This leaflet explains what counts as domestic violence and abuse. It also lets you know what we can do to support people who are experiencing it.

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Domestic violence and abuse may take many forms. The Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum gives the following definition of domestic abuse:

The misuse of physical, emotional, sexual or financial control by one person over another who is or has been in a relationship. This includes family members.

Domestic abuse covers a wide range of behaviours and may be actual or threatened.

Domestic abuse is usually perpetrated by men against women, but not exclusively.

Domestic abuse occurs in all groups and sections of society and may be experienced differently due to, and compounded by, race, sexuality, disability, age, religion, culture, class or mental health.

Violence can take place inside or outside of the home. It can occur in lesbian and gay relationships or be from a woman to a man. The abuse may also be from a brother, father, son, female family member, lodger or ex-partner. Bristol City Council’s services are available to anyone experiencing domestic abuse.
If you are being abused, these are some of the things that someone close to you could be doing to you:

- Hitting
- Threatening
- Humiliating
- Forcing sex
- Threatening your children
- Abusing your children
- Destroying possessions
- Keeping you financially insecure
- Abusing you emotionally
- Accusing you of being unfaithful
- Ridiculing your beliefs
- Isolating you from friends and family
- Using contact with the children to abuse you or them
- Not meeting your physical needs (if you are disabled or incapacitated)
Any of the above could lead you to feel;

- frightened
- isolated
- insecure
- degraded
- unable to make even basic decisions
- trapped

Domestic abuse is rarely a one-off event and tends to increase in frequency and severity over time.

There is no need to continue to live in fear or feel that the abuse is your fault. The most important thing is to take the first step and recognise that you are experiencing domestic abuse and that you want to do something about it.

We recognise the many forms domestic abuse takes and realise that each case is individual in its circumstances.

The service provided by Bristol City Council, is sympathetic and completely confidential, ensuring that anyone suffering domestic violence gets advice and support to enable them to make informed decisions. These services are available to anyone experiencing domestic abuse.

A list of support agencies is included on page 11 of this booklet.
What we can do to help

If you report domestic violence in person or on the telephone, we will give immediate advice. Where you write to us, where appropriate, we will respond within three days. Where there is an immediate risk or threat to health or safety, always call 999.

We can offer:

- advice and help with security for council tenants
- housing and tenancy advice
- advice and help if you need to move home
- information on other agencies and help with making contact
- benefits and money advice
- support in taking legal action where appropriate.

If you are a tenant you can ask to be referred to the Tenants Support Service for extra support. Please ask for the Tenants Support fact sheet for further information on this service.

The services provided are confidential - except where a child is at risk.
You:
- do not have to show proof of violence or abuse
- can ask to be interviewed by someone of the same sex
- can ask for someone to translate for you
- will not have to give your name or address if you don’t want to.

We:
- will not give any of your details out or contact any other agency without your consent (except where children are involved)
- will offer advice and support, but you must decide what is best for you.

In an emergency
If you need help from the police dial 999. Police officers will come to help and if necessary arrest the violent person.
Legal protection

You can use the civil law to get protection to allow you to live safely. You can do this regardless of any help you may have requested from the police.

If you are suffering domestic abuse or are threatened with violence you can apply for a court order called an injunction. You can take this action against someone who lives or lived with you, whether or not you are or have been married.

An injunction can place certain conditions on a person's actions or movements. For instance, it can stop a person coming within a certain distance of your home, or can stop them telephoning you. A person can be sent to prison if they break the terms of an injunction. If you receive benefits or have a low income you may be able to get Legal Aid to help pay for a solicitor’s advice.

For more information on tackling domestic abuse and where you can obtain independent legal advice contact any Customer Service Point, the police, Citizens Advice Bureau or advice centres. They are all listed at the back of this booklet.

Improving security and getting emergency repairs done (for council tenants only)

Any repairs required as a result of domestic violence or abuse, will be dealt with as a priority and you will not be charged for the work. To report a repair, contact the Customer Services Centre on 0117 922 2200 or visit any Customer Service Point.

Telephone 0117 922 2050 outside office hours.
We can arrange for additional security to your home, for example a change of locks or provision of window locks. However if you are a joint tenant, we can only change the door locks if you have obtained a court order preventing the other person from gaining access to the property. For legal advice please see the “legal advice/information” section at the end of this booklet.

**Emergency re-housing**

If you have been attacked, threatened or are in fear for your own or your children’s safety and feel that you cannot stay at or return home, then you can take the following action:

**During office hours** – you can contact the Estate Management Service or visit any Customer Service Point (Details are at the back of this leaflet).

We can arrange for emergency temporary accommodation. In the longer term you may be rehoused permanently if that is what you want. In both instances it is best to fill out a Housing Application Form at any Customer Service Point as soon as possible.

**Outside office hours** – Contact the police, telephone 101 and ask to be put through to your local Police Station. The police will contact Social Services who will arrange emergency accommodation.

**In an emergency phone the police on 999.**
Some organisations provide safe houses as an alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation. These can be local but can also be provided away from where you live. Please see the contact list at the end of this booklet.

Normally you can only claim Housing Benefit for one address and that address must be your normal place of residence.

However, if you claim Housing Benefit and have to move out temporarily because of actual or threatened violence and nobody remains at your property who is liable to pay rent, Housing Benefit can be paid on your temporary accommodation as well as your normal home.

To enable your claim to be paid you must complete a Housing Benefit application form for the property you are living in and sign a statement to confirm that the fear of violence is causing you to stay away from your normal home.

If you need further advice please contact any Customer Service Point as soon as possible.
## Useful organisations

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<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Police Domestic Abuse Unit</td>
<td>Tel: 101</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In an emergency 999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing advice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If homeless, threatened with homelessness or seeking housing advice.</td>
<td>Tel: 0117 352 6800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAS (housing advice service)</td>
<td>Tel: 0117 935 1260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe houses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Link (domestic abuse services)</td>
<td>Tel: 0117 925 0680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk">enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk">www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bristol Domestic Abuse Helpline</td>
<td>Tel: 0800 6949 999</td>
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<tr>
<td>The National Domestic Violence Helpline</td>
<td>Tel: 0808 2000 247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemini Project (North Somerset)</td>
<td>Tel: 0870 0664 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survive (South Gloucestershire)</td>
<td>Tel: 0117 9612 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:info@survivedv.org.uk">info@survivedv.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Somerset Against Domestic Abuse (NADA)</td>
<td>Tel: 01934 627 841</td>
</tr>
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**Children/the young**

**Bristol Children and Young People’s Services**
Duty desks 8.30am-5pm (all areas out of hours)
Tel: 01454 615165

**North Children’s Services**
Tel: 0117 903 8769

**East/Central Children’s Services**
Tel: 0117 903 6500

**South Children’s Services**
Tel: 0117 903 1414

**Off the Record**
Offers counselling to young people aged between 11 and 25 and also a drop in centre.
Tel: 0808 808 9120
Website: www.otrbristol.org.uk

**NSPCC**
Child Protection helpline
Tel: 0800 800 5000
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

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**Black and other Minority Ethnic Groups**

**Awaz Utaoh**
Offers support, advice and a translation service for people from the South Asian Community.
Tel: 07968 621079

**Bristol and Avon Chinese Womans Group**
Tel: 0117 935 1462
Website: www.bacwg.org.uk

**Next link**
Provide a service to women and children from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
Tel: 0117 925 0680

**Older People**

**Action on Elder Abuse**
Tel: 0808 808 8141
Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

**Disabled people**

**DIAL (disability information and advice line)**
Tel: 01934 419426
Website: www.westondial.co.uk
**Mental Health**

**Missing Link**  
Mental health and housing support for women  
Tel: 0117 9251811  
Website: www.missinglinkhousing.co.uk

**Womankind**  
A service for women experiencing mental health problems and domestic violence. Aimed at people not planning to leave home who need someone to talk to, but can also help with access to refuges.  
Tel: 0845 458 2914  
Website: www.womankindbristol.org.uk

**Mind (Bristol)**  
Tel: 0117 980 0370

**Men experiencing domestic abuse**

**Mankind**  
Tel: 01823 334244  
Website: www.mankind.org.uk

**General and emotional support**

**Samaritans National Helpline**  
Tel: 08457 909090  
Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

**Shelterline**  
Tel: 0808 800 4444  
Website: www.england.shelter.org.uk

**Novas (women only)**  
Hostel provision as well as advice.  
Tel: 0117 909 6310

**Womens Aid**  
Helpline: 0808 2000 247  
Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

**Avon Sexual Abuse Centre**  
Tel: 0117 935 1707  
Email: avonsacentre@lycos.com

**Bristol Victim Support**  
Tel: 0845 456 6099  
Email: adminavon@victimsupport.org.uk

**Legal advice/information**

**Citizens Advice Bureau (Bristol)**  
Tel: 0844 4994718

**Rights of Women**  
Legal advice line  
Tel: 0207 251 6577
Complaints, comments or compliments

Bristol City Council is committed to providing a high quality service to all its’ customers and welcomes your feedback. You can do this by submitting a complaint, comment or compliment, about the services you have received.

If you wish to do this you can complete our online form at www.bristol.gov.uk/faircomment. You can also obtain a Fair Comment leaflet from any Customer Service Point or by contacting our Customer Services Centre.

How to contact us

If you need to contact the Estate Management Service details are set out below.

General enquiries: 0117 922 2200 (option 4)
Textphone: 0117 357 4444
Fax: 0117 352 5104
By Post: Estates, PO Box 595, Bristol BS99 2AW
By Email: estates.north@bristol.gov.uk or estates.south@bristol.gov.uk
By Internet: www.bristol.gov.uk/estates
Customer Service Points

If you would like to see someone in person you can visit any Customer Service Point. Please note opening hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to 5pm, Wednesday 10.30am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm. Extended opening times are available at Phoenix Court, please telephone **0117 922 2200** to check.

**Fishponds**
- Robinson House
- Hockeys Lane
- Fishponds
- Bristol BS16 3HL

**Southmead**
- Southmead House
- Greystoke Avenue
- Southmead
- Bristol BS10 6BQ

**Central Bristol**
- Phoenix Court
- Bond Street South
- Bristol BS1 3PH

**Lawrence Weston**
- Ridingleaze House
- Lawrence Weston
- Bristol BS11 0QE

**Hartcliffe**
- Symes House
- Peterson Square
- Hartcliffe
- Bristol BS13 0BD

**Out of hours emergencies**
- Tel: 0117 922 2050
- Textphone: 0117 922 3892
- Fax: 0117 922 2379

If you are unsure which team you need or you have a customers’ service related enquiry you can email: **customer.servicepoints@bristol.gov.uk**
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<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>ইংরেজি আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অন্য ভাষার প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Jeżeli język angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym i wymagasz tłumaczenia, możemy to zapewnić.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>如果英文不是您的第一语言，而您需要翻译的话，我们可以为您安排。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Se o Inglês não é a sua língua materna e precisa de uma tradução, nós podemos obtê-la.</td>
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</table>
| Gujarati | તમારી પહેલી ભાષા અનેક શૈલી અને તમની ભાષાના શૈલી જે તમે તમને તે આપી શકીએ શકીએ。
| Hindi    | यदि आपकी आपके कोई भाषा नहीं है और आप को अन्य भाषा की आवश्यकता है तो यह हम आप को प्रदान कर सकते हैं। |
| Kurdish  | Heke İngiliz zimanë we yê yekem nine û pejavistîyä we bi wergör heye, em dikarin yekî ji we re bûdirin |
| Somali   | Haddii Ingiriiska aamu ahaan afkaaga kowadaa oo aad u baahan tahay turjumaad, amnaga kuu samayn karra. |
| Punjabi  | ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪ ਕੋ ਅਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਆवਾਂਕਤਾ ਹੈ ਤੋ ਇਹ ਹਮ ਆਪ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। |
| Urdu     | گے ارگر انگریزی آپ کے بولنے والے زبان سے پہلی ہے اور اپ کو ان کے سہولت سے کو ہم آپ کے لئے فراہم کر سکتے ہیں |
| Vietnamese | Nếu ngôn ngữ thứ hai của bạn không phải là tiếng Anh và bạn cần bản dịch, tôi sẽ giúp việc này.

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact us using the details provided in the booklet.