

Domestic Abuse From Fear to Freedom:

A Guide for Women Across Wales

*Information, support and practical
steps to help keep you safe*



A South Wales Multi-Agency developed resource
Led by Soroptimist International Wales South and developed in
partnership with Welsh Women's Aid and some local Domestic Abuse
and Sexual Violence Services, alongside wider safeguarding and
specialist legal, justice, advice and support services, together with
Physical Empowerment CIC and Women's Institute, and informed
by survivors with lived experience.

June 2026

Scan the QR code for future
updates and related
resources.



This booklet is here to Support You.

You can read it **in any order** – whatever feels right for you.

Some pages may feel emotional or difficult.

Take breaks when you need to.

You **do not have to act** on anything right now.

Just having the information can help you feel more in control.

There is also a separate booklet with support for planning to leave safely, if you ever choose to.

**You can look at it whenever
you feel ready.**

Remember ...

**You are not alone
You deserve Safety
Respect and Support**



Always here to Help

Need More Information?

This booklet gives you a simple overview to help you understand what might be happening.

There is also a separate booklet for women who are planning to leave or flee –

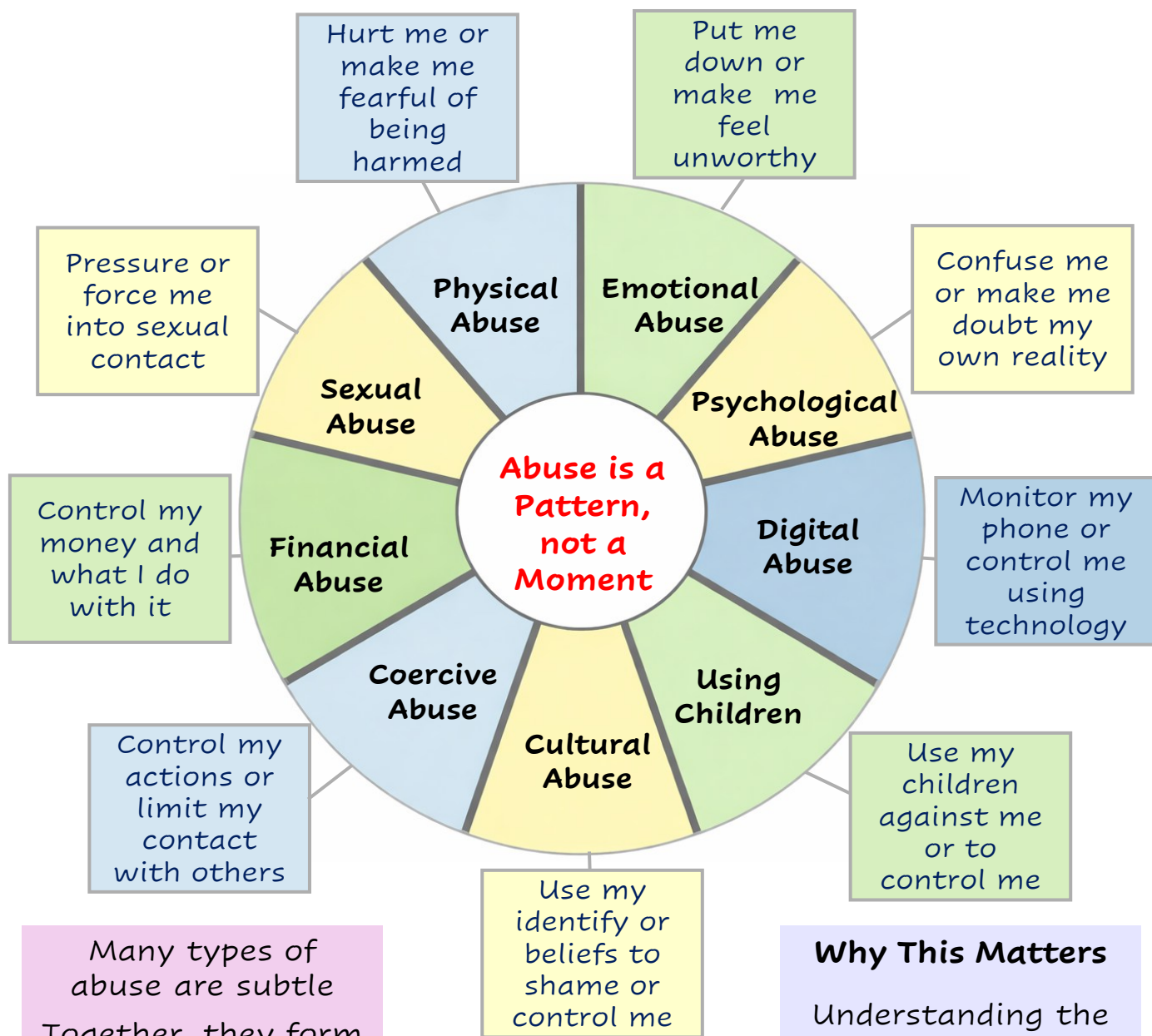
You can look at it whenever you feel ready.



<https://welshwomensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/survivor-engagement/survivor-engagement-resources/>

Understanding the Different Types of Abuse

Domestic Abuse can Affect Anyone
It doesn't always start with violence



Many types of abuse are subtle
Together, they form a pattern of control

These behaviours often overlap and connect, creating a pattern that can be confusing and frightening

You deserve safety, respect, and support.
Abuse is never your fault.

Why This Matters

Understanding the different types can help you:

- ✓ recognise what has been happening
- ✓ put words to your experiences
- ✓ see that none of this is your fault

- This word cloud is drawn from the real words of women affected by domestic abuse



Recognising Abusive Words and Behaviours

Abuse that controls and undermines

STALKING

(a pattern of unwanted attention)

Stalking is repeated behaviour that causes fear, distress, or anxiety.

Examples include:

- Repeatedly turning up at your home, workplace, or places you go
- Excessive messaging, calling, emailing, or contacting you on multiple platforms
- Monitoring your movements, online activity, or who you spend time with
- Following you, watching your home, or waiting for you
- Using others to check up on you
- Continuing contact after being asked to stop

Key message: Stalking is about **pattern and persistence**, not a single incident

If any of this feels familiar, it is not your fault.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- "Look what you have made me do"
- "No-one else would put up with you"
- "Stop crying – you're pathetic"
- "You're lucky I am still here"

GASLIGHTING

- "I don't remember that happening"
- "You're imagining things"
- "You're always over-reacting"
- "That's not what I said – You must have misunderstood"

FINANCIAL ABUSE

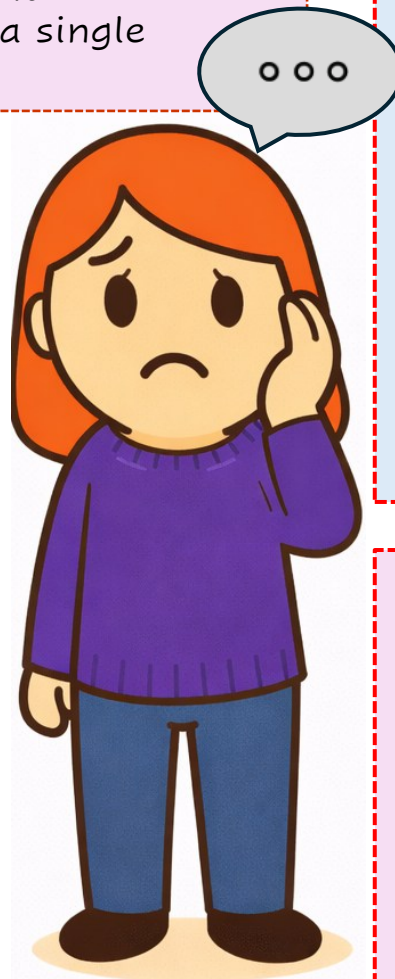
- "I bought that – it's mine."
- "You don't need a job."
- "Give me your bank card – I'll handle the money."

COERCIVE CONTROL (Forced Control)

- "I need to know where you are, it's for your own safety"
- "If you loved me, you'd stay home"
- "You don't need your friends – you have me"
- "Don't wear that"

DIGITAL ABUSE

- "Who were you talking to?"
- "I'll message you until I get a reply"
- "Why didn't you answer right away?"
- "Let me see your phone"



Abuse doesn't have to be physical to be serious

You are not alone, help is available

When Threats are Used to Control You

These words are abuse – even if no-one is hurt

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

- “You’ll be sorry”
- “If you leave, I’ll take the kids”
- “Don’t make me angry”
- “I’ll tell everyone what you are really like”

SEXUAL PRESSURE

- “If you loved me – you would ...”
- “You owe me”
- “Don’t say no – you are my partner”
- “you are my wife; I have a right to sex”

PHYSICAL ABUSE – THREATS

- “I’ll kill you if you tell anyone”
- “You’ll regret it if you don’t do what I say”
- “I’ll smash your face in”
- “I’ll break your arm”

Hmmm

USING CHILDREN

- “I’ll tell them this is your fault”
- “I’ll tell them you don’t love them”
- “You’ll never see them again if you leave”
- “The kids don’t even like you”

THREATS USING OBJECTS OR WEAPONS

- “I’ll hit you with this”
- “Don’t make me use this”
- “You know what I can do with this”

USING PETS

- “I’ll get rid of the cat if you don’t behave”
- “If you go – the dog stays with me”
- “Something bad will happen to the dog if you upset me”



**This is not your fault.
You do not deserve this**

The Difference Between Care and Control

Loves Me

- Understands my need for time alone or with family
- Always tries to understand how I feel
- Supports what I want to do in life
- Likes that I have other friends
- Makes me feel comfortable
- Treats me as an equal
- Accepts me as I am
- Values my opinions
- Respects my family
- Is truthful with me
- Makes me feel safe
- Makes me laugh
- Listens to me

These behaviours can happen in any relationship

~~Loves Me~~ NOT

- Threatens to leave me if I don't do as I am told
- Keeps me from seeing my friends and family
- Embarrasses me in front of others
- Takes my money and other things
- Teases, bullies and puts me down
- Is always 'checking up' on me
- Gets violent, or angry quickly
- Makes all the decisions
- Is sexually demanding
- Makes me feel afraid
- Tries to control me
- Always blames me
- Makes me cry
- Hits me

Early Warning Signs

You might notice signs such as:

- Jealousy shown as 'love'
- Hurtful 'jokes'
- Pressure to move quickly
- Pulling you away from others
- Feeling on edge or uneasy

These early signs matter.

If you recognise unhealthy behaviours, you are not alone
Support is available, and you deserve to feel safe

Some abusers use alcohol or drugs to control, frighten, or weaken someone's ability to stay safe

This is a form of domestic abuse

Alcohol and Drug Coercion

Warning Signs

Blames their abuse on alcohol or drugs

Pressures you to drink or use drugs

Stops you getting help

Gets in the way of your recovery

Uses your drinking/drugs use to shame or scare you

Hides substances or gives them to you without your agreement

Threatens to report your use or take your children

It is not your fault

REMEMBER

Coercing or controlling someone through alcohol or drugs is abuse

You deserve support, not blame

You can still access support, treatment, and protection

Substance use does not reduce your right to safety

Specialist services can help you plan safely without judgement

Mental Health and Wellbeing

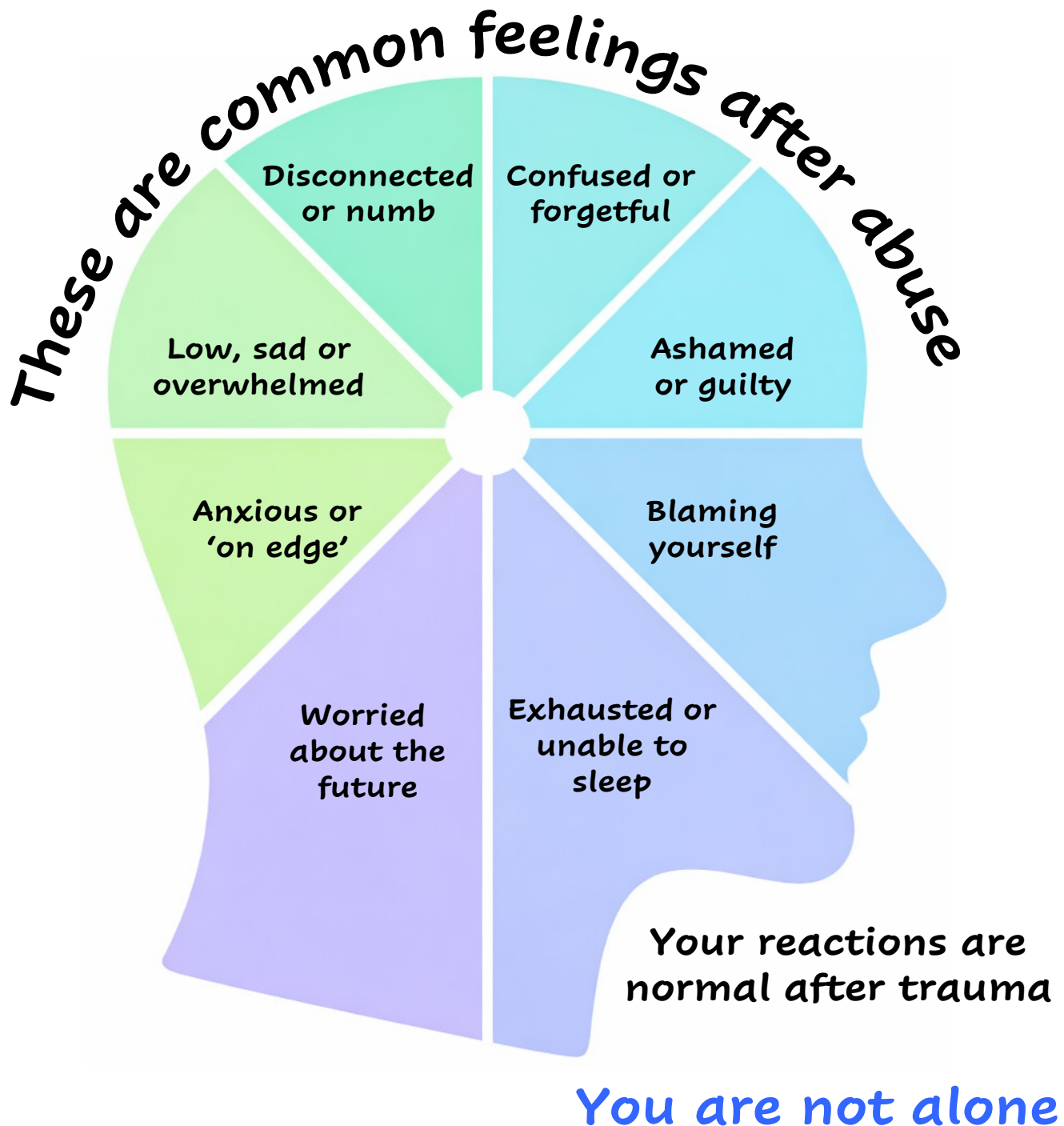
Abuse affects emotional wellbeing and mental health

How you are feeling is a normal response to an abnormal situation

There is nothing 'wrong' with you

Why this happens

Trauma keeps your body and mind in a high-alert state. Your reactions are survival responses – a natural way your body protects you



What Can Help?

*You are not weak,
broken, or to blame*

Talking
to
someone
you trust

*You are coping with more
than people can see*

Small,
calming
routines

Breathing
or
grounding
exercises

Have
regular
meals

Sleep
when
you can

Gentle
activities
that
comfort
you

Trauma-
informed
support
services



*If you feel you are
struggling*

*It is okay to ask for
help*

*You deserve care
and support just as
much as anyone
else*



Out and About

- Tell a trusted colleague or employer if safe to do so
- Ask staff to screen calls or visitors if needed
- Vary your routines and travel routes, if safe to do so
- If something happens while travelling, go somewhere busy or ask staff for help
- Rail to Refuge offers free emergency train travel to a refuge

**You deserve to be safe.
Small steps can help.**



Staying Safe

Safety Steps

- Get help to change locks (landlord, council, or DA service)
- Ask police or housing about extra home safety and Target Hardening
- Fire Service can install smoke alarms and safety equipment
- Ask police to add a safety marker to your address
- Share your safety plan with trusted neighbours
- Identify safest rooms and exits (avoid kitchens/bathrooms)
- Plan and practice escape routes with your children

In Case of an Incident

- Know your quickest exits
- Keep keys and essentials together
- Ask neighbours to call police if they hear worrying noise
- Teach children to call 999 and use a safe word
- Move to a safer room if danger rises
- Know where your children will go if you need to leave quickly

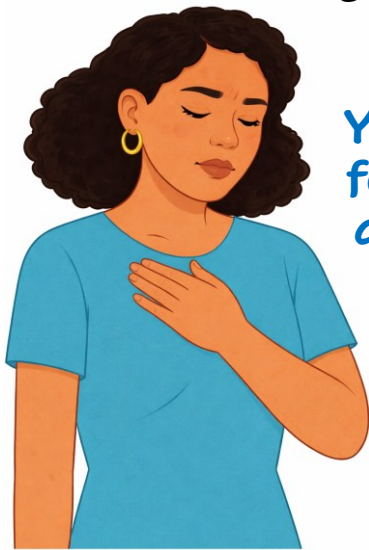
If you are in danger

- Know where you can go quickly (a friend, refuge, or a safe public place)
- Keep emergency numbers handy and teach children how to call for help
- Tell trusted people who can collect your children
- Let someone know your partner no longer lives with you

Emotional Self -Defence

★ Trust your Feelings

If something feels wrong or frightening, it usually is



Your feelings are real

★ Name the Behaviour

Saying "This is abuse" or "This is control"

Helps you hold on to your truth



Remember:

The abuse is not your fault
You did not cause it

You deserve safety, support and respect

★ Set Small Boundaries

You can take time alone. Pause before replying or say "Not now"

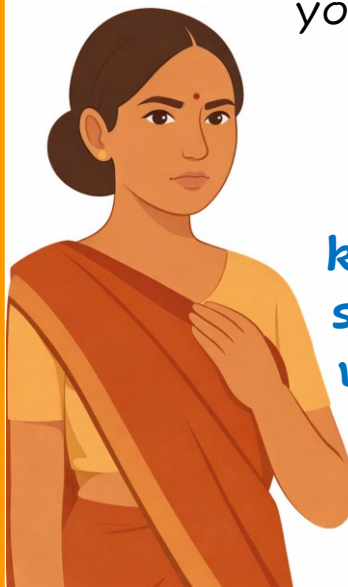
Boundaries protect your emotional space



★ Keep Hold of Your Truth

Abusers try to confuse you

Remind Yourself "I know what I saw, I know what I felt"



★ Tell One Safe Person

You don't have to tell everyone

Sharing with just one trusted person can make you feel less alone



★ Plan Quietly

Knowing who to call or where to go can help you feel calmer, even if you are not ready to leave



Emotional Self -Defence

Your feelings matter

Your voice matters

YOU MATTER

★ Speak Kindly to Yourself

Try Small thoughts like:

"I deserve respect"
"This is not my fault"



★ Hold on to What Helps you Cope

A hobby, music, photos, journaling, faith, walk,

Small things help you feel grounded 🎵



Why you Feel the Way you Do

Living with abuse affects your mind and body.
Your reactions are normal responses to an unsafe situation
— not a sign of weakness or failure



Why you may feel confused

Trauma affects concentration, memory, and decision-making
You may forget details, feel unsure what “really” happened, or doubt yourself
This is a common impact of abuse, especially gaslighting and coercive control



Why you may freeze or stay quiet

When you feel fear, your body may go into freeze mode
This is a survival response — your body trying to keep you safe



Why it feels hard to leave

Fear, love, children, money, hope, shame, or threats can all make leaving feel impossible
These barriers are real,
They do not mean you are weak



Why you may feel strong emotions

After abuse, it's common to feel anxious or on edge, numb or disconnected, sad, ashamed, or angry, overwhelmed or exhausted
There is nothing “wrong” with you.
Your body has been coping with danger



What to Remember

Your reactions make sense
Many survivors feel the same way
Healing is possible, and support is available

Your Phone and Online Safety Matters

Technology can help and support **or monitor and control**

Protecting Your Digital Identity

- Use strong passwords (mix of letters, numbers, symbols)
- Never reuse the same password across accounts
 - Turn on two-step verification for email, banking, and social media
- Do not share personal details like your address, school, or workplace online
 - Keep your email account secure – it often links to all your other accounts

Social Media and Privacy Safety

- Keep your accounts **private** so only people you trust can see your posts
 - Be careful with **friend or follower requests** – abusers can make fake profiles
- Avoid posting **where you are** or photos that show your location
- Check who can **tag you** or see photos you are tagged in
- On Facebook, Instagram, and other apps, **check your privacy settings often** to make sure they are still safe



Sharing or threatening to share intimate or explicit images without consent is a form of abuse

This can include images taken with consent that are later shared or used to control, threaten, or humiliate

South Wales Police Cyberstalking or Harassment

Guidance: https://www.south-wales.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/images/south-wales/campaigns/white-ribbon-day-2025/c25-0040_cyberstalking--harassment-guidance_v4_digital.pdf

Speaking Too Risky?

- Call 999
- press 55 if you cannot speak – **police will know you need help**





Phone and Device Safety

- Keep your phone locked with a PIN or fingerprint
 - Do not share your unlock code
- Consider having a second phone for safe contacts
- Check location-sharing apps (like Find My, WhatsApp, Google Maps) and switch them off if unsafe
- Reset devices if you think spyware has been installed (ask a trusted IT helper or domestic abuse service before doing this)
- Save emergency numbers so you can call quickly if needed

Staying Safe On Your Phone



Spotting and Responding to Tracking

Your phone or online activity may be monitored

Signs this may be happening:

- Phone battery drains very quickly
- They know things you haven't told them
- You notice unfamiliar apps or changes on your phone

What you can do:

- Run a security or antivirus check
 - Change passwords using a different device you know is safe
 - Use private or incognito browsing when seeking help
- If you think you are being tracked, you can contact the police

In Wales, **Project Athena** supports people experiencing stalking or online monitoring

Safety Apps

- **Bright Sky:** gives advice and links to support (available in Welsh and English)
- **Hollie Guard:** turns your phone into a personal safety alarm and can record evidence

⚠ **Only use these apps if it's safe for them to be on your phone**



Older Women

- Older women may be targeted by scams, fake emails, or fraud
- Never give out bank details or passwords over the phone or by email
- Use strong passwords and ask for help setting up security
 - Free digital skills training is available through local libraries, councils, and community groups in Wales



Children and Young People

- Talk with children about being safe online
- Use parental controls and privacy settings to protect them
- Remind children not to share personal details or accept requests from people they don't know
 - If a child is being contacted online by someone unsafe, they may need help and support



Keeping Evidence Safe

Save messages, screenshots, call logs or photos somewhere safe the abuser cannot access

This may help if you report the abuse later

STAY SAFE

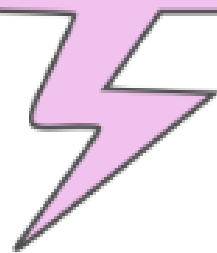




LGBTQ+ Support

You have the
right to disclose
safely

No one should
pressure you to
'out' yourself



If you are LGBTQ+
and experiencing
abuse, you are not
alone

You deserve safety,
respect and support
Help is available



Galop

Support for LGBTQ+
people facing domestic abuse,
sexual abuse or hate crime



0800 999 5428



<https://www.galop.org.uk>



help@galop.org.uk

Your identity does not
change your rights to safety
You Deserve to be Safe

Support for Older Women Experiencing Abuse

You may be experiencing:

- **Controlling** my money, pension or medications
- **Withholding** care or stopping me attending health care appointment
- **Not allowing** me to access my hearing aids, glasses or mobility aids
- **Criticising** or humiliating me
- **Isolating me** from family, friends or pets

It's never
too late
to be safe

I am:

- Afraid of starting again
- Worried about housing or money
- Dependent on someone for care
- Isolated or unsure who to talk to
- Embarrassed about leaving later in life

YOUR FEELINGS ARE VALID

Domestic abuse can happen
at any age

Some older women have lived
with abuse for many years,
and others experience it for
the first time later in life

You can get help with:

- safe housing
- care arrangements
- benefits and pensions
- medical support
- emotional wellbeing
- legal protection

Whatever your situation, you
deserve safety, respect, and
support

Remember ...

It is never too late to be safe

You deserve support, dignity,
and a life free from abuse –
at every age



Disability and Accessibility Considerations

These behaviours are abuse

Controlling medication, mobility aids, or care

Refusing support with daily tasks

Monitoring your movements or communication

isolating you from friends, family, or carers

Using your condition to frighten or shame you



Some abusers misuse a person's disability or health needs to control them

Abuse can affect anyone.

If you have a disability, long-term condition, or access needs, you may face extra barriers – but ***you still have the right to be safe***

Ask services to meet your needs –

They are required to do so

Where to get support

Specialist disability and domestic abuse services can help you plan safely, access adjustments, and understand your rights

You deserve safety and dignity

Just like every other Woman and Girl.

Support is available for you

Your rights

You have the right to:

- **Reasonable adjustments** in all services
- **Accessible communication**
- **Interpreters** or specialist support
- **Safe care** arrangements
- **Accessible refuge** or alternative accommodation

Support for Women From Overseas Residing in Wales



You are
WELCOME
You are safe

If you are experiencing abuse,
you can get help

Support is available to
everyone, regardless of
background or circumstances



Your Rights

- You can **get help** even if your **visa depends on your partner**
- You can get **medical care**
- The **police can help** keep you safe

You deserve safety and dignity –
no matter where you come from

BAWSO (Wales)

Support for domestic abuse,
trafficking, forced marriage,
and FGM

☎ 0800 731 8147

🌐 <https://bawso.org.uk/en/>

Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC)

May give up to 3 months of
money and housing if your
visa depends on your partner

Apply here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-benefits-for-visa-holder-domestic-violence>

Rights of Women – Immigration & Asylum Advice Line

Free legal advice on:
domestic abuse and
immigration; visas and
family/private life; asylum;
options if you have no
recourse to public funds

☎ 0207 490 7689

<https://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/immigration-and-asylum-law/>

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is illegal. It is when someone pressures, threatens, or forces you to marry against your wishes

You have the right to choose whether to marry

If you are at risk or fear being taken abroad, help is available

The police can investigate, and the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) can provide urgent support

A court can issue a **Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO)** to help keep you safe

A marriage is not valid if you did not agree to it freely



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a harmful practice where a girl's or woman's genitals are cut, removed, or injured for non-medical reasons. It can cause long-term physical and emotional harm

FGM is illegal in the UK, including taking a girl abroad to have it.

If you have experienced FGM or are worried someone is at risk, support is available.

Through NHS FGM clinics, the NSPCC, BAWSO, and specialist medical and counselling services

Domestic Abuse in Different Cultures

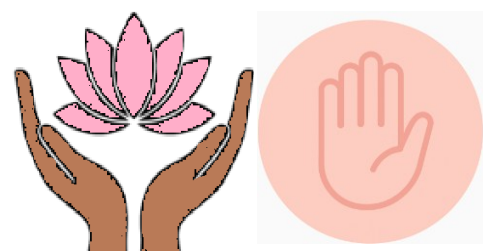
'Honour-Based' Abuse (HBA)

'Honour-based' abuse happens when someone is harmed, threatened or controlled because their behaviour is seen as bringing "shame" on the family

It can involve:
strict rules about friendships, dress or leaving the house
being watched or followed
verbal abuse or threats
physical harm or punishment
pressure to marry someone you have not chosen

This can be carried out by one person or by several family members acting together

It is a crime.
You have the right to be safe



Family and Community Pressure

Some women may experience pressure from extended family or community members, including:

- Being told you must stay in a marriage, no matter what
- Being stopped from seeking help
- Having your movements or phone use closely monitored
 - Threats of being disowned, shamed, or isolated
- Control over money, documents or immigration status

This is abuse.

You deserve safety and support.

Your Culture and Faith Matter

And You Still Have Choices

You do not have to leave your culture, community or faith to be safe

Support services will:

- Respect your cultural and faith needs
 - Listen without judgement
- Keep your information confidential
- Help you make choices that feel right for you

Domestic Abuse Across Cultures



If any of this feels familiar, you are not alone.

You can talk to specialist services who understand cultural pressures, including **BAWSO**, Women's Aid, health services, the police, or your local domestic abuse service

You deserve safety and respect — in whatever way feels right for you



Support Available to All



NEED SUPPORT? START HERE WELSH WOMEN'S AID

Can help you find local specialist support services for domestic abuse and sexual violence

This includes

- Local Domestic Abuse Services
- Specialist support for women and children
- Help to access the right local organisation

<https://welshwomensaid.org.uk/information-support/find-your-local-service/>

**In Immediate
Danger,
Call 999,
can't speak?
press 55
when
prompted**

Translation & Interpretation
Services should arrange an Interpreter for you, including spoken language or BSL support

Live Fear Free Helpline – Wales

Call – text- live chat – email – video relay

Free, confidential support for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, or for someone supporting them. They can:

- Help you talk through what's happening
- Support you to stay safe
- Help you find local and specialist services including Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs)

 **0808 80 10 800** (Free, 24/7)

 Text **07860 077333**

 info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

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

Confidential. You do not have to give your name

Housing Services:

Support with housing and homelessness

<https://sheltercymru.org.uk/>
Chat AI available

Victim's Right to Review You can ask for a review

if the police or CPS decide not to charge or stop a case

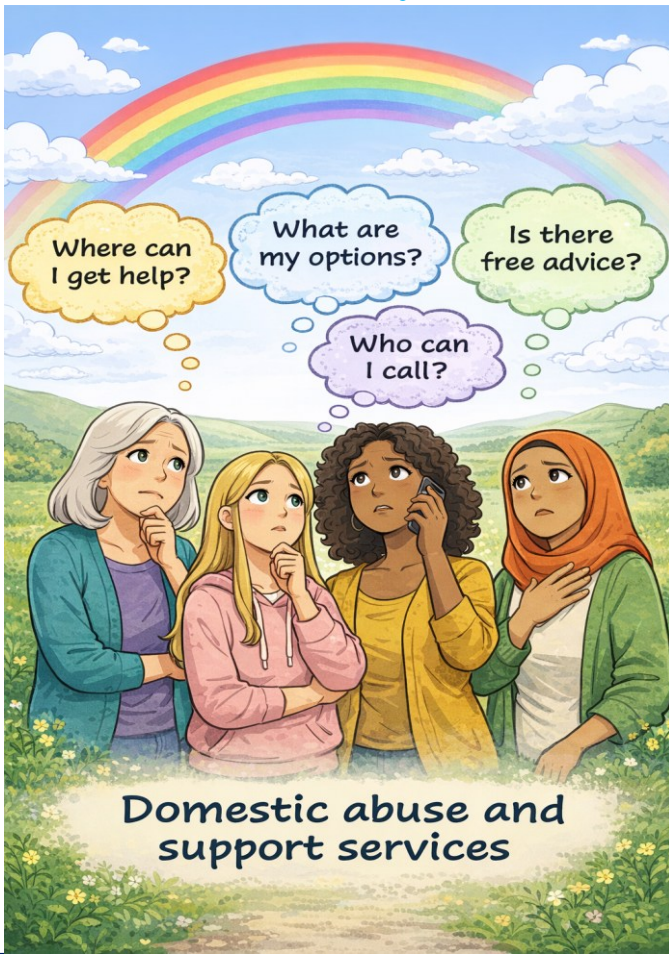
[a-guide-to-the-victims-right-to-review-scheme.pdf](#)

Support at Court

Attending court can be stressful. Free, independent support is available from the Witness Service

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/legal-system/going-to-court-as-a-witness1/get-help-and-support-being-a-witness/witness-referral/>

Extra / Specialist Support Available



Domestic abuse and support services

Children and Young People

Support is available for children and young people affected by domestic abuse, whether or not they live with the abusive person

Barnardos (Parents & Carers)

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers>

MEIC (under 25s)

worried about abuse or violence, contact Meic advice line and talk to a trusted adult

<https://www.meiccymru.org/violence-abuse/> - online chat

Phone/WhatsApp 080880 23456
Text 07943 114 449

Deaf, Help if you are Experiencing Domestic Abuse

<https://signhealth.org.uk/announcement/signhealths-domestic-abuse-service-helpline-for-deaf-people-in-wales/>

Older Women Advice:

Hourglass Cymru

Support and advice for Older Women experiencing, or at risk of, abuse in Wales

☎ 0808 808 8141 (24/7)

📠 078 6005 2906 | 📧

cymru@wearehourglass.org



www.wearehourglass.cymru/wales

Age Cymru:

<https://www.agecymru.wales/sites/assets/documents/information-guides-and-factsheets/fs78w.pdf>

<https://www.agecymru.wales/information-advice/>

Older People's Commissioner for Wales Help if you are experiencing abuse:

<https://olderpeople.wales/abuse-support/>

Galop

Support for LGBT+ people experiencing abuse or violence, including a national helpline
Tel: 0800 999 5428

E-mail: help@galop.org.uk

Website: <https://www.galop.org.uk>

BAWSO

Confidential, specialist support for Black and minority ethnic survivors of domestic abuse and family-related abuse, provide translation service

Helpline: 0800 731 8147 **24/7**

<https://bawso.org.uk/en/>

New Pathways

Confidential counselling and specialist support for survivors of rape and sexual abuse

☎ **01685 379 310**

enquiries@newpathways.org.uk

Your 12 Rights as a Victim of Crime.



You can get help to understand – with an interpreter, advocate, or clear information



The police must take your report quickly – your statement should not be delayed



You will be told what happens next – and where to get support when you report the crime



You should be offered support that meets your needs – such as counselling, housing advice, or other help



You can ask about compensation – and be told how to apply



You will get updates about your case – from the police and CPS



You can make a personal statement – to explain how the crime has affected you



You will be supported at court – with things like safe waiting areas, screens, or video links



You will be told the result of the case – and if there is an appeal



You can claim expenses and get property back – if you go to court or if your belongings were held



You can be kept informed about the offender – for example if they are released from prison



You can complain if your rights are not respected – and expect it to be taken seriously

Orders: Who Makes & Enforces Them

Which order protect what?



Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN): Emergency notice to stop contact or keep abuser away
Made and Enforced by: Police (note: *short term order*)



Bail Conditions: Rules such as “no contact.” Breaking them is a crime
Made by: Police or court, Enforced by: Police



Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) Can keep abuser away for up to 28 days
Made by: Court (after police apply) Enforced by: Police



Non-Molestation Order (NMO): Stops threats, harassment, or contact
Made by: Family court on request of victim/ their solicitor;
Enforced by: Police [*Breach = criminal offence*]



Occupation Order: Can make the abuser leave the home
Made by: Family court, Enforced by: Police (if a power of arrest is added)



Stalking Protection Order (SPO): Stops stalking, following, or unwanted contact
Made by: Court (police apply); Enforced by: Police



Restraining Order: Prevents contact or harassment; can be made even if abuser found not guilty
Made by: Criminal court; Enforced by: Police



Prohibited Steps Order (Children): Stops a child being taken or certain actions without permission
Made by: Family court, Enforced by: Police only if criminal activity occurs e.g. child abduction



Forced Marriage: It is illegal in the UK — including threats, pressure, or taking someone abroad to marry. Police can investigate and make arrests
Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) can be made by court to protect you

Additional Legal Protections & Support



Urgent Applications

A judge can act quickly if you are in danger. Protection can sometimes be put in place the same day



Special Measures (In Court)

You can give evidence safely — by video link, from behind a screen, or from a separate room away from the abuser



Serving Orders

Court orders must be officially delivered to the abuser before they can be enforced

This is called “serving” the order



Disclosure Schemes (Police Powers)

Clare’s Law: You can ask the police if a partner has a history of violence

Sarah’s Law: You can ask the police if someone poses a risk to a child



Police Duty to Protect You

Police must act to keep you safe if they believe you are at risk, even if you feel unsure about reporting



Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)

IDVAs can help you apply for legal protection, support you with safety planning, and speak to the police or courts on your behalf



Emergency Housing and Refuges

If you are in danger, you have the right to emergency housing or refuge support



Your Right to Privacy

Your address and personal details can be kept confidential in police statements and court papers



Evidence the Police Can Use

Police can collect 999 recordings, CCTV, medical notes and witness statements — not just messages from your phone



Court Support Workers

A court support worker can stay with you, explain the process, and help you use special measures

Frequently Asked Questions

What if no one believes me?

You will be believed.
You do not need proof to ask for help.
Support workers and police take abuse seriously.

What if it's not "bad enough"?

If you feel scared, controlled, or harmed, it is bad enough.
All types of abuse matter.

I'm scared to leave. Is that normal?

Yes. Leaving can feel frightening.
You do not have to leave alone — support services can help you plan safely.

What if they find out I asked for help?

You can speak to services confidentially.
Your abuser will not be told.

I don't want to get them into trouble.

You can get support without making a police report.
Your safety comes first.

What if I go back?

Many women leave and return.
You can always ask for help again — no judgement.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to talk to the police?

No. It is your choice. Support workers can explain your options.

What about my children?

You will not lose your children for asking for help. Services can help keep you and your children safe.

Do I have to go to a refuge?

No. Refuge is one option. You may have other safe choices.

What if I still love them?

Many women feel this. You will not be judged for your feelings.

Can I get help if English isn't my first language?

Yes. Interpreters can be arranged.

I feel alone.

Abuse isolates people. When you reach out, you won't be alone anymore.

Glossary

Simple Explanations of words you may hear
from support services or Courts

A	Abuse: Behaviours that scare, controls, hurts or pressures you
B	Bail Conditions: Rules the court gives to the abuser (e.g. no contact). Breaking then is a crime
C	CAFCASS Cymru: Speaks with parents and children for Family Court and checks safety
C	Coercive Control: a pattern of control – monitoring, threats, isolation or making you doubt yourself
D	DAF (Discretionary Assistance Fund): Emergency money in Wales if you need help quickly
E	Emergency SMS/ Silent Solution (55): Texting 999 (if registered) or pressing 55 when you can't speak
E	Economic Abuse: Controlling your money, work or access to essentials
G	Gaslighting: Making you question your memory, feelings or reality
I	IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor): A domestic abuse specialist who helps keep you safe
I	ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor): A Specialist who supports you after sexual violence
N	Non-Molestation Order (NMO): A court order that stops threats, harassment or contact. Breaking it is a crime
O	Occupational Order: says who can live in the home
P	PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner): oversees victim support and policing
S	SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre): Medical care, support and evidence collection – even if you don't report to police
R	Refuge: A safe place to stay if you need to leave home quickly
R	Restraining Order: A court order that stops someone contacting you
V	VAWDASV: Violence against women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales)
V	VPS (Victims Personal Statement): Tells the court how the abuse has affected you

Quick Reference / (Emergency Help Section)

Police

-  Police Emergency 999
-  Police Emergency - Silent 999 – When You Can’t Speak

If you are in danger but cannot talk:

- Call 999
- If using a mobile, press 55 when prompted – this lets the police know it is an emergency
- You can also register your phone for emergencySMS by texting register to 999

-  Police Emergency (non-emergency) 101

24/7 Live Fear Free Helpline (Wales)

Free, confidential support for anyone experiencing abuse

- Call 0808 80 10 800
- Text 07860 077333
- Webchat and email available at: livefearfree.gov.wales

Safe Spaces in Pharmacies and Banks

Ask staff for a “Safe Space” in participating pharmacies, banks or building societies.

You will be taken to a private room where you can make calls and access support safely

On Trains and Stations

If you feel unsafe on a train or at a station:

Text British Transport Police on 61016

You can text quietly without making a call

In an emergency, call 999

Ask for Angela

Some pubs, bars and restaurants offer the Ask for Angela service.

If you feel unsafe, you can ask staff for “Angela” to discreetly get help. Staff can help you leave safely, call a taxi or trusted contact, or contact support services or the police if needed

Important / Emergency Numbers

- Local Domestic Abuse Service:
- Support Worker:
- Solicitor:
- Social Services:
- School/Nursery:
- GP:

All information in this booklet was correct at the time of printing