



LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON



DOMESTIC ABUSE

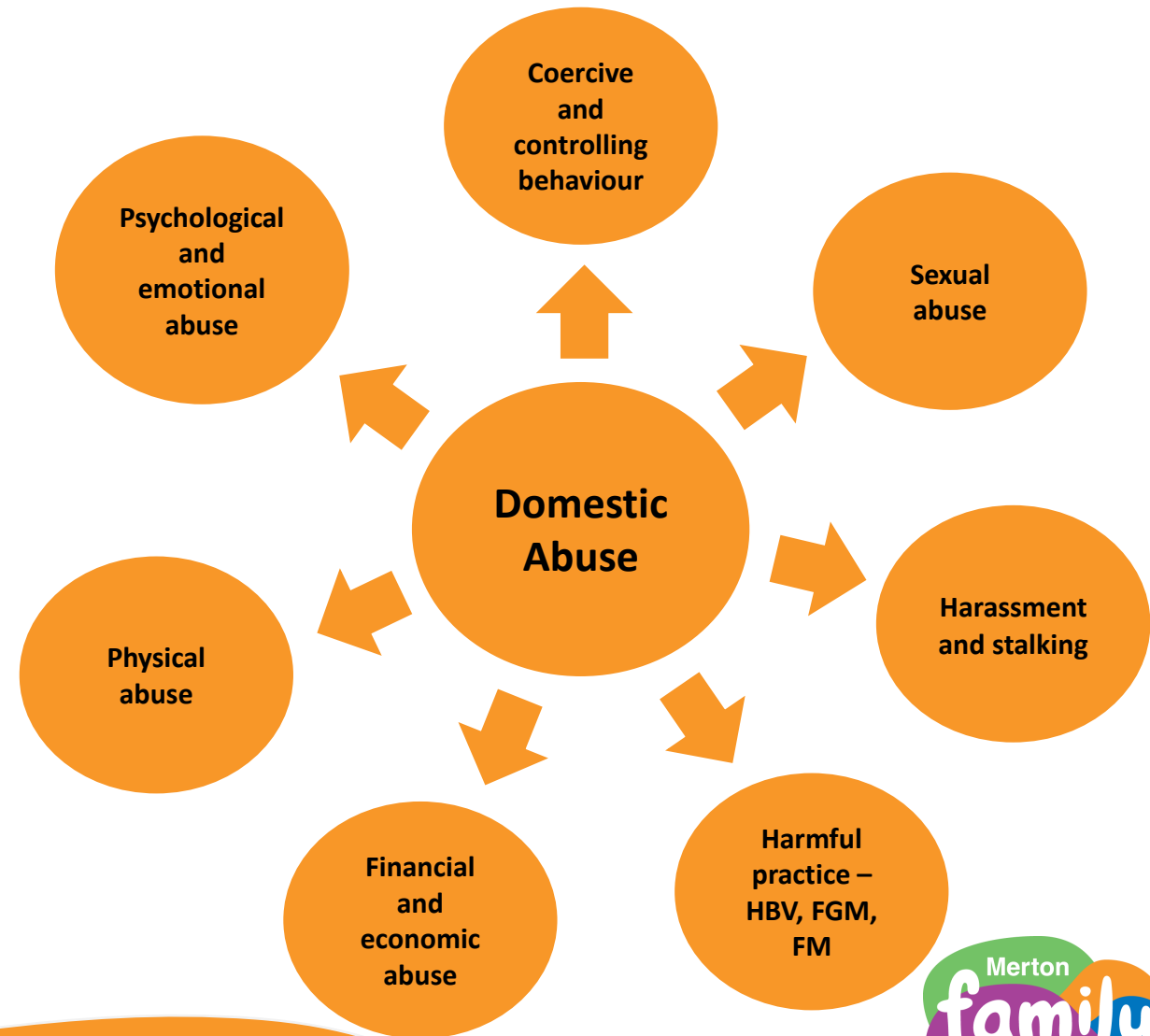


DOMESTIC ABUSE

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Physical or sexual abuse;
- Violent or threatening behaviour;
- Controlling or coercive behaviour;
- Economic abuse;
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

This also includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.



POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

The power and control wheel offers a visual representation of the tactics employed by abusive partners to assert power and control in relationships.

The wheel outlines patterns of abuse encompassing physical, emotional, psychological, and financial aspects.

It includes tactics such as intimidation, isolation, threats, coercion, and manipulation.



DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out the first definition in law of what constitutes domestic abuse.

The definition goes well beyond physical violence. It recognises that domestic abuse can be emotional, coercive or controlling, or economic.

To fall within the definition, both victim and perpetrator must be “personally connected”. The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

The definition is gender neutral to ensure that all victims and all types of domestic abuse are sufficiently captured, and no victim is excluded from protection or access to services.

The [supporting statutory guidance](#) provides more detail on the features of domestic abuse, including recognising that the majority of victims are women, and the majority of perpetrators are men.

DOMESTIC ABUSE OR PARENTAL CONFLICT

Domestic Abuse

- There is an imbalance of power with one parent using coercion and control against the other, the non-abusing parent is likely fearful of their partner/ex-partner.
- May include some or all of the following: Physical violence which may lead to injuries, intimidation or threats, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and harassment.
- Children experience this abuse, or the harm caused to a parent who's been abused. This will be frightening, worrying and is likely to cause significant harm.

Parent Conflict

- Conflict is frequent and intense and is often left poorly resolved or unresolved.
- There is a lack of open communication and topics of conflict are frequently revisited.
- There is no physical violence and no significant power imbalance between the parents
- Children may be caught in the middle of the conflict but this is not likely to lead to significant harm

KEY INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Never alone, a partner or family member is always present

Cancelled or frequently not attending appointments

Anxiety, Depression, Suicidal ideation, Alcohol or Substance use

Always seeming afraid or nervous

Being unable to meet anywhere in public or never able to take calls alone

Reluctance to speak about personal matters or relationship

Isolation

Repeated damage to property / Abandoning property/tenancy

Visible bruising / bleeding

Noise or anti-social behaviour complaints from neighbours

Repeatedly needing to be rehoused

COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE CONTROL

Pressuring someone to have sex or messing with their birth control to cause a pregnancy is called sexual and reproductive coercion. It's a form of abuse.

Sexual control is pressuring a partner to do things they don't want to do sexually. It can happen to anyone of any gender or sexual orientation.

Pressuring a partner to get pregnant or messing with birth control to cause a pregnancy is called reproductive control.

Examples of Reproductive Control:


- ❖ refusing to wear a condom, or pressuring your partner not to use one
- ❖ hiding or throwing out birth control
- ❖ taking off or breaking condoms to try to cause a pregnancy
- ❖ lying about using birth control
- ❖ threatening a partner who doesn't want to get pregnant
- ❖ forcing a partner to have an abortion or carry a pregnancy to term




GASLIGHTING

Gaslighting is a technique that undermines a person's perception of reality.

Gaslighting can make someone second guess themselves, their memories, recent events and perceptions.

WHAT IS GASLIGHTING? 

When someone intentionally twists your perception of reality for their own gain.
Based on the play and movie, 'Gaslight.'

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE? 

You're overreacting. **You need help.**
I didn't do that. **You're upset over nothing.**
You must be confused again.
Just calm down. **You're so dramatic.**
I never said that. **Why are you so defensive?**
What are you talking about? **It's your fault.**
You're so sensitive. **You twist things.**
I never said that. **Stop imagining things**
I was just joking.
You're remembering things wrong.
It's always something with you.

#DomesticViolenceAwarenessMonth

Merton family hub

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS (VAWG)

Domestic violence and abuse – a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) – involves the complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is mostly carried out on young girls at some time between infancy and the age of 15. Unlike male circumcision, which is legal in many countries, it is now illegal across much of the globe, and its extensive harmful health consequences are widely recognised.

Forced marriage (FM) – a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor.

‘Honour’-based violence (NBV)– violence committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family and/or community. Women, especially young women, are the most common targets, often where they have acted outside community boundaries of perceived acceptable feminine/sexual behaviour. In extreme cases, the woman may be killed.

Sexual violence including rape – sexual contact without the consent of the woman/girl. Perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners, but most are known in some way.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS (VAWG)

Prostitution and trafficking – women and girls are forced, coerced or deceived to enter into prostitution and/or to keep them there. Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries ('internal trafficking').

Sexual exploitation – involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives 'something' (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, protection money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Girls involved in or connected to gangs are at risk of sexual exploitation by gang members.

Sexual harassment – unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere and includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

Stalking – repeated harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; or spying on and following the victim.

Faith-based abuse – child abuse linked to faith or belief. This includes a belief in concepts of witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession and ritual.



DOMESTIC ABUSE STATISTICS

Nationally

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experience domestic abuse in their life time
- 2 women are murdered each week across the UK
- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic abuse. (Department of Health, 2002)
- Around 2.3 million adults aged 16-74 were estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in 2018, the majority whom were female. (CSEW, 2020)

In Merton

- Domestic abuse increased by almost 9.8% in 2022.
- Gender of perpetrators in 2022 - 66% male, 24% female, 10% unspecified.
- Ratio of offences in 2022 – 81% Violence against a person, 6% Criminal Damage, 5% Sexual and 4% Theft and Handling.

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Victim

- Mental health problems
- Depression / Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Increased risk of suicide
- Physical health issues
- Lack of self-esteem
- Feeling of helplessness
- Alcohol & drug misuse
- Fearful of retribution from the perpetrator
- Increased risk of homelessness
- Isolation
- Increased risk of offending

Children

- Anxiety/depression
- Change in behaviour – aggressive/angry/upset/withdrawn
- Self-harming
- low self-esteem and difficulties forming healthy relationships
- Difficulty sleeping /nightmares
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches or bed wetting
- Delayed development or deterioration in speech, language and communication
- Reduction in school attainment/truancy/risk of exclusion from school
- Increase in activities outside the home, including academia or sports, as a distraction
- Alcohol or drug misuse

RISKS

Victims find it hard to report or tell anyone. The average victim is assaulted 35 times before reporting the abuse to anyone. Then on average, it takes 7 attempts to leave the relationship.

Key risk points:

- ❖ Partner has criminal convictions for violence
- ❖ Mistreatment of an animal or a family pet
- ❖ Pregnancy or had a baby in the last 18 months
- ❖ Cultural issues
- ❖ Financial issues
- ❖ Abuse is happening more often or getting worse
- ❖ Ending an abusive relationship

SAFETY PLANNING

Safety planning is critical when working with a victim of Domestic Abuse.

Some of the planning options are:

- ❖ Mobile phone to be always charged
- ❖ Important documents to be kept safe
- ❖ An exit plan to get out of the house quickly
- ❖ Informing someone what is happening
- ❖ Informing the children's school what is happening and who should pick the children up from school
- ❖ The range of local and national support services – including Ask for Angela (code phrase for seeking support)
- ❖ Bright Sky app - free mobile app providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship
- ❖ Global web icon
- ❖ Independent domestic violence advisers (IDVA) support to create a safety plan



SAFEGUARDING

If there is an emergency or someone is in immediate danger the police should be called on 999

If there are concerns about a child or family but they are not in immediate danger, Merton's safeguarding procedure should be followed:

- ❖ Identifying the level of need by referring to Merton's Effective Support Model and indicators of need.
- ❖ Completing a referral to the Children and Families Hub if required or contacting for a consultation to seek advice and discuss next steps.

Children and Families' Hub - candfhub@merton.gov.uk 02085454226/4227



MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)

MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

MARAC takes place every 3 weeks with the aim to reduce the risk of serious harm, and increase the safety, health, and wellbeing of the victims and their children.

A **Domestic Abuse Stalking & Harassment (DASH)** risk assessment helps front-line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence, and ensures that the right cases are referred to MARAC.

If the DASH has a score of 14+ or involves strangulation, HBV, FM or FGM a MARAC referral is required.

Practitioners can request a MARAC referral form or ask any questions related to domestic abuse by emailing: mertonmarac@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net or merton.marac@merton.gov.uk



CLARE'S LAW



The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), commonly referred to as Clare's Law is a scheme whereby members of the public can apply to the police for a disclosure of a partner/ex-partner's previous history. An application can also be made by a third party on behalf of someone at risk.

[Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\) application | Metropolitan Police](#)

There are also different protective orders and injunctions that can be applied for and granted by the courts. These help protect victims and their children from someone who makes them feel afraid or who may harm them physically or emotionally.

Orders and injunctions include Non –Molestation order, Occupation Order, Domestic Violence Protection Notice / Order, Prohibited Steps Order, and Restraining Order.

[Get an injunction if you've been the victim of domestic abuse: How to apply](#)



THE FREEDOM PROGRAMME

The Freedom Programme is a domestic abuse programme which is delivered in Merton by The Family Wellbeing Service.

The Programme was primarily designed for women as victims of domestic abuse. However, the programme is also suitable for men, whether abusive and wishing to change their attitudes and behaviour or whether victims of same sex domestic abuse themselves.

To access the programme, a [referral form](#) will need to be completed by a practitioner and emailed to FSD@merton.gov.uk .

The Freedom Programme



Jacky Fleming

DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES



[Victim Support](#)

Victim Support is an independent charity dedicated to supporting victims of crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales. Victim Support has independent domestic violence advisors (IDVA) who provide specialist help and support.

One Stop Shop

[020 7801 1777](#)

Merton has a confidential drop-in service for people experiencing domestic abuse. It's held every Monday between 9.30am -12.00 noon (except bank holidays) at Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane, Morden, SM4 5BL.



For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

[Refuge National
Domestic Abuse
Helpline](#)

The National Domestic Violence Helpline is run in partnership with Women's Aid and Refuge. The helpline is staffed 24 hours a day by fully trained helpline support workers and volunteers. Phone: 0808 2000 247

Respect

Men's advice line

[Domestic Abuse
Helpline for Men](#)

The Men's Advice Line is for male victims of domestic abuse. They offer confidential advice, non-judgemental support, practical information and help.

Men's advice line – Telephone 0808 801 0327 Mon-Fri 10am to 8pm



DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES



Women and Girls
Network

The Women and Girls Network support Black and minoritised young women aged 14-24 who live, work or study in the London Borough of Merton. They also need to be worried about or have experienced violence, abuse or exploitation and experiencing trauma or emotional distress.



ManKind

ManKind provide an information, support and signposting service to men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife, partner (including same-sex partner) or husband. They have produced a directory of local services (called the Oak Book) which support male victims.



Galop

Galop provides a lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) helpline for people who've experienced biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexual violence or domestic abuse.
0800 999 5428 / help@galop.org.uk

FORWARD

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FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is the leading African women-led organisation working to end violence against women and girls.



DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES



[IKWRO](http://www.ikwro.org.uk)

IKWRO provides advice to Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls who are at risk of 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, female genital mutilation and domestic violence. 0207 920 6460 / info@ikwro.org.uk



[SignHealth](http://www.signhealth.org.uk)

SignHealth is a specialist domestic abuse service that supports the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. 020 3947 2600 / info@signhealth.org.uk



[National Stalking Helpline](http://www.nationalstalkinghelpline.org)

The National Stalking Helpline is the first national helpline to specialise in providing information and advice to victims of harassment and stalking. 0808 802 0300 (9:30-16:00 weekdays)



[Mascot Telecare](http://www.mascottelecare.org.uk)

MASCOT Telecare and Community Support Services provide a range of initiatives enabling people to remain at home with independence and security. Home 020 8274 5940 / mascot@merton.gov.uk



FURTHER SUPPORT

Families can receive further information on domestic abuse services through the Family Information Support Hubs (FISH).

FISH provides parents/carers with information, support and guidance on all aspects of family life.

FISH sessions take place Monday – Friday with FREE face-to-face or telephone appointments available. Appointments can be booked via [Eventbrite](#) either by a parent/carer or a practitioner on their behalf.

Or parents/carers can come along to one of the FISH drop-in sessions (no appointment needed):

Family Hub at Church Rd Children Centre – Mondays, 1.30pm-4.30pm

Family Hub at Acacia Children Centre – Wednesdays, 9.00am-12.00pm

