

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST (EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION)**

UCL Domestic violence and abuse guidance

# What is domestic violence and abuse?

Domestic violence be an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been, intimate partner or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can include force marriage or ‘honour-based’ violence and ritual abuse.

The abuse can include, but is not limited to:

* Psychological
* Physical
* Sexual
* Financial
* Emotional

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

Those who experience abuse often feel like they are alone, isolated and that there is no option but to stay. Leaving an abusive relationship is not a single act. In fact, [according to Refuge](https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Supporting-a-survivor), it takes a person on average seven attempts to leave an abusive relationship.

## Spotting the signs

* Is the person jealous and possessive?
* Are they charming one minute and abusive the next?
* Do they tell you what to wear, where to go, who to see?
* Do they constantly put you down?
* Do they play mind games and make you doubt your judgment?
* Do they control your money?
* Do they pressure you to have sex when you don’t want to or in ways you don’t want to?
* Are you starting to walk on eggshells to avoid making them angry?
* Do they monitor or track your movements or messages?
* Do they use anger and intimidation to frighten and control you?

# Prevalence of domestic abuse\*

An estimated 1.9 million adults aged 16 to 59 experienced domestic abuse in the UK in the last year. Two women each week and one man each month are killed in England and Wales by a current or former partner. There is not yet an official, standardised method for recoding the deaths of trans people across the UK.

The current crisis has seen these figures increase. It is important to understand that the home is not a safe environment for everyone.

Domestic abuse occurs in all levels of society, regardless of social class, race, religion, sexuality or disability. Individuals may experience abuse or be affected by it long after they have left their partner.

Men, women and children all experience domestic abuse, and can also all be perpetrators of abuse. However, evidence shows that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse and the majority of perpetrators are men.

Employers, like UCL, have an important role to play in society’s response to domestic abuse and supporting colleagues who may be affected. Preventing and tackling domestic abuse is integral to providing a safe and effective work environment.

1 in 4 women, and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse within their lifetime. However, most employers recorded less than 1 disclosure per year, which suggests staff do not feel comfortable to come forward. Scottish Transgender Alliance found that 46 percent of transgender respondents to their ‘Transgender Experiences in Scotland’ survey had experienced transphobic abuse within a domestic relationship.

The cost of domestic abuse to business is estimated at £1.9 billion a year due to decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages and sick pay. It can potentially have an adverse impact on staff morale, as well as on an organisation’s image and reputation.

Employers owe a duty of care to employees and have a legal responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment. Preventing and tackling domestic abuse is an integral part of this.

Similarly universities are invested in ensuring that their students are able to like a life free from abuse and violence.

# What support is available if I am experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse?

If you think you may be in an abusive relations or experiencing abuse from a family member, there is support available. 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

In an emergency, where someone is physically hurt, or is at immediate risk of harm to themselves or others:

* Report to A&E by calling 999 and request an ambulance
* Report to the Police, call 999 and there is an option for silent support if talking will put you in danger

If it is not an emergency, you can access a large range of specialist support services or you can speak to your GP/Healthcare professional. You have the option to call the Police non-emergency number 101. Rights of women have this guide on reporting an offence and what to expect from criminal proceedings which you can read before you speak to the police.

[Bright Sky](https://www.hestia.org/brightsky) is a free app providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship, or those who are concerned about someone they know. The app provides:

* A UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services, and the ability to call national helplines
* A secure tool where incidents of abuse can be logged, without the content being saved on the device
* Questionnaires to assess the safety of a relationship

# Specialist support available

Domestic abuse can make a person feel completely isolated, but you are not alone. You can access support available at UCL, including contacting an advisor and having a confidential conversation. Confidentiality may be impacted if there is a duty of care – including risk to safety.

**External support available**

[**Solace Women’s Aid**](https://www.solacewomensaid.org/) Provides advice and support for women for domestic abuse and sexual violence. If you require urgent help, please call 0808 802 5565 for free confidential advice.

[**Respect**](http://respect.uk.net/information-support/male-victims-of-domestic-violence/)Information and support for men who experience domestic violence. Advice line open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm or email [info@respectphoneline.org.uk](file:///\\ad.ucl.ac.uk\GroupFolders\EQUALITIES_Share\Harassment%20and%20Sexual%20Misconduct\Report%20and%20Support\Report%20+%20Support%20Set%20up\Web%20content\Completed\Support\info@respectphoneline.org.uk)

[**Women and Girls Network.**](http://www.wgn.org.uk/) Counselling and support to help women and girls recover from violence. Tel: 0808 801 0770

[**Galop**](http://www.galop.org.uk/)is a charity that support lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people affected by sexual and domestic violence. They run a London and National phone helpline as well as on online chat services Saturday & Sunday: 15:00 – 19:00.

[**Respond**](file:///C:\Users\vbaar003\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\4OKY081C\respond.org.uk)helps children and adults with learning disabilities who have experienced abuse or trauma, as well as those who have abused others, through psychotherapy, advocacy and other support. Tel: 0 808 0700.

[**Revenge Porn Helpline:**](https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/)Open 10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday – 0345 600 0459.

[**Victim Support**](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/)providefree and confidential support to help you deal with your experience, whether or not you report the crime. They also support witnesses of crime. Tel: 0808 168 9111.

[**Women’s Trust**](http://www.womanstrust.org.uk/support-groups/)Specialist domestic violence counselling in some borough, but support groups and workshops are pan-London.

[**Survivors UK (National)**](file:///C:\Users\vbaar003\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\4OKY081C\survivorsuk.org)Information, support and counselling for men and boys who have been raped or sexually abuse. Helpline Web Chat Monday – Friday 10am – 9pm, Saturday to Sunday 10am – 6pm.

# I’m worried about a student, friend or colleague.

If you have spotted any signs of domestic abuse, reach out to the person in the first step. Leaving an abusive partner, is not a single act. In fact it takes on average, seven attempts before a survivor is able to leave for good.

* Create a safe space in private and make it clear you won’t judge.
* Tell them they haven’t seemed themselves lately, and ask if there is anything they want to talk about.
* Trust what the person is saying, actively listen and take them seriously.
* You may feel the need to say something, but if you’re unsure what to say, just acknowledge that and say you are there to listen.
* Remind them they are not alone, and that this is not their fault.
* Ask is there anything that they need at this particular point. They may not know, and this is okay.
* Be clear about what you can do next, this may be signposting to specialist support and/or agreeing to check in at another point. another conversation and/or signposting

Would it be helpful to include the UCL cause for concern process for students? <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/if-you-are-concerned-about-student>

# What is my role as a manager and how can I support my team?

During remote working it can be difficult to ascertain how people are coping, and if there are any current challenges that may be impacting their personal and professional lives.

Communication and checking in with peers and your team is critical.

If you notice that a staff member is not visible in video meetings, or remains quiet or silent during calls and meetings, check in and ask how they are finding the new working environment, and if there is any support they need.

While there is fatigue about being on camera all day for meetings, it is important that staff can see their colleagues semi-regularly to help provide support and manage wellbeing.

If you have any concerns about a staff member or student, please use Report + Support contact an advisor, or seek guidance from one of the specialist organisations.

**\***The guidance summarises information from the Employers Initiative for Domestic Abuse (EIDA). [The full toolkit can be found on the EIDA website](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cd83ed84d871178f0307100/t/5cfe752a01f3c40001e7516d/1560180083314/bitc_phe_domestic_abuse_toolkit.pdf).