create a new domestic abuse offence for Northern Ireland that will make domestic abuse in all its forms a criminal offence. The bill will legislate for controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as physical abuse, against a partner, former partner or family member.

Northern Ireland has a Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme. This provides a formal mechanism for a person to make enquiries about an individual with whom they are in a relationship, or who is in a relationship with someone they know, if there is a concern that the individual may be violent or abusive towards their partner.



## **Scotland**

### Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into force in 2019. It recognises the multiple ways in which people are affected by domestic abuse. It also expands the definition of domestic abuse in Scottish criminal law and how the police and courts investigate and prosecute this crime.

The new law increases the opportunity to obtain protection and seek justice through the criminal justice system. For the first time, the law recognises domestic abuse as a specific crime. This means that a person who engages in a pattern of abusive behaviour towards a partner or ex-partner can be prosecuted and punished by the law.

Previously, the criminal law focused on physical violence. It now covers a range of psychological and emotional abuse, making coercive control a criminal offence.

To prove there was domestic abuse, the law must demonstrate that:

- the abuse was directed toward a partner or ex-partner
- there was a pattern of abusive behaviours (there were two or more incidents of abuse that a reasonable person would think would have caused the victim/survivor to suffer physical or psychological harm (including fear, alarm and distress))
- the abuse can be, but does not necessarily have to be, physical or sexual
- the perpetrator intended to cause physical or psychological harm, or was reckless as to whether the behaviour would cause such harm. This means that even if the perpetrator did not intend to hurt their partner or ex-partner, their behaviour could still be considered domestic abuse, and it is not necessary to show that harm was actually caused.

### Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (Clare's Law)

Police Scotland operate the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland. If someone has concerns about a partner's past, or concerns about another person's partner, they can apply to the scheme to ask if that person has a history of domestic abuse or other relevant behaviour.

Scotland also has Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA), Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) (see page 28).

## **Wales**

### Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

This Act aims to improve the public sector response in Wales to domestic abuse and violence against women.

The purpose of the Act is to:

- (a) promote awareness of, and to prevent, protect and support victims of, gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- (b) strengthen the strategic leadership and accountability for gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- (c) improve the consistency, quality and join-up of service provision in Wales.

The Act acknowledges that the prevalence and severity of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence disproportionately affects women and girls, and includes a specific provision relating to violence against women and girls. The Act also recognises that anyone can be affected by such violence and abuse.

This 2015 Act created the role of National Adviser to advise Welsh Government ministers and improve joint working among public bodies. It also requires that progress towards achieving the purpose of the Act is reported with reference to a set of national indicators (developed in consultation with the relevant organisations working in the sector).

The Act makes it a requirement for Government ministers to prepare, publish and review a national strategy that includes objectives and the timescales for their achievement. The Act also gives authority for Government ministers to issue guidance to relevant local authorities on how they should exercise their functions in relation to ending gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

In addition, the 2015 Act has a provision for Government ministers to require local authorities to publish information about how the local authority's education functions are being exercised to promote the purpose of the Act.

Under the Act, a local authority and a local health board must jointly prepare a strategy for the local authority's area, which focuses on prevention, protection and support.

One of the key mechanisms for delivering the Act is the National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence ([gov.wales/national-training-framework-violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence](http://gov.wales/national-training-framework-violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence)). This statutory document contains supporting guidance that outlines the Framework and its requirements.

Wales also has Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA), Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) (see page 28).

## **Isle of Man**

### The Domestic Abuse Act 2019

The key object of the Act is to address domestic abuse specifically, for the first time in Manx law. Accordingly, the Act defines domestic abuse, creates the offences of domestic abuse and controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate and family relationships, and the punishment for these. The Act also establishes preventative and protective measures, in the form of the Domestic Abuse Protection Notice (DAPN) and the Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO). A DAPN may be issued by the police, but a DAPO may be made by any court considering a matter where domestic abuse is raised as a factor, irrespective of whether or not the initial matter concerned domestic abuse.

Other objectives of the Act include:

- Raising public and professional awareness of domestic abuse so it is seen as a key issue that must be addressed.
- Enhancing the safety of victims of abuse, and those at risk of abuse, before it has occurred.
- Providing tools and guidance to enable various agencies, including the courts, to address domestic abuse effectively, take specific measures to protect victims, provide means to punish offenders and to identify those perpetrators who may be rehabilitated.

- Enabling key agencies by ensuring they can share information, allowing them to work effectively with other agencies to combat abuse.

## **Jersey**

Jersey does not have a domestic abuse law equivalent to any provisions in the UK. Current legislation in Jersey enables prosecutions to be made against various behaviours associated with domestic abuse.

The Sexual Offences (Jersey) Law 2018 now defines consent, provides for a new offence of assault by penetration and introduces new offences relating to the sexual abuse of children and female genital mutilation. The Criminal Procedure (Bail) (Jersey) Law 2018 will bring a modern legislative regime that governs the granting of bail and will provide the police with new powers to help protect the victims and witnesses of domestic abuse. In addition, the Criminal Procedure (Jersey) Law 2018 will address protection for vulnerable victims and witnesses at court and provide additional opportunities for the introduction of evidence and ‘bad character’ (see below) to the criminal justice process.

The recent amendments to the Crime (Disorderly Conduct and Harassment) (Jersey) Law, 2008, permit the court to impose a restraining order on a conviction for any offence (not just harassment). The court needs to be satisfied that the order is necessary to protect the victim or any other person from further contact which would amount to harassment, or from a perceived threat of violence. Restraining Orders play an important role in managing the risks to victims and protecting them from further harm.

The suite of legal tools, introduced as part of a revamped Criminal Procedures (Jersey) Law, is expected to make significant changes to investigations and court cases. Under ‘bad character’ legislation, prosecutors are now able to put details of a defendant’s violent or abusive past before the court. In addition, ‘hearsay’ evidence such as video footage of a victim who is too scared to give evidence from the witness box is also admissible. It is considered more likely that perpetrators would plead guilty if they knew their ‘bad character’ would be put before the court. This would mean victims or witnesses would not have to go through the ordeal of giving live evidence in a trial.

Clare’s Law or the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme has been adopted in Jersey (see page 28).

There are some initiatives in Jersey detailed below:

Jersey Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (JMAPPA) were brought in when the Sex Offenders (Jersey) Law 2010 came into force in 2011. JMAPPA protects the public by assessing and managing sexual, violent and dangerous offenders, together with potentially dangerous persons in order to reduce their offending behaviour. The most dangerous domestic violence perpetrators are managed through the JMAPPA system. Many JMAPPA subjects have a history of domestic abuse.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency victim-focused meeting where information is shared between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase the safety of victims including children.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) were introduced in Jersey early in 2014 due to a consistent increase in domestic violence reports, IDVAs focus on high risk clients by providing support to people who have been assaulted or abused by their partner or a family member. The IDVA can explain the criminal justice process, attend court and provide support on a range of issues such as the emotional impacts of domestic abuse, housing and legal matters.

The IDVA service is central to MARAC focusing on reducing risk and safety management of women and their dependents. The IDVA signpost to other organisations when risk is reduced. The IDVAs have a presence within health and social services visiting various wards and departments.

Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) are trained to provide emotional and practical support to survivors of rape, sexual abuse and sexual assault who have reported to the police or are considering reporting to the police.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) is a special facility where victims of rape or sexual assault can receive immediate help and support. This includes access to a forensic medical examination, which is carried out by an experienced and qualified doctor, and the opportunity to speak to the police about what has happened.

## **Guernsey**

Guernsey is currently working on updating its legislation but at present there is no domestic abuse legislation or orders, although stalking can be prosecuted under the Protection from Harassment (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2005. New legislation proposals will include the introduction of a coercive control law, stalking legislation and domestic violence and abuse protection orders.

A domestic abuse disclosure scheme is being considered as part of the law review. Currently, the police will disclose to new partners if there are significant concerns but there is no 'right to ask' in the legislation.

There are some initiatives in Guernsey detailed below:

### Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

Guernsey Police Public Protection Unit (PPU) coordinate and facilitate the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). These conferences are held every fortnight and focus on identifying and managing risks to victims in high-risk domestic abuse situations. Guernsey also provides Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA).

Concerns about population management permits. The size and make-up of Guernsey's population is regulated by the Population Management Law. If a person's permit is conditional on them living with a householder, but they have been the victim of domestic abuse in that household, they can generally expect to be granted a temporary (six-month) permit to support them to move into different local housing. Further details can be found on the official States of Guernsey website: [www.gov.gg/pmfamilychange](http://www.gov.gg/pmfamilychange). Help for domestic abuse victims with population management

concerns or immigration issues can be sought from Safer (a Bailiwick of Guernsey domestic abuse charity) on 01481 721999. Safer's website: [safer.gg](http://safer.gg)

Support for those who are behaving, or have behaved, abusively towards a current or previous partner. The Sarnia Programme supports individuals to acknowledge, address and change their behaviour by focusing on their strengths, building on their skills, and providing tools to help them make positive choices.

Sarnia is a modular-based programme, consisting of both individualised work and group sessions. Following an initial assessment, a programme pathway is created, of the most beneficial modules for that individual. Some modules are undertaken as a standard part of the programme and focus on issues such as motivation and relationship skills. Others work on individual issues, such as anger, trauma, or children and parenting. See their website: [www.gov.gg/sarniaprogramme](http://www.gov.gg/sarniaprogramme)

Contact the police or Safer for leaflets and cards outlining services available for those experiencing abuse. These can be displayed in offices, meeting rooms, church halls and public spaces. Safer also have a range of posters that can be sent out to organisations, including churches. Contact [enquiries@safer.gg](mailto:enquiries@safer.gg) or phone them on 01481 721999.

## **Gibraltar**

### Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act 1998

The Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act 1998 has a number of provisions to protect victims of domestic abuse, including a range of restraining orders.

However, there are proposals for a bill and specific legislation to protect those who are abused. The reform aims to improve outcomes and increase the tools available to law enforcement agencies and victims.

The bill will also allow for a new offence, criminalising the type of coercive and controlling behaviour that can constitute domestic abuse.

There will be provision in the bill for domestic violence protection notices and orders, enabling the police and the courts to put in protection immediately a domestic violence incident is reported. This will include banning the alleged perpetrator from returning to a particular residence and from having contact with the victim for a period of time.

The scope of Gibraltar's Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements is being reviewed to increase their responsibilities in dealing with offenders, including violent offenders, who are perpetrators of domestic abuse.

There is a national strategic plan on domestic abuse and its aim is to eradicate domestic abuse, support and empower victims and families.

## **Malta**

### Domestic Violence Act (chapter 481)

The Domestic Violence Act (chapter 481) defines domestic abuse as "any act of violence, even if only verbal, perpetrated by a household member upon another household member and includes any

omission which causes physical or moral harm to the other.” The Act adopts a broad definition of violence, which overlaps with criminal law. Certain acts of domestic violence may also constitute a criminal offence or violation.

The definition of domestic violence states that the violence may be the result of one of the following:

- 1) Physical harm.
- 2) Psychological harm.
- 3) Acts of omission.

One household member must commit violence against another member for it to be considered domestic violence. Household members are classed as the following:

- 1) Those married or formerly married to each other.
- 2) People living in the same household as the perpetrator or who lived with the perpetrator within a year preceding the offence.
- 3) Those whose marriage has been dissolved or declared null.
- 4) Parents and their children.
- 5) Other adults sharing the same household.
- 6) Those who are, or have been, formally or informally engaged with a view to getting married.
- 7) People who are related to each other (up to and including the third degree) either by consanguinity (a blood relationship) or affinity (a marriage relationship).
- 8) Those having or having had a child in common.
- 9) A child conceived, but not yet born to any one of those mentioned above in 1 to 8.

The Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Bill will integrate and implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention in national law and repeal the Domestic Violence Act. When it becomes law, the bill will amend other laws to help ensure adequate protection is available to victims and that perpetrators face justice.

The Domestic Violence Unit in Malta provides a specialist social work service to victims of domestic abuse. The service aims to support victims at crisis point by assisting with immediate needs and helping to develop a safety plan, as well as providing ongoing support.

## Appendix 3: Contacts and resources

### Helplines and services across the UK

#### **Action for Children – [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)**

Helping children across the UK to grow up safe and happy. For campaigns and articles, enter the search term ‘Domestic Abuse’.

#### **Age UK Advice Line: 0800 678 1602**

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

#### **Forced Marriage Unit helpline: 0207 008 0151**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

A joint Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office(FCDO) and Home Office unit, which leads on the government’s forced marriage policy and supports British nationals in the UK and overseas.

#### **Galop National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 999 5428**

[www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse)

#### **Hourglass (formerly Action on Elder Abuse) helpline: 0808 808 8141**

[www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)

Ending the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK

#### **Imkaan**

[www.imkaan.org.uk/get-help](http://www.imkaan.org.uk/get-help)

Details of UK-wide support and services available to black and minority ethnic (BME) women.

#### **Karma Nirvana helpline:**

**0800 5999 247**

[www.karmanirvana.org.uk](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk)

Support for victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage. Skype calling and contact form available.

#### **Mankind Initiative: 0182 3334 244**

[www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk)

Support for male victims of domestic abuse across the UK, their friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and employers.

#### **Men’s Advice Line: 0808 8010 327**

[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)

UK-wide helpline for male victims of domestic abuse.

#### **National Domestic Abuse hotline: 0808 2000 247**

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

Supporting women and children to escape domestic violence.

#### **Rape Crisis (England and Wales) helpline: 0808 802 9999**

Live chat, text-based service: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/live-chat-helpline](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/live-chat-helpline)

#### **Respect helpline: 0808 802 4040**

[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

For anyone concerned they may be harming someone else

**Restored** – [www.restored-uk.org](http://www.restored-uk.org)

Equipping the Church to support survivors, advocate on their behalf and engage men in the conversation.

**Safe Lives** – [www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)

Dedicated to ending domestic abuse. Offering training and resources.

**The Survivors Trust** – [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)

Umbrella agency for specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the UK. Including a free helpline: 08088 010818

**Survivors UK:** [www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/online-helpline](http://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/online-helpline)

Support for men experiencing rape and sexual abuse, and for their friends and family.

**Victim Support: 0808 1689 111**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Offers free, confidential support for people affected by crime or traumatic events across England and Wales.

**Women's Aid Live Chat:** [www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support)

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Providing services in England to protect women and children, as well as shaping and coordinating responses to domestic abuse.

## Helplines and services specific to Wales

**Dyn Wales/Dyn Cymru Helpline: 0808 801 0321**

[www.saferwales.com](http://www.saferwales.com)

Support and advice for men experiencing domestic abuse (weekdays 9am–5pm).

**Live Fear Free Helpline: 0808 801 0800**

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>

Providing help and advice about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

**Safer Wales (Women's Safety Unit): 02920 220033**

Services in Cardiff for women who are pregnant or have children 0-4 years old who are experiencing or are at risk of domestic abuse. Providing an independent Domestic Violence Advisor to work with high risk victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

**Welsh Women's Aid: 02920 541551**

[www.welshwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk)

Working in Wales to end domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women.

## Helplines and services specific to Scotland

**Abused Men in Scotland helpline: 03300 949 395**



[www.abusedmeninscotland.org/](http://www.abusedmeninscotland.org/)

**Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid 24-hour emergency services: 0141 353 0859**

[www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk/hemat.html](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk/hemat.html)

For Asian, black and minority ethnic women fleeing domestic abuse.

**The Male Domestic Abuse Support Service: 0808 800 0024**

**Rape Crisis Scotland helpline (6pm-midnight): 0808 801 0302**

[www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)

**Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline: 0800 027 1234**

[www.sdafmh.org.uk](http://www.sdafmh.org.uk)

**Scottish Women's Aid: [www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk)**

**Shakti Women's Aid: 0101 475 2399**

[www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk](http://www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk)

Help for black minority ethnic women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

Helplines and services specific to Northern Ireland

**Men's Advisory Project: (028) 9024 1929**

Counselling services for men experiencing domestic abuse.

[www.mapni.co.uk/](http://www.mapni.co.uk/)

**Victim Support: (028) 9024 3133**

Free and confidential information and support to people who are victims of crime or attending a court in the region.

[www.victimsupportni.com](http://www.victimsupportni.com)

**Women's Aid: 0808 802 1414**

24-hour helpline for victims of domestic and sexual abuse .

[www.womensaidni.org/](http://www.womensaidni.org/)

Helplines and services specific to the Isle of Man

**Relate: 01624 632902**

Relate have counsellors trained in domestic abuse. Email: [relate@mcb.net](mailto:relate@mcb.net)

[www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

**Victim Support: 01624 679950**

Helping people cope with crime. [enquiries@victimsupport.im](mailto:enquiries@victimsupport.im)

[www.victimsupport.im](http://www.victimsupport.im)

**Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Helpline and Women's Refuge: 01624 677900**

The Women's Refuge is available to victims of domestic abuse should they need somewhere to stay. It can be accessed via the police or Victim Support.

## Helplines and services specific to Jersey

**Domestic Abuse Prevention Programme (ADAPT): 01534 441916**

For male perpetrators.

**Jersey Domestic Abuse Support: 01534 880505**

[www.jdas.je](http://www.jdas.je)

**Jersey Women's Refuge: 0800 7356836**

A safe place for women and children to go who are victims of domestic abuse

[www.jerseywomensrefuge.org](http://www.jerseywomensrefuge.org)

**Victim Support (for male victims): 01534 440496**

## Helplines and services specific to Guernsey

**Police Public Protection Unit: 01481 719410**

The PPU deal with a range of serious and complex crime and are actively involved in safeguarding within the community. The unit can be contacted for advice.

**SAFER Specialist Domestic Abuse Services: 01481 721999**

[www.safer.gg](http://www.safer.gg)

Offering a range of services to victims of domestic abuse. [enquiries@safer.gg](mailto:enquiries@safer.gg)

**Victim Support: 01481 713000**

[www.victimsupport.gg/](http://www.victimsupport.gg/)

## Helplines and services specific to Malta

**Support Line: 179 (dialled from Malta)**

National helpline offering support, information and a referral service.

**Victim Support: 356 2122 8333**

[info@victimsupport.org.mt](mailto:info@victimsupport.org.mt)

## Helplines and services specific to Gibraltar

**Abuse helpline: 350 20042581**

**Gibraltar Women's Association**

[www.gwa.gi/news](http://www.gwa.gi/news)

Encourages people to report domestic violence.

**Women's Aid: 350 20041999****Women in Need helpline: 8081**

Supports victims of domestic violence. Refuge available 24-hours.

**Further useful websites****Restored – [www.restored-uk.org](http://www.restored-uk.org)**

Equipping the Church to support survivors, advocate on their behalf and engage men in the conversation.

**Victim Support – [www.victimsupport.org.uk/search/node/domestic%20abuse](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/search/node/domestic%20abuse)**

Offers free, confidential support for people affected by crime or traumatic events.

**Safe Lives – [www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)**

Dedicated to ending domestic abuse. Offering training and resources.

**Action for Children – [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)**

Helping children across the UK to grow up safe and happy. For campaigns and articles, enter the search term 'Domestic Abuse'.

**The Survivors Trust – [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)**

Umbrella agency for specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the UK. Including a fee helpline: 08088 010818

**Resources****Domestic Abuse Bill factsheet overview**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2019-factsheets](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2019-factsheets)

**The Baptist Union**

[www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/313891/Domestic\\_Violence.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/313891/Domestic_Violence.aspx)

Various resources for church use.

**Restored Relationships**

[www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)

Various resources for church use.

**Press Red**

[www.pressred.org](http://www.pressred.org)

Various resources for church use.

Any updates to this document will be made on the Methodist Church in Britain website:  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk>. Please check this regularly.

The Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures will be reviewed before February 2023.