



# Domestic abuse advice

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**This leaflet provides support and information to anyone who is pregnant and experiencing domestic abuse. Domestic Abuse helpline 0808 2000 247 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, if it is an emergency you should always dial 999 and ask for police assistance.**

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## Introduction

One in four women experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. Unfortunately, domestic abuse can often begin or worsen during pregnancy. We recommend seeking support, as abuse can increase the risk of miscarriage, infection, premature birth, low birth weight, fetal injury and fetal death.

The Home Office 'official' definition of domestic abuse is:

*“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, -, financial or emotional abuse.”*

Anyone can experience domestic abuse regardless of gender, race, ethnic or religious group, class, disability, sexuality or lifestyle.

## Who can you tell or speak to?

You can talk about your experiences of domestic abuse to any health professional: this includes your midwife, GP or health visitor who can offer guidance, support and help to connect you to local support agencies. We have listed some of these below who support those using our services, along with national agencies.

- Alana House Project offers support specifically to women who would like help with domestic abuse, during working hours Alana House key workers will visit the hospital to offer support and signpost to other agencies.

To contact Alana House during office hours, Monday to Thursday 9am–5pm, Fridays 9am to 4pm, telephone Alana House - **0118 921 7640**. Out of hours, complete an online referral to Alana House - <https://www.pactcharity.org/alana-house/ah-referrals/refer-yourself/>

- Berkshire Women's Aid is another local support agency that can provide a safe and friendly place where you can get professional help on a range of issues from legal advice and police support to health and benefits advice.

Berkshire Women's Aid can be contacted free 24 hours a day on **0808 8010882** or email [helpdesk@bwaid.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@bwaid.org.uk)

- FLAG DV provide free legal advice for all victims of abuse in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire. Telephone enquiry line **01635 015854** between 11am – 1pm Monday to Friday or you can complete an online referral at <https://flagdv.org.uk/>

### Other useful contact numbers 3

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: **0808 2000 247**
- Samaritans: **116 123** from any phone 24 hours a day. The Samaritans can put you in touch with people who can help and can provide emotional support to anyone in distress.  
<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>
- Karma Nirvana: Specialise in Honour Based Violence **0800 5999 247**  
[www.karmanirvana.org.uk](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk)
- Opoka: **0300 365 1700** (free helpline for Polish women who experience domestic abuse in the UK)
- Sahara Asian Women's Project: Contact via the Berkshire women's Aid (BWA) helpline (**0808 8010882**). The project provides emergency accommodation, practical advice and counselling for Asian women. Email [helpline@bwaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@bwaid.org.uk)
- GALOP (LGBT): **0800 999 5428** – We realise that acknowledging the abuse and taking action is a major step and may be scary, but there is help and support available for you. email: [info@galop.org.uk](mailto:info@galop.org.uk) website <http://www.galop.org.uk>
- Bright Sky app: Bright Sky is a mobile app and website for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, or who is worried about someone else. The app is available in 5 languages: English, Urdu, Punjabi, Polish and Welsh. It is a unique UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services with contact details <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

Safeguarding midwife, December 2006

Reviewed: March 2024

Next review due: March 2026

### Our Maternity Strategy and Vision

*'Working together with women, birthing people and families to offer compassionate, supportive care and informed choice; striving for equity and excellence in our maternity service.'*

You can read our maternity strategy here

