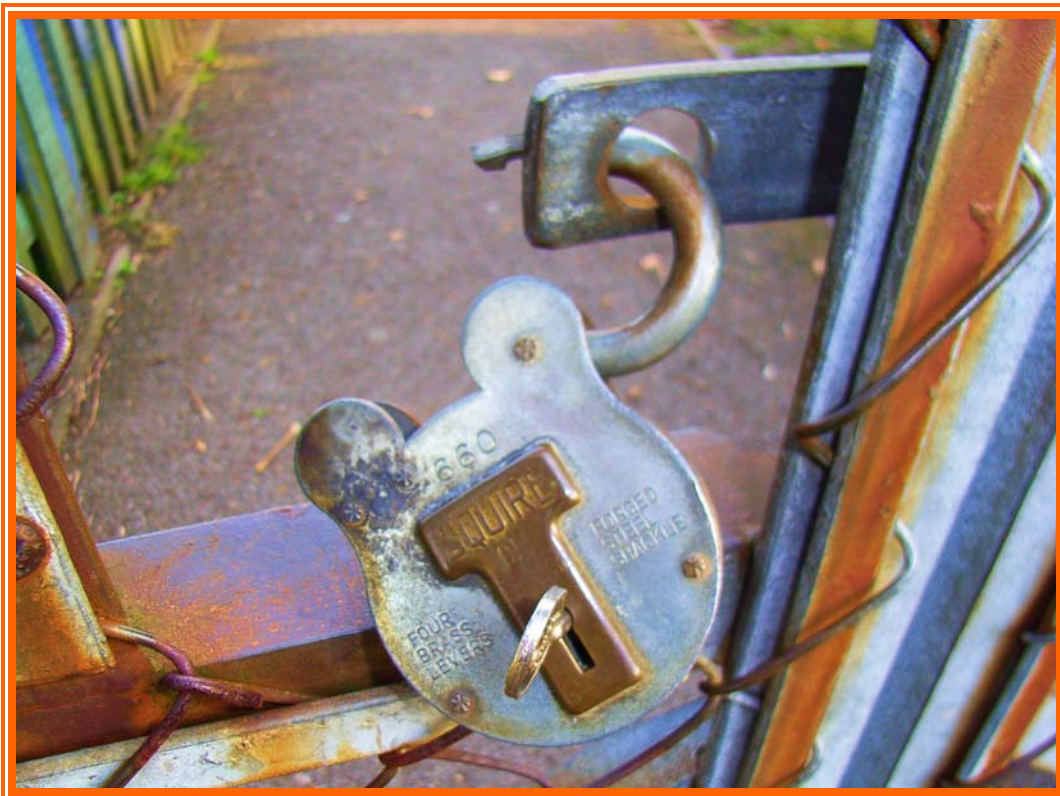


Domestic Abuse:  
Breaking Free &  
Staying Safe



Help available in  
Runnymede

## What is Domestic Abuse?

- Domestic Abuse essentially involves the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person over another. It is any form of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse.
- It can be actual abuse or threatened abuse
- It takes place within the context of a close relationship, usually between partners or ex-partners.
- Domestic Abuse often includes a range of abusive behaviours beyond physical violence.
- Domestic Abuse can occur to anyone, from any social class, any age group, and any level of education, from any ethnic or racial background. It happens between men and women, and in same sex relationships. The most commonly reported incidents are where men are the perpetrators. However, this does not mean that if you are a man reporting Domestic Abuse, or a same sex partner, you will be treated any differently, and the information in this booklet is for anyone who is experiencing an abusive relationship.

## Are you experiencing Domestic Abuse?

- Domestic Abuse is an experience that can leave you feeling shocked, numb and overwhelmed, but admitting to yourself, and then others, that it is happening to you is the first step to breaking free from it. Any form of abuse is unacceptable in today's society. Victims of Domestic Abuse often feel isolated from family and friends, and can feel as though they are the only ones experiencing this behaviour, or that the violence or abuse is somehow their fault.
- Whatever has happened, whatever you have been told by your partner, there is absolutely **NO** justification for violence. **IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT.**
- Some victims feel that even if they informed someone about their situation they may not be believed. Perhaps their partner is a respected person within the community; people may choose to believe that they would not be capable of such a crime. There are many people who can, and will help you - people who will believe you, and who will be able to advise you regarding what you can do next. It is possible to change your situation, and many people move on to new and rewarding lives. You do not have to carry on being a victim of Domestic Abuse.

## **Where to Find Help**

- **The Police**

If it is an emergency and you need police assistance you should dial **999**. Police officers will come to you if you request help. The police do not need to have witnessed an assault, or need a warrant to arrest someone who has, or they suspect is about to, commit an arrestable offence. They can also arrest someone who has broken their bail conditions or the terms of a Court Order, which has a power of arrest, attached.

**Surrey Police: 08451 252222**. Ask to be connected to the **Domestic Violence Unit**.

- **North West Surrey Outreach Service**

Offer a free impartial service for both men and women regardless of age, race, religion, sexuality or disability. They cover **Runnymede**, Woking and Surrey Heath. Outreach workers can give practical help and emotional support in addition to advice regarding housing rights, the legal system, relationships and separation, safety planning, and support for children. They can also advise concerning access to other relevant services, and may be able to accompany you to court and other official meetings

**01483 776822**

- **Women's Aid**

Widely recognised as one of the leading specialist agencies dealing with Domestic Abuse against women. Their advisers can provide information, support and a place of safety for women, with or without children, living with, or escaping from Domestic Abuse. All their services are confidential. The refuges are shared houses, where women and their children will receive practical and emotional support, in order to rebuild their sense of worth and confidence. The female support workers can also offer legal, housing and benefits advice. The safety of women and their children is the main priority in these refuges, and therefore access is restricted to just the women residents, their children, and the support workers.

**Women's Aid National Helpline (24 hours): 0808 200 0247** - advice, support & referral, including referral to specialist refuges for ethnic minority women, and women with special needs.

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

**Surrey Women's Aid - 01483 776822** - advice, information, support and refuge places. Practical advice and support in obtaining a non-molestation or occupation court order against a perpetrator of Domestic Abuse.

[www.surreywomensaid.org.uk](http://www.surreywomensaid.org.uk)

- **Refuge**

National charity with a network of safe houses providing emergency Accommodation for women and children wishing to escape Domestic Abuse. The addresses are confidential and no men are able to come into the properties. The refuges are places where women can be sure that they are safe, and where they can access emotional and practical support from female staff who understand what they have been through. Refuge recognises that some women may wish to live in refuges sensitive to their cultural needs or preferences, therefore some of the refuges are specifically for women from particular ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Women can stay in the refuges for as long as is needed. However, primarily a refuge is temporary accommodation, and support workers will assist in finding more suitable permanent accommodation.

**Refuge (24 hour national crisis line) 0870 599 5443**

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

- **The Dove Project**

An organisation based in Essex offering telephone support, advice and refuge availability details for women and children who are experiencing, or have experienced domestic abuse. Special support for women from minority ethnic groups, and lesbian and bi-sexual women if requested.

**01702 302333/01702 300006**

Email: [dove.project@westcliff48.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:dove.project@westcliff48.fsnet.co.uk)

- **Victim Support**

National independent charity for anyone affected by crime, whether or not this has been reported to the police. The service is free and confidential, and is available to anyone affected by domestic abuse. Specially trained volunteers offer personal and emotional support. People are given time to discuss their experiences and their feelings; discuss future options, choices and their consequences. Volunteers also provide information about the criminal justice system; identify specialist agencies to assist, and accompany individuals to court for court order proceedings. They can also assist in completing forms and offer advice on personal safety.

**Victim Support (Runnymede) – 01932 855110**

**Victim Support National Support Line – 0845 30 30 900**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

- **Samaritans**

Will listen to and support those who feel desperate, unable to cope, or suicidal and feel that there is no one to turn to.

**National Linkline: 08457 909 090 (24hrs)**

**Runnymede branch: 01932 844444**

[www.samaritans.org/~weybridge](http://www.samaritans.org/~weybridge)













