



## **Safety planning**

Safety planning is about building your own armoury of measures you can employ to make yourself safer. It is more than likely you will know when a partner or family member are increasingly likely to use violence on you and it is also likely that you already employ some of your own measures to try and reduce your risk of being hurt.

What follows is a list of measures you may not have thought of as effective ways to reduce or avoid being harmed in the future. These are all considerations that will be suggested by the police and advice lines as measures to try and reduce harm from a perpetrator of violence, power and control.

The measures may not all be applicable, consider them a 'pic n mix' of choices that you can dip in any out of as you see fit, or alternately make long term changes to increase your own safety. The list itself contains measures ranging from fairly common sense suggestions through to measures that will need changes in lifestyle and living. **If you are considering your own safety planning, and have not done so yet, please consider your first step as to call the police. If you do not want to speak to the police please call one of the helplines in this App. Free advice costs nothing.**

For further advice on Domestic Violence, definitions and safety planning, the Southall Black sisters publish comprehensive advice accessible at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/three-steps-to-escaping-domestic-violence>

### **Safety at home:**

- Dial 999 in an emergency and ask for the police
- Ensure windows and doors are secure
- Identify a safe room within the house that you or your children can go to and are able to move furniture in the room to barricade the door. Consider keeping a phone in the room to call 999. Do not go to the kitchen.
- Teach your children to call 999 in emergency and what they would need to say
- (for example ,their full name address and telephone number)
- If you can – leave the house, go to a neighbour or a friend. Practice ways of getting out of the house in advance and where you could go. If you cannot directly leave, consider things that can get you out such as taking out the rubbish.
- Any weapons in the house – try and remove them discretely.
- Consider getting CCTV or an alarm and outside security lights.
- Speak to your friends, neighbours, family or other person whom you can trust. Tell them about your situation and suggest a 'code word' you can shout or use so they know to call the police on your behalf to attend. If you are in the street during an incident then stay public, seek help in a shop or local police station.
- Practice and refine your safety plan.
- If you have left your partner and are worried they may cause a fire at your address consider buying smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Call your local fire brigade who can fire proof your letter box.

## **Phones:**

- Consider changing your numbers (mobile and landline)
- Check with your provider whether your phone can block numbers
- Keep your phone charged and in a pocket rather than your bag
- If you suspect you are being stalked – disable any smart apps that may track your location and keep a log of events.
- When calling the police state your location before anything else in case you get cut off.
- Check your phone for any spyware applications that may have been downloaded. If you are unsure – change your phone or seek professional advice.

## **Child Contact:**

- Ensure child drop offs and pickups are in public places – use a third party if possible.
- Explain your situation to your child's school and ensure they have copies of any court orders/ picture of perpetrators.
- Seek legal advice about long term arrangements and court orders.

## **Work:**

- Confide in your employer and explain your situation.
- Ask to park on work premises
- Ask to be accompanied to your car.
- Change times of work if possible to vary your work pattern.
- Ask your employer to contact the police if you fail to attend work.
- Ask your employer to screen any calls made directly to you.

## **Online security:**

- Change your passwords – do not use passwords that can be guessed by any other person – use mixture of capital letters, numbers and symbols. Choose security questions only **You** will know the answers to.
- Check your Facebook security settings and screen any 'friends' who may have perpetrator on their account to prevent unintended notifications through your own friends. Do not accept any friend requests who may be acting on behalf of perpetrator. Avoid posting any personal information, photos or information that can be used to find you.
- Avoid twitter or other social media which tag your location and avoid blogging any information about your locations, activities or emotions.
- Change your e mail address
- Check your employers are not sharing information about you on their website. Ensure published conferences do not contain your details on attendee lists, for example. This is also applicable to schools, clubs or other organisations that you belong to who openly publish details of its members.
- Check any photo's you publish to ensure they do not give away any valuable information about your location or activities. Some phones and cameras may also record a geo location of where they are taken.
- Close all current internet shopping accounts and open new ones using new e mail and new passwords. Any accounts known to the perpetrator can be used to access user name, credit details and private information if new details are added to an existing account.

## **Preparing to leave**

If you have decided to leave your partner, it is best if you can plan this carefully. Sometimes abusers will increase their violence if they suspect you are thinking of leaving, so this can be a particularly dangerous time for you.

Plan to leave at a time you know your partner will not be around. Try to take everything you will need with you, including any important documents relating to yourself and your children, as you may not be able to return later. Take your children with you, otherwise it may be difficult or impossible to have them living with you in future. If they are at school, make sure that the head and all your children's teachers know what the situation is, and who will be collecting the children in future.

Thinking about leaving and making the decision to leave can be a long process. Planning it doesn't mean you have to carry it through immediately or at all. But it may help to be able to consider all the options and think about how you could overcome the difficulties involved. If at all possible, try to set

aside a small amount of money each week, or even open a separate bank account

### **.Leaving an abusive partner / family member:**

**Put together a 'GO' bag in preparation for leaving. Try and leave it with a confident or neighbour and try and take the following items:**

- Money (try and put some in the bag as often as possible)
- Some form of identification, including national insurance numbers
- Keys to house/ car/ work
- New mobile phone
- Medicine
- Extra clothes
- Any important paperwork about you and your children
- Copies of documents, relating to your housing tenure, i.e. mortgage details, lease or rental agreements.
- Cards for payment of Child Benefit and any other welfare benefits you are entitled to
- Passports/ birth certificates/ medical records/ school records/ court orders.
- Bank book/ credit cards (try and open a new account in advance the perpetrator is unaware of)
- Driving licence/ insurance/ registration
- Address book
- Personal items that mean a lot to you such as jewellery and pictures.
- Items for your children (toys/ clothes/ blankets) and toiletries
- You should also take any documentation relating to the abuse, e.g. police reports, court orders such as injunctions and restraining orders, and copies of medical records if you have them.

This list is not exclusive. The most important message is to take any item which you will need and any item which can be used by a perpetrator to force your return and/or exercise control over you.

Ideally, plan in advance for somewhere you can go where you cannot be located. Let only those people who can be trusted not to release your location know where you are. If you cannot plan in advance for somewhere to go, that is ok. Then just call a domestic violence helpline or the police and they will look after you. The most important thing is for you and your children to be safe and aware from the risk of more hurt.

## **After leaving:**

- Review your safety plan.
- Try to avoid any places such as shops, banks, cafes, that you used to use when you were together.
- If you haven't changed your phone, then consider changing it and only give the number to those whom you can trust not to pass it on to others.
- Phones can be tracked this should only happen if you have given permission, if your partner has had access to your phone they may have activated this without you knowing.
- Try to avoid using shared credit or debit cards as this will reveal your "general area" where you have gone for safety.
- If you need to phone your abuser make sure your telephone number is untraceable by dialling 141 before ringing.
- Obtain legal advice about protection orders or residency orders for the children. You may be likely to be eligible for access to court orders without cost and in some cases the form completion will be completed on your behalf.
- Tell your friends/ employer/ school what has happened. Prescribe names of persons able to collect your children.
- If you require regular prescriptions, change your pharmacy or doctor.
- Consider changing your vehicle, particularly if it is noticeable such as being a particular colour or adorned with stickers/ modifications that make it stand apart from others.
- Consider changes to routines such as shopping days/ shops / bars /leisure activities that you regularly frequent.
- Talk to your children about the need to keep your address and location confidential

***\*\*Change vehicle/ house insurance and utilities into your own name to prevent mistaken or deliberate cancelling of policies by ex-partner.***

Leaving an abusive partner or family member can be the most difficult decision to make. There will be a very strong 'material' argument for not leaving such as financial, social and personal property, indeed the not knowing of what happens next. Be assured, these will not last long, yes it can be daunting, but replaced by a lifetime where an abuser has been left behind - replaced by a future shaped by you, on your terms. Possessions can be replaced, friendships will be made and homes can be rebuilt.

Your abuser may try and use these 'material' items to exert power over you to return, they may make promises to change, or they may make threats to you. Therefore it is very important to get professional help to leave and maintain this support, having left. There may be an urge for a while to return back to the relationship on the promise of change from an abuser, but such changes will almost certainly be short lived before returning back to the cycle of power and control.

You are not alone  
Domestic abuse is more than just physical abuse.  
We can help and support you – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
Need to talk?  
Use Live Chat to talk to one of our 101 operators at  
In an emergency, call 999.

Below is a link to the Kent Police website, please watch the Domestic Abuse video if you are a Domestic Abuse Victim – working in partnership to support you.

[Kent Police Domestic Website.](#)

**NORTH KENT**

## **Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services website**

<http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/>

For advice and help around obtaining a Non-Molestation order

### **Choices**

Domestic Abuse **ONE STOP SHOPS** offer free advice, information and support from a range of agencies such as Solicitors, Housing and other professionals under one roof to help victims of domestic abuse. No appointment is required, no referral needs to be made and victims can just turn up.

**Dartford** - Every Tuesday from 9.30am to 12pm

The Brent Children's Centre, The Roundhouse, Overy Street, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1UP

**Gravesend** - Every Thursday from 9.30am to 12 noon

The Gateway, Civic Centre, Gravesend, DA12 1DE

**Medway** – Every Tuesday from 9.30am to 12 noon

The Sunlight Centre, 105 Richmond Road, Gillingham ME7 1LX

**Sittingbourne** – (Run by Clarion not Choices) Fortnightly, Tuesday 10am to 11:30am

Sittingbourne Library - Central Ave, Sittingbourne ME10 4AH

**Sheerness** - Fortnightly, Monday 10am to 11:30am

Seashells Sheerness Children & Families Centre, Rose St, Sheerness ME12 1AW

**For further details please go to** - <https://www.swale.gov.uk/domestic-abuse>

**SATEDA** (Support and Action To End Domestic Abuse)

01795 417 251

The ethos of SATEDA (Swale Action to End Domestic Abuse) is to end domestic abuse by providing support and advocacy, raising awareness of domestic abuse and delivering preventative projects. SATEDA are part of Kent Domestic Abuse Consortium.

**Sheerness** - Every Wednesday between 1-3pm

The Gateway, High Street, Sheerness,

**Faversham** - Every Thursday between 9:30-11:00am

West Faversham Community Centre, Bysingwood Road

### **VICTIM SUPPORT**

0333 257 2624

### **NATIONAL STALKING HELPLINE**

0808 802 0300

[advice@stalkinghelpline.org](mailto:advice@stalkinghelpline.org)

### **HOLLIE GUARD APP**

for iphone, android and Windows phone.

This is an app which can alert persons named and give an exact location of where you are.

**PROTECTION AGAINST STALKING** e-mail: [support@protectionagainststalking.org](mailto:support@protectionagainststalking.org)

### **Women's Aid / Refuge**

0808 200 0247

A national service for women and their children wishing to flee a violent or abusive relationship or seek advice around leaving.

### **MEN'S ADVICE LINE**

0808 801 0327

Mon- Fri 9am – 5pm. A confidential helpline for men in abusive relationships (heterosexual or same sex)

**MEN'S AID** ([www.mensaid.co.uk](http://www.mensaid.co.uk))

0333 567 0556

A registered charity providing advice and support to men who have been abused or discriminated against in any way.

**BROKEN RAINBOW**

0300 999 5428

Providing the National Helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people experiencing domestic Abuse (LGBT)

**KARMA NIRVANA**

0800 599 9247

Advice for BME Women regarding domestic abuse, forced marriages, Honour Based violence and abduction abroad. Can signpost and support in a confidential and sensitive way.

**GALOP**

LGBT National Charity, including a Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 999 5428

**POLISH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE**

0800 061 4004

Support and advice, allowing victims to talk about their situation in their native language

**CITIZEN ADVICE BUREAU**

A free service providing help and information on a range of subjects such as housing, employment, family law.

**National advice line**

03444 111 444

**Dartford and Gravesend**

0300 330 9001

**Faversham**

0344 8487978

**Medway**

01634 383 760

**Sittingbourne**

0344 8487978

**LOOK AHEAD** (Refuge)

Tonbridge

01732 353076

Tonbridge Wells

01892 542113

**HOUSING** - The council can assist with advice and options around housing for you and your children. This may include re-housing, home bond schemes, refuge and temporary housing.

**Dartford Borough Council**

01322 343434

Out of hours: 0345 634 1212

**Gravesham Borough Council**

01474 337000

**Medway Council**

01634 306000

**Swale Council**

01795 417850

**RESPECT**

0808 802 4040

Information and advice on domestic abuse perpetrator issues

**FAMILY MATTERS**

01474 536661

Specialised charitable service providing counselling and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) support to child and adult victims of rape and sexual abuse.

**EKRCC**

01227 826900

Specialised student Independent Sexual Violence Advisor, Practical and emotional support for students who are survivors of sexual violence. Support for recent and historic incidents, disclosing to college/university and access to the welfare team.

**RELATE** (Relationship counselling)

0300 100 1234

**KCA** 01227 456 744  
Organisation offering support and range of services to young people (10-17) who have difficulties with drugs and alcohol.

**MIND** 0208 519 2122  
Support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem

**SAMARITANS** 116123  
e-mail [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
Whatever you're going through, you can call us any time, from any phone for FREE. Sometimes writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you understand them better.

**SOLACE WOMEN'S AID** 0808 802 5565  
e-mail: [advice@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:advice@solacewomensaid.org)

**SOCIAL SERVICES** 0300 041 1111

**SSAFA – The Armed Forces Charity** 0800 731 4880  
SSAFA provides lifelong support to men and women in the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the British Army and the Royal Air Force, and their families.

### **CIVIL ORDERS**

**An occupation order** - is issued by the family court under Part IV Family Law Act 1996 and sets out who has the right to stay at the family home, who can return and who should be excluded. An order does not change the financial ownership of a property.

**A residence order** - is a court order 'settling the arrangements ... as to the person with whom a child is to live. ... This means that you can take most of the decisions that a parent can take about a child's care and upbringing.

**A Prohibited Steps Order** - is an order which prohibits a party (usually a parent) from a certain activity relating to a child(ren), and which also prohibits a party from exercising their parental responsibility.

**National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV)** - provides assistance with emergency non-molestation orders. <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/> - 0800 970 2070