



Domestic Abuse Policy and Guidance

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another by using threatening behaviour, physical violence or other controlling behaviours including psychological, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse – known as coercive control. Domestic abuse can take many forms and isn't limited to one form of abuse like physical violence.

Abusive relationships can be between intimate partners or family members, irrespective of age, gender, or sexual orientation. It affects all socioeconomic, racial, faith and cultural backgrounds. Domestic abuse is a crime in Northern Ireland and the behaviour is never acceptable.

Types of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to one type of behaviour, as perpetrators will often use multiple control tactics against their victims. Listed below are some of the more common types of domestic abuse experienced by victims and survivors.

Physical: Physically hurts the individual in any way or throws items in their direction to scare or threaten them which can include:

- Damaging items physically in the direction of the victim like a wall or a door.
- Physically assaulting the victim claiming that 'they made them do it'.
- Raising their voice to scare and intimidate the victim.

Emotional: A form of manipulation that can harm a person's mental health and wellbeing designed to control aspects of the victim's life by cutting off their support networks. Examples include:

- Guilt the victim when they spend time with others - *'If you love me you won't go out.'*
- Love bombs them with gifts and attention so they feel indebted to them.

Psychological: Coercive Control¹ is an ongoing pattern of behavior in which the perpetrator insults, humiliates, and instills fear in an individual in order to control them.

- Isolating the victim from their family and friends - *'they don't really care about you.'*
- Demands they dress a certain way or deems them when they wear something the perpetrator does like *'you look ugly in that dress' 'I like it better when you don't wear makeup, you should stop wearing it.'*

¹ NI reference to coercive control <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/news/new-domestic-abuse-offence-comes-force-long>

- *Gaslights their victim- 'I never said/did that, you are crazy.'*

Financial: Constantly wants the individual to justify what they spend money on & tries to take control of all finances.

- Tells the victim they aren't good with money, and they can help them 'manage' it.
- Takes out loans and credit in their name and doesn't make the payments.
- Prevents the victim from working and having financial Independence

Sexual: Is a form of abuse which includes jealousy, possessiveness and continually accuses the individual of being unfaithful. Demands sex, or pressures victims into unwanted sexual activities. Can also include:

- Threatening to publish intimate images as a method of control
- Sexually humiliating the victim by publishing intimate images
- Forcing the victims into sexual situations they don't feel comfortable

Stalking: Demands to know where the individual is at all times including constantly messaging, calling & tracking of their movements.

- Demands they share their location with the perpetrator.
- Show up to places they know the victim will be like their workplace or a child's school during pickup time.
- Places hidden spying equipment on the victim like trackers or spyware on their devices.
- Telephones the victim's workplace asking to speak to them or if they are there.

Cyber Harassment: When a perpetrator uses technology to extend their control over the victim. Like coercive control, it can feel more Insidious to the victim as It's still terrifying without the perpetrator being physically there.

- Demands access to their social media and email accounts.
- Tells the victim they aren't allowed social media accounts- usually following accusations of cheating.

The Impact of Domestic Abuse

Victims and survivors of domestic abuse can experience varying degrees of trauma because of what perpetrated on them. It's Important how we understand how this trauma can manifest and be respectful and understanding to victims and survivors when seeing these behaviours. Common impacts Include:

- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Lifelong Injuries from the physical or sexual violence experienced
- Exposure to trauma can lead to stress, fear and isolation
- Suicidal thoughts
- Eating disorders
- Addiction

Responding to Domestic Abuse

If concerned that an adult colleague (coach/volunteer) or club parent is living with domestic abuse, then the first thing you should do is seek advice for yourself either through your club safeguarding /welfare officer or the [Women's Aid Federation NI](#). The control within domestic violence situations is often about shame and creating guilt so terms like “our secret our story” and “I don't want everyone knowing my business”, are common. It is important you seek the advice of Women's Aid staff to ensure any communication with the adult does not push the person and whole family away and it may not be suitable for a club representative at initial stage, to raise this concern with the adult. You do not know the risk level in house; therefore, you should seek immediate advice from Women's Aid or report to the [Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline \(NI\)](#) (contact details under useful contacts).

DA is such a complex issue and so many things heighten danger. If it can be done safely talk to the adult and check how things are. Via the club social media sites openly promote the Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline (D&SV), Women's Aid contact details along with Childline for anyone who may need help and to know they are not alone.

Following discussion with Women's Aid or D&SV Helpline the club welfare/safeguarding officer can decide to refer the information to PSNI specialist DV team or Social Services if there is a child in the house.

PSNI

Any reports to police about domestic abuse can still be reported the same way by calling 101 in a non-emergency and 999 in an emergency. PSNI call handlers have undertaken the specialist training to understand domestic abuse including coercive control so each case can be taken seriously and supported.

Domestic abuse accounts for approximately 1/5th of all crime in Northern Ireland and every 16 minutes of the day the PSNI attend a domestic abuse incident. If there is a child in the home, there will be an automatic referral to Social Services, and this will be dealt with by a contact to the non-abusive parent to look at safeguarding the child/ren within that home.

Public Protection Branch (PPB) teams are now aligned with the Health and Social Care Trusts as opposed to the Police and council boundaries. This allows for a closer working relationship with social service teams as well as our other statutory and non-statutory partners.

Social Services

In Northern Ireland support families with the primary focus being the well-being and safety of the child within that home. It is important to encourage good practice in the identification of children affected by domestic abuse and the provision of protection and support for these children. With the introduction of the Child Aggravator within our Domestic Abuse & Civil Proceedings Act, it does for the first time see children beyond just a witness to abuse. For the first time, a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator is acknowledged. It firmly places the fault with the perpetrator and how their behaviour affects the children. This will help to ensure that social services now consider and address the needs of children affected by domestic abuse and the impact of all forms of abuse including coercive control have on children and young people.

Children do not just witness domestic abuse they experience it as they live in an environment of fear and threat of violence. The emphasis of control by the person perpetrating the violence and the lack of voice for the child can make home a very frightening place to live and impact on the child's emotional development and view on the world. Domestic Abuse has an impact on their family relationships and can also affect future relationships. The club should promote Childline to encourage any young person effected to have someone to talk to about their situation or they can also be directed to Hide out web site for specific support around Domestic Abuse <http://thehideout.org.uk/> .

Key summing up

- Identify risk and how situation can escalate quickly
- Don't want to push family away
- Don't try to sort it out yourself – always talk to some e.g. welfare officer/safeguarding officer
- Any sign of harm/stress to child call Social Services but inform parent if possible

Knowing signposting options available in resource book e.g.

- Women's Aid
- NSPCC Helpline
- Childline
- 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline

You may feel you are not able to make a referral to social services with the concern/evidence you have, but it is about support for the family currently which can be challenging to be able to deliver. Domestic abuse is such a complex issue and so many things heighten danger. If it can be done safely talk to the adult you are worried is being harmed and check how things are. Just because it is not happening within the club does not mean that domestic abuse can be ignored you. Everyone at a sports club have a moral duty to protect an adult or child impact by abuse.



Seeking support

Domestic abuse is a crime in Northern Ireland. It is never acceptable, and any relationship you've had with the person doesn't excuse their behaviour. If you are in danger, call the Police by dialling '999.' If it's not safe for you to speak, you can hit '55' on your keypad to let the operator know. You can also report what is happening on the Police's Non-Emergency number by dialling '101' on your phone.

[999 55: The Silent Solution - Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland](#)

Useful Supports

 <p>Women's Aid</p>	<p>Services throughout Northern Ireland offer specialist support for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse.</p> <p>You can find your local Women's Aid group by visiting: womensaidni.org</p>
 <p>MAP mens advisory project</p>	<p>The Men's Advisory Project (MAP) exists to provide counselling services for men experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Support and counselling services are also available to men who have previously left a violent or abusive relationship and who are still experiencing the effects. www.mapni.co.uk info@mapni.co.uk</p> <p>Belfast: (028) 9024 1929 Foyle: (028) 7116 0001</p>
<p>domestic and sexual abuse helpline 0808 802 1414</p>	<p>Available to anyone who has concerns about domestic or sexual abuse, now or in the past. It is open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence</p>
 <p>The Rainbow Project</p>	<p>The Rainbow Project provides Northern Ireland's only co-cultural gay affirmative counselling service.</p> <p>info@rainbow-project.org www.rainbow-project.org Belfast: (028) 9031 9030 Foyle: (028) 7128 3030</p>
 <p>here a place for lesbian & bisexual women</p>	<p>HERE NI is a community organisation and registered charity supporting lesbian and bisexual women and their families to improve the lives across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>www.hereni.org Tel: 028 9024 9452</p>

	<p>ASSISTNI are the Northern Ireland wide advocacy service passionate about supporting victims of domestic and sexual abuse crime who primarily are engaging with the criminal justice system.</p> <p>They provide guidance and support, information, work with other service providers and advocate on victim's behalf, tailoring our service to their needs.</p> <p>www.assistni.co.uk info@assistni.org.uk.</p>
	<p>Childline Tel: 0808 11 11 Visit: https://www.childline.org.uk/</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Trusts in NI - Children</p>	<p>Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of child abuse and more local contacts for ongoing professional liaison for advice on concerns.</p>
<p>Northern HSC Trust</p>	<p>Tel: 03001234333</p>
<p>South Eastern HSC Trust</p>	<p>Tel: 03001000300</p>
<p>Southern HSC Trust</p>	<p>Tel: 08007837745</p>
<p>Belfast HSC Trust</p>	<p>Tel: 028 90 507000</p>
<p>Western HSC Trust</p>	<p>Tel: 028 71314090</p>
	<p>Regional Emergency Social Work service. Available 5.00 PM – 9.00 AM Monday to Thursday and 5.00 PM on Friday to 9.00 AM on Monday. There is a 24-hour cover over public holidays. 028 9504 9999</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Trusts in NI - Adult Safeguarding</p>	<p>The Adult Safeguarding Gateway teams can be contacted at the following numbers:</p>
<p>Northern Trust</p>	<p>028 256 35512</p>
<p>Western Trust</p>	<p>028 716 11366</p>
<p>South Eastern Trust</p>	<p>028 925 01227</p>
<p>Belfast Trust</p>	<p>028 950 41744</p>
<p>Southern Trust</p>	<p>028 374 12015 or 028 374 12354</p>
	<p>Emergency (Out of Hours) Social Work 028 9504 9999</p>