



Registered Charity Number: 1069296

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Domestic abuse, also known as domestic violence, can happen to anyone. Sometimes the most unlikely people are experiencing it and their public persona may not give any indicators to what is going on behind closed doors while they are at home.

Domestic abuse has no boundaries – it has no regard for your gender, sexuality, wealth, educational level, status, race, religion, age, geography or disability. It is not only the stereotypical person who experiences domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is a social epidemic and affects many of us. In Suffolk it affects one in three women and one in six men. So statistically, the chances are that we all know someone who is experiencing it, or the shadow of domestic abuse is in our families.

Many of you may be aware of physical and verbal domestic abuse but domestic abuse also includes emotional, psychological, sexual, financial and coercive control.

Coercive control is not a new phenomenon but it is now a criminal offence and it is defined as a pattern of behaviours, not a one-off incident, designed to make the other person subordinate or dependent. The effect is to shrink the victim's world which normalizes the abuser's behaviour and restricts access to help and support for the victim. Some examples may include:

- Taking control over aspects of a person's everyday life e.g. where they go, who they see, what they wear, what they eat and when they can sleep
- Isolating you from family and friends
- Controlling how much money you have and how you spend it
- And many more behaviours on a spectrum of control

The motivation behind coercively controlling behaviour is power and control over the individual and this also helps us understand why it is so extremely difficult to leave an abusive relationship and sometimes the person who is being controlled does not even realise that they are experiencing abuse.

Lighthouse, like many other domestic abuse agencies, is very concerned about the impact of social isolating and working from home is having on the families where there is domestic abuse. For those in abusive relationships the workplace or school may be their sanctuary and they will no longer have access to that safe place.

During this unprecedented and challenging time, please look out for friends, family members, neighbours or colleagues who may be experiencing domestic abuse and signpost them to the following telephone numbers for advice on domestic abuse:

Lighthouse Advice Line: 01473 228270 (Monday-Friday 9am-4pm)

Lighthouse Immediate Safety Advice: 07516 124536 (Monday-Friday 9am-4pm)

Other services available include:

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

Gallop LGBT+ Helpline: 0300 999 5428

If you are in immediate danger call 999

Lighthouse Women's Aid is a charitable organisation based in Suffolk, UK providing emotional support to women and their children experiencing domestic abuse in their personal or family relationships.

We offer temporary accommodation in safe and supportive refuges where women and their children can recover from the traumatic effects of domestic violence and make informed choices. We also offer a range of community services and courses to support women and children to rebuild their lives after abuse.

We have been providing safe and supportive refuge in Ipswich since 1976.