Sanctuary

Domestic abuse: what you can expect from us

About this guide

This guide explains how we will support you if you tell us about domestic abuse, or if we are concerned it may be happening. It covers Sanctuary Housing, including homeownership, and Sanctuary Supported Living.

If you or someone else are at immediate risk of injury or harm, call the police on 999 immediately.

Domestic abuse is never acceptable. If you tell us about domestic abuse, we will listen with care, take your concerns seriously and work with you to get the support you need.

What domestic abuse means

Domestic abuse can be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour. It can include:

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

Domestic abuse can happen between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other. This includes current or former partners, relatives and people who share a child.

What you can expect from us

- We will listen without judging you and put your safety first.
- We will agree with you how and when it is safe to contact you.
- We will ask what support you need to communicate with us, such as an interpreter or another way of contacting us.
- We will look at the risks and act quickly if we need to.
- Where appropriate, we will work with the police, local authorities and specialist support services.
- Depending on your circumstances, we will consider housing advice, another place to stay, specialist support or extra security for your home.
- We will follow our safeguarding procedures if a child or adult may be at risk.
- We will treat you fairly and respect your circumstances, culture and needs.

Contact us

If you or another person is in immediate danger, please contact the police immediately by calling 999.

If you are worried about your own safety or someone else's safety, please speak to a member of staff or call us on **0800 131 3348.** You do not need to have reported the abuse to the police before speaking to us or asking for support.

Privacy and sharing information

We will treat what you tell us confidentially. Sometimes, we may need to share relevant information without your consent to help protect you or someone else from harm, or where the law allows or requires us to do so. Where possible and safe, we will explain what information we are sharing and why.

What happens after you tell us about domestic abuse

1. We check immediate safety

First, we will check whether you are in immediate danger and contact the police if needed. We will also consider whether a child or adult at risk needs safeguarding support. If your home is not secure, we may arrange emergency repairs.

We will consider your individual needs when supporting you. This could include arranging an interpreter or providing extra support if you have difficulty reading, communicating or explaining what has happened.

You can also tell us if you would feel more comfortable being supported by someone of a particular gender or background. We will do our best to respect your preference and, where possible, arrange for another member of staff to support you.

2. We contact you safely and assess risk

A case manager will contact you using the contact details you have told us are safe to use. If another agency (e.g. the police) has not already completed a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-based Violence (DASH) risk assessment with you, the case manager will aim to complete this with you within one working day of being told about the abuse or receiving a report.

3. We agree the right support

The risk assessment helps us understand what action is needed. If the risk is high, or could get worse, we can refer your case to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) after identifying the need for a referral. At this meeting, relevant organisations agree what they will do to help reduce the risk.

The police may investigate any criminal offences. Specialist agencies can provide advice and support. We will agree with you what housing support you need from us and how often we will update you.

4. We close the case carefully

Before we close your case, we will make sure the actions we agreed and any reasonable steps to reduce the risk are complete. We will tell you why we are closing the case.

If we cannot reach you after making reasonable attempts, including through partner organisations, we may close the case after two months without contact. We will keep it open if you are waiting for a court hearing or a move. We will try to carry out welfare checks at times we have agreed with you.

Your choices matter

We will put you at the centre of our response. We will respect your choices and agree with you how to contact and support you safely. Where possible, we will also consider your preference for the gender or background of your case manager.

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Further information

For more information about how Sanctuary can support victims of domestic abuse, visit the Domestic Abuse page on our website. Sanctuary Supported Living customers should also view Domestic Abuse | Sanctuary Supported Living.

These specialist organisations can provide advice and support:

- Emergency court protection (National Centre for Domestic Violence) – visit www.ncdv.org.uk or call 0800 970 2070
- Support for children and young people (Childline) – visit www.childline.org.uk or call 0800 1111
- Forced marriage advice (Forced Marriage Unit) – visit www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage or call 020 7008 0151
- LGBT+ abuse support (Galop) – visit www.galop.org.uk/helpline or call 0800 999 5428
- Honour-based abuse and forced marriage support (Karma Nirvana) – visit karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/helpline or call 0800 5999 247
- Domestic abuse support for men (ManKind Initiative) – visit mankind.org.uk or call 01823 334244
- 24-hour domestic abuse support for women (Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline) – visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk or call 0808 2000 247
- Domestic abuse support for older people (Hourglass) – visit https://wearehourglass.org/domestic-abuse or call 0808 808 8141
- Help to stop your abusive behaviour (Respect Phoneline) – visit respectphoneline.org.uk/contact-us or call 0808 802 4040
- Free family law advice for women in England and Wales (Rights of Women) – visit www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/family-law or call 020 7251 6577