

Wherever possible try to take children when leaving and leave at a time when the abuser will not be around.

MOVED TO NEW ACCOMMODATION

It is an individual decision whether to tell people that there has been domestic abuse.

Telling someone such as trusted friends, family, school, and employers can be helpful, but they should be asked to keep information, including any new address, confidential.

As a perpetrator may try to find the family, it is best, if possible, to:

- Avoid places such as shops, banks, or cafes they would know to look
- Change routines and regular appointments
- Ask schools not to take or post images of children on publicly available websites
- Ensure that courts know not to put a new address on any court papers.

Wokingham Borough Council can help with assessing a property for equipment which may increase safety where the abuser is no longer living there.

STAYING IN SAME PROPERTY: ABUSER HAS LEFT

Consider:

- Seeking legal advice about property ownership or tenancy changes needed
- Checking that there is no surveillance in place such as a video doorbell, tracking devices, location finders on mobile phones
- When home ownership/tenancy is in sole name, change the locks and install any additional security measures needed
- Making a referral to Wokingham Home Refuge Scheme.

CHILDREN

Children may feel quite scared about what is happening so will need to be reassured that they are not responsible and that they are loved.

Children often feel that they should intervene if an incident is taking place but by getting in the middle, they can end up hurt and not able to call the police for assistance.

Key points to talk through with children:

- Do they know how to call the police if they are worried someone may be hurt, including knowing their address and phone number?
- Do they have a safe place inside or outside the house where they can get to quickly and call for help?
- What to do if things are escalating, including knowing how to call the police
- Checking if they feel they have trusted adults they can talk to if they are worried.

USEFUL CONTACTS – YOU CAN GET HELP

The numbers below are for organisations who can offer practical and emotional support.

In an emergency call 999
Police non-emergency: 101

Wokingham Domestic Abuse Support Service:
0118 402 1921, email: dass@cranstoun.org.uk
www.cranstoun.org/dass

Kaleidoscopic (peer to peer support):
www.kaleidoscopic.uk

Hourglass (over 60 year olds):
0808 808 8141,
email: helpline@wearehourglass.org;
www.wearehourglass.org

Victims First Emotional Support:
0300 1234 148 www.victims-first.org.uk

Flag DV! (civil injunctions):
www.flagdv.org.uk, email: hello@flagdv.org.uk

Citizens Advice:
0808 278 7958
www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk

Wokingham Homelessness Team:
Home Refuge Scheme:
0118 974 6000
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/domestic-abuse/how-get-help/housing-options>

Wokingham Home Refuge Scheme
Home Refuge Scheme: 0118 974 6000, then choose option 4, then option 3
<https://directory.wokingham.gov.uk/kb5/wokingham/directory/service.page?id=xZW4dHJPUzc>

Dogs Trust Freedom Programme (foster care for dogs):
0800 298 9199: www.dogstrustfreedomproject.org.uk

Cats Protect (foster care for cats):
0345 260 1280,
email: pawsprotect@cats.org.uk
www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/paws-protect

Full directory of services:
<http://directory.wokingham.gov.uk/domestic-abuse>

Domestic abuse information:
www.wokingham.gov.uk/domesticabuse



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DOMESTIC ABUSE

SAFETY PLANNING

Creating a personalised safety plan can help those experiencing abusive or controlling behaviours.

It can help to maximise safety in different situations, building on strengths, knowledge, coping mechanisms and support available.



OVERVIEW

This leaflet has been written to help individuals create a safety plan.

It seeks to build on existing safety strategies that are working well as well as provide information other victim-survivors have found to be helpful.

We recommend that the safety plan is developed in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Support Service, so the plans can benefit from their expertise.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

It is important to recognise that the person who is being abusive or controlling is the one responsible for their behaviour and that no-other person can be responsible for someone else's behaviour.

For those who recognise the impact of their behaviour, support is available to make long term changes- contact the Domestic Abuse Support Service for information.

AIMS OF A SAFETY PLAN

- Build on strategies that are working well
- Reflect individual circumstances and the consequences of an abuser's behaviour on others
- Be flexible and evolve as situations and risks change
- Be specific to the individual whilst fitting within wider family safety planning

STARTING TO CREATE A PLAN

When thinking about what is needed in an individual safety plan, it can be helpful to think about:

- What safety planning is already taking place (including for children and pets)?
- What is working / not working so well?
- What signs or feelings are there that a situation could become abusive (for example raised voices, feelings of anxiety etc)?
- Are there more risky times or days when domestic incidents occur?
- Are there areas of your home or other environments where incidents occur more often?

- Are there places where it feels safer (inside or outside the home)?
- Are there people around who are supportive and can be trusted?
- Are there things which make it difficult to leave the home environment? (eg time away from the home being monitored; access to keys restricted or often not where expected?)
- Can a phone be accessed to make calls in an emergency?
- Are there any safe physical or emotional spaces in place?

GENERAL SAFETY PLANNING TIPS

Are the following in place:

- Access to a phone to call for help in an emergency
- Identified safe places to go in an emergency (inside and outside the home)
- At least one person who is aware of the situation and who can be called on for support. This support could include setting up a code word system and what to do if this is used.
- Awareness of possibility of tracking devices being in place on vehicles, computer or other electronic devices, mobile phones.

The website www.refugetechsafety.org has information to help address cyber abuse, but be alert to the need to delete computer web browsing history if using a computer an abuser may have access to.

- A safety plan for when out and about, including when in a vehicle.
- Support from the specialist domestic abuse services.
- A way, where safe to do so, of gathering evidence of incidents including date, time, impact, any photographs.

EMERGENCY BAG

It can be helpful to try and have the following items ready in a safe place in case you need to leave in an emergency. This may be with a trusted friend or neighbour, or hidden if this is possible without the abuser being able to find these:

- Money, including for bus or train fares
- A mobile phone
- Emergency medicine, prescriptions
- Clothes and toiletries
- Children's toy
- Birth and marriage certificates, bank statement, passport, driving licence, other financial documents
- Spare keys
- Court orders or any documents relating to the abuse

It may not be possible to take these in an emergency situation but helpful if you can.

LIVING TOGETHER

Thinking about different rooms in the property:

- What are the risk factors in each of the rooms or places? (items which could be used as a weapon; sharp corners; no way out)
- What are the protective factors in each of the rooms? (soft furniture; access to a phone)
- Are there likely to be other people in the room or nearby when incidents occur? If so, do they know what to do?
- Have quick and safe routes to a safer place been identified from each room?
- Is there any equipment which could be used (for example door wedge) to increase safety?

Tips:

- It can be helpful to practice different scenarios and how to get to a safer place so that in an emergency, you are less likely to 'freeze'.
- Talk to any children or vulnerable adults about what is happening and what to do in different situations, including to call the police.
- Try to ensure that mobile phones are charged and easily accessible so the police can be called in an emergency.
- If it is safe to do so, neighbours can be helpful by knowing to call the police if they hear raised voices and providing a place to run to in an emergency.
- Trust your instincts.

THINKING OF LEAVING

Sometimes the risk of violence and abuse increases if an abuser thinks their partner is about to leave.

Often leaving may happen quickly and because of a specific incident, but for others there may be an opportunity to plan for this.

If it is safe to forward plan, it can be helpful to:

- Try and set some money aside in a bank or post office account which the abuser is not aware of.
- Speak to the Homelessness team about housing options.
- Speak to Citizens Advice about what benefits may be available.
- Speak to a solicitor about what civil protection you may need (for example a non-molestation order)
- Identify a safe place to go to before leaving if possible.
- Use the Post Office vulnerable person's service to safely change the address for your post.



In an emergency always call **999**

Please
turn
over...