



# What is domestic abuse?

**Duty Line: 0300 300 4370**

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

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

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

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

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

## Get help now

You can contact Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP) and its group members by email to [bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or by visiting <https://bedsdv.org.uk/>

The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership brings together key agencies across Bedfordshire to raise awareness, to deliver services, and to work together to improve local response to domestic abuse.

BDAP work closely with local authorities and other agencies to provide services in the local area, BDAP deliver a two-tier training programme for professionals who work with those affected by domestic abuse and strive to bring all those agencies working locally together to ensure a coordinated response to domestic abuse. BDAP also coordinates the monthly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and the Domestic Abuse Champion Scheme in both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire

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



If you are a man experiencing domestic abuse you can contact the Men's Advice Line on **0808 801 0327**.

If you are in a same-sex relationship you can call the National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline on **0800 999 5428**.

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

Call the police on **999** if:

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

## Leaving home immediately

If you think you need leave your home, try to arrange temporary housing from the council before you leave. Not everyone leaving home due to violence is entitled to emergency accommodation.

You could stay with friends or relatives while you think about what to do next.

If you're a woman leaving domestic abuse, try to find a place in a women's refuge. Central Bedfordshire Council can help you with this.

Take some essentials with you such as a change of clothes, toiletries and any medication you need to take regularly. Try to bring important items such as your passport, bank and credit cards and mobile phone.

Don't make a decision to give up your home permanently until you have spoken to an adviser and considered all your options.

Use Shelter's directory to find a Shelter advice centre or Citizens Advice in your area.

## Get housing advice from the council

You can apply to our Housing Options team as a homeless person if you can't stay in your home.

The council will give you advice about finding somewhere to live. Some people are entitled to emergency accommodation.

If the council has a duty to find you somewhere to live, you will be asked to provide details of your situation. You may be asked for supporting evidence, which could include details and dates of incidents. You can take a friend or an adviser with you for support.

Get advice immediately if the council says it won't help you because it believes it was reasonable for you to stay in your home. You could challenge its decision.

Contact Civil Legal Advice on **0345 345 4 345** if you are entitled to legal aid.

Use Shelter's directory to find an adviser in your area.

## Help from social services

Some people may be entitled to help from the council's Social Care services.

Social care services might be able to help if you:

- are elderly
  - have children living with you
- 

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

Social Care services may be able to help by finding accommodation for you, paying for a deposit or providing financial support.

There are no rules about the kind of help social services have to provide.

Further details of how Central Bedfordshire Council's Social Care services can help can be found on the website <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/health-social-care/protection/report-abuse.aspx>

## Refuges for women

Women experiencing domestic abuse may be able to stay in a women's refuge. Some refuges are specifically for women from certain backgrounds, such as Irish or Asian women.

Staff at refuges can give you advice about your situation. Contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline on **0808 2000 247** for more information about refuges.

## Refuges for men

If you are a man who has to leave home because of domestic abuse, you can make a homeless application to the council. There is limited specialist housing for men experiencing domestic abuse.

Contact a Shelter advice centre or Citizens Advice to check what help is available.

Use Shelter's directory to find help in your area.

## Help for children and young people

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

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

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

Find out more from The Hideout about children and young people and domestic abuse and violence.

## Get more help

If you need more help call the Shelter advice line on 0808 800 4444.

## Confidentiality

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





**Contact us...**

by telephone: 0300 300 8302 or 0300 300 4370

by email: [customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

on the web: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,  
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

