



# Domestic violence and abuse



## Large print format available

If someone in your household needs this information in large print or as an audio recording, please contact our Customer Service Centre on **020 3535 3535**

This leaflet explains what **Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)** is and what you can do if you are experiencing DVA.



## This leaflet explains about domestic violence and abuse

You do not need to live in fear of domestic violence and abuse.

If you are being threatened or assaulted by someone you live with, that is domestic abuse. It is controlling and aggressive behaviour which includes all kinds of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse within intimate relationships and where a child is violent towards a parent.

**Domestic abuse is a crime. No one deserves to be assaulted, abused or humiliated in what is supposed to be a caring relationship. Try to understand that you are not to blame. It is your abuser's behaviour that needs to change.**

This leaflet explains what you can do if you are experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

### Our promise to you

We are fully committed to dealing with any issues relating to domestic violence and abuse. We will:

- not tolerate domestic violence and abuse
- support you to ensure you have a safe and secure place to live
- work with other agencies to deal with the problem
- promote equal opportunities and value diversity to ensure that you get the right services.

## Recognising domestic abuse

Domestic violence and abuse is caused by an abuser's desire to gain power and control over their partner. Abusers use physical, emotional, sexual and financial tactics to achieve this.

**Physical** – such as punching, slapping, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair, pushing, burning and strangling

**Sexual** – such as unwanted touching, forced sex, sexual jokes, and humiliating gender remarks

**Psychological or emotional** – such as criticising, name calling, sulking, persistently putting you down in front of other people, lying to friends and family about you, stalking, being controlling, verbal abuse, isolation and making threats

**Financial** – such as withholding money, controlling money, not allowing you to earn your own money and denying access to financial information.

## What can I expect from Metropolitan?

It is our policy to support all victims and help them resolve issues that are affecting their housing situation.

This means we will:

- Respond within 24 hours (on working days, Monday to Friday)
- treat all complaints of domestic violence and abuse seriously
- take a victim-centred approach and give priority to our customers' safety
- where possible, offer customers the option to talk to someone of the same sex and/or cultural background or sexuality
- ensure confidentiality.



## What can I do?

Acknowledging that what is happening to you is wrong is not easy to accept. Getting help may be daunting, but it is the first stage towards stopping the abuse. There are three important steps to escaping domestic abuse:

- 1** Report the violence and abuse – don't suffer in silence. Be aware that help and support is available. The most important thing you can do is tell someone. You might feel scared, isolated or ashamed about telling anyone. Never be afraid to ask for help.
- 2** Take action to escape the violence. If you have decided to leave your partner, domestic abuse organisations can help you and your children to stay safe.
- 3** Keep safe from the violence. Deciding what to do can take time. You may wish to involve the police, talk to a domestic abuse organisation or end your relationship. Whatever you decide, your safety is always most important.

## Working together

We will work with our partners to support you and deal with anyone committing domestic violence or abuse. We will make sure you get the services you need to ensure you and your family are safe.

With your agreement, we will take part in multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). If your case is not referred to MARAC, we will organise multi-agency meetings with the relevant support agencies such as the police and Victim Support.

## Can I move away?

If you are in serious danger and want to move away from your home, we can help you apply for temporary accommodation with a local authority or refuge. Once you have been offered a safe place to stay, we can advise you on your long-term housing options.

## How can I protect myself?

There are a number of options that can protect you from domestic violence and abuse. These include court orders, preventing the abuser from attacking, threatening or harassing you or your children, or barring the abuser from your home.

To find out more about these powers you should seek legal advice or contact one of the agencies listed at the end of this leaflet.

## Where else can I get help and support?

**If you are in immediate danger, always dial 999.**

We have listed below a number of national helplines, but you can also find services through your local authority.

## National Domestic Violence Helpline

Community Legal Advice can provide free help or legal advice over the phone. **0808 2000 247**

This is a 24-hour national domestic violence helpline, run in partnership with Women's Aid [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) and Refuge [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)



## **Victim Support**

**0845 30 30 900**

**Typetalk users: 18001 0845 30 30 900**

To keep your number private, press **141** before you dial the number.

## **Refuge – women and children victims**

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

This is a national charity for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

## **Women’s Aid – female victims**

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

## **MALE – male victims**

**0808 801 0327**

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

## **Broken Rainbow National Helpline**

**0300 999 5428**

(Opening hours Monday and Thursday 2pm to 8pm,  
Wednesdays 10am to 1pm)

**[www.broken-rainbow.org.uk](http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk)**

This provides services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people who are experiencing domestic abuse and violence.

## **Forced Marriage Unit**

**020 7008 0151**

The unit provides information for you if you are worried that you or a friend or relative might be forced into marriage.



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Metropolitan is a leading provider of integrated housing services, care and support and community regeneration.

## Customer Service Centre

020 3535 3535

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