

**Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Domestic Abuse and the Workplace policy**

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1. Introduction

This procedure applies to all members of staff of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) irrespective of gender, age, sexuality, race, religion, culture or disability.

Members of the OPCC who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse must be treated as victims/survivors.

The OPCC recognise that every member of staff who is experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse has the right to raise and discuss the issue with their line manager and/or other members of the OPCC who can lend support and advice, in the knowledge that the matter will be dealt with in an empathetic, non-judgmental, confidential and effective manner. The organisation will regularly monitor and evaluate its performance to ensure compliance with this procedure.

Domestic abuse is a crime, is disruptive and socially harmful. Domestic abuse has an impact on the workplace, and the OPCC has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its staff.

The OPCC and the Constabulary are committed to working in partnership with other agencies or bodies in the statutory or voluntary sector to combat domestic abuse.

2. What is domestic abuse?

The Home Office definition of domestic abuse is defined as:

“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:

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional*

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.

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.”

Domestic abuse can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, the destruction of a spouse or partner’s property, their isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone and stalking.

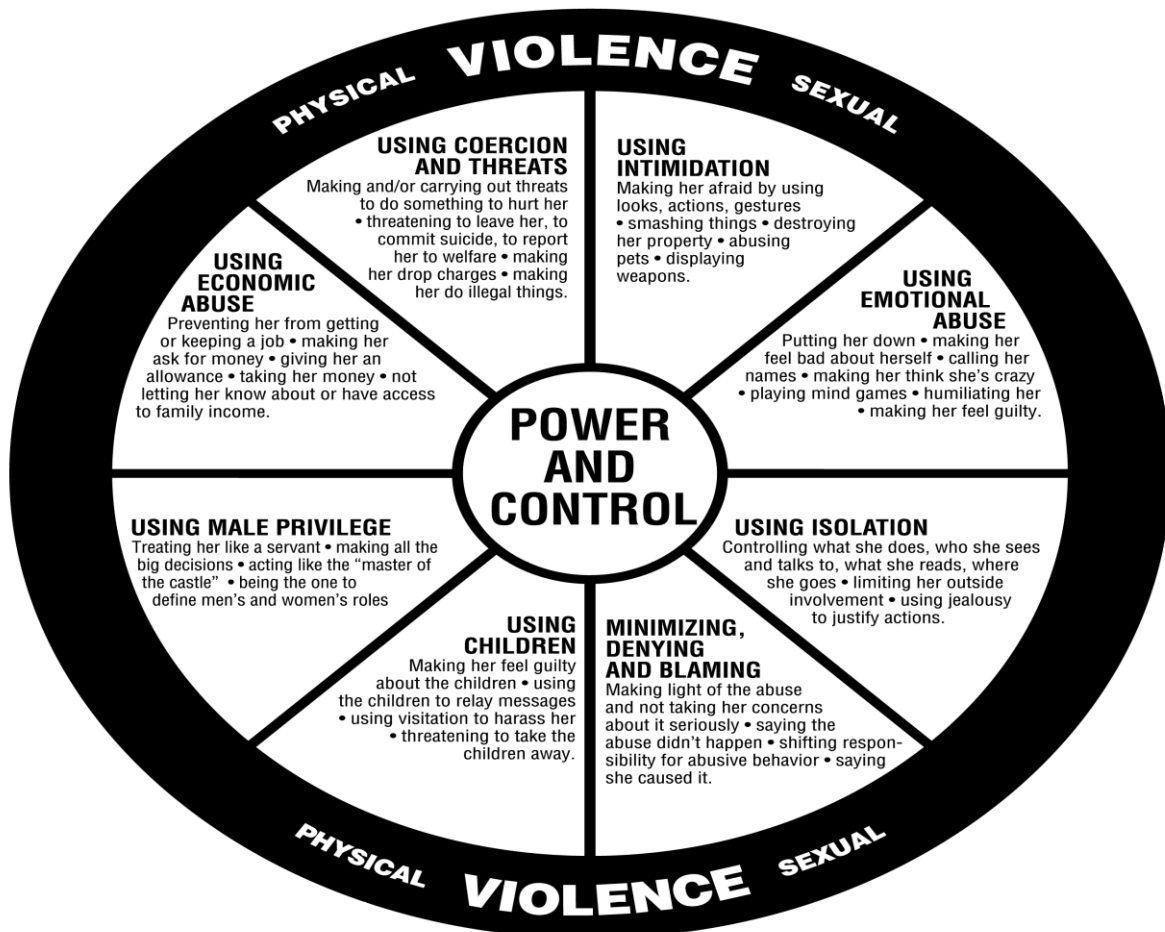
It can include violence perpetrated by a son, daughter, or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim. It can also include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by, children. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic abuse for children must be recognized as a child protection issue. The effects can be linked to poor educational achievement, social exclusion and to juvenile crime, substance abuse, mental health problems and homelessness from running away.

Domestic abuse is usually not a one-off occurrence; it most often will be frequent and persistent.

The Home Office definition is a full definition which recognises that any person can be the victim of domestic abuse. Women and men and transgender or non-binary people can be victims of domestic abuse in heterosexual relationships; domestic abuse can also take place in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships. Agencies need to be aware that people with disabilities can be particularly vulnerable. The inclusion in the definition of violence between family members ensures that issues such as ‘honour based abuse’ and ‘forced marriages’ are properly reflected.

2.1 The Duluth Model Approach

Many practitioners use the Duluth Model Approach, when explaining the psychology which underpins domestic abuse. This has developed into the Duluth Power and Control Wheel – see below. The wheel is based upon experiences of the wide range of behaviours and tactics that abusive parties use to control their partners and exhibit power and control over their family members. Abusive parties can choose to use different combinations of the behaviours. All of the behaviours mentioned below are alternative methods of domestic abuse if they are used to control or frighten, or prevent anyone from making free choices. The wheel is copy written, so the OPCC assumes that the elements in the diagram can be applied to any gender or relationship.



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT

202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.duluth-model.org

2.2 Evidence has shown that staff who have been affected by abuse rarely confide in their work colleagues or line managers. It is more likely that the manager will become aware of the situation through associated issues such as sickness absence monitoring, or poor performance. As with other welfare issues, identifying that a member of staff is experiencing difficulties will create the possibility of early interventions and help.

2.3 Managers and staff should be aware of signs which may indicate that an employee may be a survivor of domestic abuse. These may include.

General signs:

- Survivors may present as being afraid or anxious to please a partner
- Agreeing to everything the partners says or does
- Regularly update their partner with their movements
- Receive frequent and harassing calls and texts from their partner
- Talking about their partners temper, jealousy or possessiveness
- Needing regular time off for appointments
- Changes in the quality of work for no apparent reason

Signs of Physical abuse:

- Presenting with frequent injuries
- Absenteeism from work or social occasions without explanation
- Dressing in clothes with a view to hiding or disguising injuries

Signs of isolation:

- Restricted opportunity for socializing
- Limited or restricted finances

Psychological signs of abuse:

- Low self esteem
- Changes in emotional presentation
- Uncharacteristic depression, anxiety or distraction or problems with concentration
- Self-harm

This list is not exhaustive and there will be some survivors who do not display signs of violence or abuse. However, where line managers fear that a member of staff is displaying signs, they should sensitively enquire as to their wellbeing and to offer support and advice where appropriate.

2.4 Elder Abuse

The definition of elder abuse is:

Abuse is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. (Source: Action on Elder abuse)

Such abuse may manifest itself in the following ways; (this is not an exhaustive list)

- Physical – which included not only assaults but inappropriate administration of medicines;
- Psychological - Threatening, using what someone loves or values against them;
- Financial - Stealing or defrauding someone of goods or property. This will also include misuse of the power of attorney and stealing benefits and pensions;
- Sexual - Forcing someone to participate in sexual actions or conversation against their wishes;

- Neglect- Failing to provide food, or heat or clothing, or needed aids for living including maintaining basic personal hygiene standards.

This is a hidden section of society. The majority of abuse occurs in the victims/survivors own home. In these circumstances, the majority of abusers come from those closest to the survivor – partner, family member, neighbour or acquaintance. In this domiciliary setting financial and psychological abuses are most prevalent. Where the survivor lives in a residential care the majority of abuse is psychological abuse and neglect with the abuser coming from the paid staff.

The dynamics of family related elder abuse mirror that of domestic abuse relationships. Dealing with it must be from an equally open minded view point.

Identifying staff who may be caring for an elderly relative or may be involved in difficult family circumstances is key to dealing with any issues. Having conversations with those that it may be believed to be involved in elder abuse is vital to addressing issues. With regard to abuse experienced by a relative in a care home, the reporting of suspected issues and any offences at the earliest possible stage is key to addressing this. It is vital that staff are supported throughout this process.

2.5 Stalking and Harassment

The definition of harassment is:

"A person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another, and which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other."

Harassment deals with behaviour which is repeated and unwanted by the victim and causes the victim to have a negative reaction in terms of alarm and distress.

Behaviour by a suspect can include:

- Frequent, unwanted contact - text messages, appearing at home or the workplace
- Driving past the victim's home or work
- Following or watching the victim/survivor
- Sending unwanted letters or gifts to the victim/survivor
- Damaging the victim's property
- Burglary or robbery of the victim's home, workplace, vehicle or other
- Threats of harm to the victim and or/others associated with them
- Harassment of people associated with the victim/survivor
- Physical and/or sexual assault of the victim/survivor and even murder.

Stalking is a particular type of harassment. The Act prohibits a person from pursuing a course of conduct that amounts to stalking. Although stalking is not specifically defined, it is a particular type of harassment and can include a pattern of persistent and repeated contact with, or attempts to contact, a particular survivor. The list below provides some examples of behaviours that may be displayed in a stalking offence:

- following a person

- contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means
- publishing any statement or other material (i) relating or purporting to relate to a person, or (ii) purporting to originate from a person
- monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication
- loitering in any place (whether public or private)
- interfering with any property in the possession of a person
- watching or spying on a person.

The first part of the offence prohibits a course of conduct that causes the victim/survivor to fear, on at least two occasions that violence will be used against them.

The second part of the offence prohibits a course of conduct which causes 'serious alarm or distress' which has a 'substantial adverse effect on the day-to-day activities of the victim'. These activities may include:

- the survivor changing their routes to work, work patterns, or employment
- the survivor arranging for friends or family to pick up children from school (to avoid contact with the stalker)
- the survivor putting in place additional security measures in their home
- the survivor moving home
- physical or mental ill-health
- the victim/survivor's deterioration in performance at work due to stress
- the victim/survivor stopping /or changing the way they socialise
- A study in 2011 showed that 50% of survivors of online and offline stalking suffer symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

3 Reporting

Research has shown that whilst survivors of domestic abuse may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, they are also hoping that someone will realise that something is wrong and ask them about it. Managers should therefore offer staff the opportunity to discuss personal issues which may be affecting their health, performance at work etc. during their regular 1-2-1 sessions. Questions can also be asked during return to work interviews or at formal/informal performance management meetings.

Barriers to reporting:

- Fear that their colleagues might discover their situation and they will lose their respect
- Embarrassment
- Staff in same sex relationships may fear being judged due to their sexual orientation, making them feel more isolated and not able to get the same treatment as a heterosexual person
- People affected by disability whose primary carer may also be a perpetrator, may risk losing the support of a carer
- Cultural issues around Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage

3.1 The Manager's role is to:

- Provide a sensitive and non-judgemental approach;
- Believe the person in the first instance;
- Ensure that confidentiality is respected in line with Force policy. The consequences of domestic abuse are serious and managers and colleagues need to respect this;
- Understand that the employee may not wish to approach their line manager and may prefer to involve a third party such as another colleague, Occupational Health, or the Office and HR Manager;
- Recognise that the employee may need some time to decide what to do and may try many different options during this process. The manager must explain that it is the employee's right to choose what happens next, as long as their, and/or family members, safety is not compromised;
- Discuss measures to prioritise safety in the workplace;
- Be aware of what support is available and explore these options with the employee. This may include annual leave, flexible working, time off work and support arriving and leaving the workplace. The OPCC will endeavor to also support employees with any subsequent health or financial issues.

3.2 Action on receipt of an allegation involving an employee

In some instances, staff may be advised by a colleague that they are suffering domestic abuse, or may have suspicions that it is taking place. The first recipient of an allegation of a domestic incident involving an OPCC employee must **immediately** refer the information to a member of SLT.

4. Victim/survivor Safety

The OPCC, staff and others have responsibility for the health safety and welfare of persons at work as defined by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Managers may have to consider additional factors if incidents involve domestic abuse. Such incidents may involve violent partners or ex-partners visiting the workplace, abusive phone calls, intimidation or harassment of members of staff by the alleged perpetrator. These issues could be addressed by the following measures:

- Improving security measures such as ensuring that access to buildings is open to authorised staff only;
- General reminders to staff not to divulge information about colleagues, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone numbers or whereabouts (disclosing personal data may lead to disciplinary action);
- Offering temporary or permanent changes in the workplace and work times, helping to make the staff member less at risk at work, and on their journeys to and from work;
- Offering changes in specific duties, such as answering phones;

- Agreeing what to tell other staff and how they should respond if the abuser rings or calls at the workplace. Changing an extension number to avoid harassing calls;
- Providing colleagues with a photograph of the abuser, and other relevant details such as car registration numbers, may help to maintain security in the workplace;
- Making sure that the systems for recording staff whereabouts during the day are adequate, and if the work requires visits outside the office, considering how risks can be minimised (e.g. allowing another colleague to accompany them on certain journeys);
- Recording any incidents of violence in the workplace, including persistent phone calls, emails, texts, or visits to a member of staff by their partner/ex-partner. Details of any witnesses should also be recorded. These records could be used as evidence in any subsequent proceedings.

The safety of the survivor, their children and any other person will be paramount.

5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be afforded to the individual (subject to the requirements of adult and child protection) and where the options are provided and a decision made by the survivor not to make an official report to the Police, a full risk assessment will be conducted by the line manager.

Confidentiality can only be broken in the following circumstances:

- With the consent of the individual;
- If disclosure is clearly in the individual's interest but it is not possible or undesirable to seek consent;
- If it is required by law;
- If it is unequivocally in the public interest, where a failure to disclose information may expose the individual, or others, to risk of death or serious harm. In such circumstances, you should disclose information promptly to an appropriate person or authority;
- If it will prevent a serious risk to public health and serious crime;
- If a child or vulnerable adult is involved.

Disclosure or information sharing will only be conducted with the full knowledge and consent of the survivor except in relation to child protection matters or high risk of harm or death to the survivor or any identified person eg current partner, relative or witness. This information is police information as defined by Management of Police Information and is required to be protectively marked and is likely to be personal/sensitive personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998. For all these reasons information security measures should be in place for its collection, processing, movement, storage and disposal.

Confidentiality cannot be assured for staff who disclose that they are a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

6 Investigation

A decision by an individual to make an official report to Police will not have been made lightly. In the case of domestic abuse, it is likely that they would have

experienced several incidents and may have taken advice or sought help through other avenues, prior to informing the Police.

Members of staff are reminded that any information must remain confidential and that any unauthorised breaches of information could result in disciplinary action being taken. This is important, as the consequences of breaching confidentiality could have serious effects for the member of staff experiencing domestic abuse. Statistics have shown that the risk of more serious assaults, permanent injury and murder take place when a survivor of abuse decides to confide in others, decides to leave or leaves the relationship, up to six months after leaving. It is therefore important that the manager and other members of staff do not underestimate the dangers or assume that the fear of abuse by the member of staff is exaggerated.

7. Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) also known as Clare's Law

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme enables a person to make enquiries about a person who they are in a relationship with, or have been in the past, or who is in a relationship with someone they know, whom they suspect may have a violent or abusive history.

7.1 The DVDS has two distinct entry routes that may lead to a disclosure being made.

- **Right to Ask** – which is triggered when a person makes a *direct application* to the police for information about the person of concern. The applicant could be either the partner, or former partner, who is or was, in an intimate relationship with the person of concern, or a third party, such as a parent, neighbour or friend.
- **Right to Know** – which is triggered when the police receive *indirect* information from a third party, or intelligence about the safety of a potential victim, and where, after appropriate checks are made, the police judge that a disclosure should be made to safeguard that person. The person making the third party application would not necessarily receive the disclosure, as it may be more appropriate to disclose the information to the person at risk, or a person deemed best placed to safeguard that person, e.g. a social worker or parent.

8. Welfare and Support

The OPCC are committed to ensuring that any of its personnel who disclose they are experiencing domestic abuse are supported in a sensitive and effective manner.

The needs of OPCC staff experiencing domestic abuse may be varied. There might be concerns in relation to child contact, financial implications or accommodation issues that will require that the victim be present at solicitor meetings, court hearings, housing agency, support agencies, childcare or school meetings etc. In addition, where criminal proceedings are pending there may be demands on them to comply with requests for statements, photographs, medical examinations or attendance at court.

OPCC personnel should be afforded where possible flexibility with requests for time off, temporary varied hours, annual leave, compassionate leave, unpaid leave or other requests to enable them to attend appointments.

It may be necessary to adjust workloads or make temporary or permanent changes to working times using existing procedures i.e. flexible working. Decisions must be made on the basis that the victim has a fundamental right to be believed and matters of safety and work-life quality are addressed.

Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example blocking emails/screening telephone calls; alerting reception/security if the perpetrator is known to come to the workplace; ensuring arrangements are in place for safely travelling to and from work.

Survivors may benefit from or require the confidential services of Occupational Health or Care First for advice or counselling and line managers can make a referral on the individual's behalf.

A member of staff leaving a violent or abusive partner may face considerable financial hardship or have concerns about finding suitable accommodation for themselves, and their family. Managers can consider approving a salary advance if needed. Additionally, consideration should be given to changing the method of salary payment if a member of staff has disclosed that their partner has access to their finance or, is exerting financial pressure on them.

With the member of staff's consent:

1. advise colleagues on a need-to-know basis and agree a response if the perpetrator contacts the workplace;
2. provide a photograph of the perpetrator to line management, security staff and reception.

For support in other areas of assistance may be available from Unison or the LGBT Liaison team.

9. Raising Awareness

The OPCC are committed to promoting "zero" tolerance of domestic abuse against and by its staff. It is essential therefore, that the working environment promotes the view that domestic abuse against any person is unacceptable and that such abuse will not be condoned.

The OPCC aim to raise awareness through the following means:

- Publicising its policy and procedures on dealing with Domestic Abuse;
- Enabling staff to attend domestic abuse awareness training;
- Posting information on the PCC website;
- Publicising the internal support services available;
- Publicising Local Support Agencies

10. Local Support Agencies Domestic Violence and Abuse

The main contacts locally are:

Bristol

Support Agency	Type of support	Contact details
Next Link	Provides a range of support and housing services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse. These include safe houses/refuges, children's services, resettlement and outreach services and a crisis response service. Dedicated black and ethnic minority services.	0117 925 0680 www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk
Survive	Offers services and support for women, men, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in Bristol and south Glos.	0117 961 2999 www.survivedv.org.uk info@survivedv.org.uk
Northern Arc (North Bristol) and Southern Arc (South Bristol)	Offers support in North and South Bristol for women in abusive relationships	Northern Arc 0117 982 2495 www.northern-arc.com northernarc@nextlinkhousing.co.uk Southern Arc 0117 353 3853 www.southern-arc.com southernarc@nextlinkhousing.co.uk
BRI Emergency Dept, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) Service	Provide support for male and female victims including crisis intervention, risk assessment and advocacy	0117 342 1495 or 0117 342 1496 Mon – Sun (incl bank holidays) 9am – 5pm
Victim Support in Avon & Somerset	Offers free confidential support to male and female victims of all crimes including domestic abuse.	0300 303 1972 Mon – Fri 9.30am-6pm Sat 9.30am – 12.30pm Out of hours support: 0808 16 89 111 www.victimsupport.org.uk
Bristol Freedom Programme	A support group that provides a free programme for any woman with experience of living with domestic violence and abuse.	Contact Next Link on 0117 925 0680
LGBT Liaison team	LGBT Liaison officer and SW rep for National LGBT Police Network	Team Lead 0117 945 5775 / 07889 659 843 LGBTLIAISON@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
BAVA	The website provides information about different types of violence and abuse and support services that can	http://www.bava.org.uk/

	help. There is also information on how to help others and how to raise awareness of violence and abuse	
Bristol Zero Tolerance	Bristol Zero Tolerance is a new initiative set up by Bristol Women's Commission working towards Bristol becoming a city free from gender-based violence, abuse, harassment and exploitation	https://www.bristolzerotolerance.com/ https://www.bristolzerotolerance.com/our-partners-2/police-and-crime-commissioner/

Bath and North East Somerset

Support Agency	Type of support	Contact details
Next Link	Provides a range of support and housing services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse. These include safe houses/refuges, children's services, resettlement and outreach services and a crisis response service. Dedicated black and ethnic minority services.	0117 925 0680 www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk
Southside Domestic Abuse Service	Provides specialist domestic abuse services for women, men and children living in B&NES including crisis support, access to legal services and support through the court process	01225 331243 www.south-side.org.uk

North Somerset

Gemini Services	Provide floating support and refuge accommodation for men, women and children at risk of domestic abuse.	0800 694 9999
Avon & Somerset Domestic Abuse Freephone Service (DAFFS)	A free phone service available to anyone who wants advice about domestic abuse.	0800 6949 999
Reclaim Initiative	Free counselling for women and men who have been affected by domestic abuse in North Somerset.	07919 440 233

Somerset

Avon & Somerset Domestic Abuse Freephone Service (DAFFS)	A free phone service available to anyone who wants advice about domestic abuse.	0800 6949 999
Somerset Survivors	Information and advice for anyone affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence in Somerset.	0800 69 49 999 www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk
Mankind	The Mankind Initiative was the first charity in the UK to support male victims of domestic abuse (registered in 2001). For over 15 years we have been at the forefront of providing services and support for male victims and campaigning to	01823 334244 http://new.mankind.org.uk

	ensure that male victims receive the support they need from other organisations.	
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South Gloucestershire

Survive	Offers services and support for women, men, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in Bristol and south Glos.	0117 961 2999 www.survivedv.org.uk info@survivedv.org.uk
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The national contacts are:

National Domestic abuse Helpline	Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, a helpline for women experiencing domestic violence.	0808 2000 247 Free helpline available 24/7 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
Men's Advice Line	Offers confidential advice, information and support to men experiencing domestic violence and abuse.	0808 801 0327 Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm info@mensadvice.org.uk www.mensadvice.org.uk
National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Domestic Violence Helpline	Provides confidential support to all members of LGBT communities.	0800 999 5428 Mon & Thurs 10am – 8pm Tues & Wed 10am – 5pm Fri 1pm – 5pm www.galop.org.uk help@galop.org.uk
Women's Aid	Women's Aid is a grassroots federation working together to provide life-saving services and build a future where domestic violence is not tolerated.	0808 2000 247 24 www.womensaid.org.uk

Stalking contact:

The National Stalking Helpline	Anyone who is made to feel harassed or intimidated by the behaviour of another person can contact the helpline	0808 802 0300 Mon – Fri 9.30am – 4pm Except Wed 1pm – 4pm
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Other support agencies:

This is Not an Excuse	A&S Police maintain this website to raise awareness of domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual assault and to signpost to organisations that provide help and support.	www.thisisnotanexcuse.org
Lighthouse Victim and Witness Care	Supports all victims of domestic and sexual abuse that have reported	www.lighthousevictimcare.org

	<p>an offence to the police. They can put you in touch with the services you need to cope and recover and guide you through the criminal justice process.</p>	
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Procedural Guidance Information	
Procedural Guidance Owner	OPCC CEO
Effectice Commencement Date	April 2017
Last Review Completed	
Next Review Due	April 2020