



WEST YORKSHIRE  
**POLICE**

West Yorkshire Police and Partners  
Against Domestic Violence

# Violence in the Home **Safety Booklet**



# Violence in the Home

## Safety Booklet

This booklet can help you protect you and any dependent children. West Yorkshire Police recognises that anyone, in any type of relationship, may become a victim of domestic violence. It describes the characteristics of domestic violence, who you can turn to if you need help and also various safety plans for any situation that you may be in now, or any future situation that you may find yourself in.

Although this booklet may contain a vast amount of information, it should not be taken as a fixed course of action. Please do not feel overwhelmed, feel free to just use the parts that are relevant to you.

We hope this booklet is part of the beginning of a safe future for both you and any dependent children.



West Yorkshire Police and Partners  
Against Domestic Violence

With thanks to Domestic Violence Services (Keighley)

# Risk Assessment

A first step in breaking the pattern of domestic violence is to admit that it is a problem.

The first step for you is to admit to yourself that you are being abused and that you deserve to be treated with RESPECT. It is a crime if someone physically hurts or threatens you or your children. You have the right to feel SAFE from harm, especially in your own home.

## Ask yourself these questions

- Are you being hit or threatened by a person you live with?
- Is someone using violence to get what they want from you or your children?
- Are you constantly being humiliated, criticised, insulted, threatened by someone you live with?
- Are you not allowed to leave the house?
- Are you not allowed to have or see your own friends?
- Are you kept without money?
- Are you afraid for yourself or your children?
- Are you emotionally or physically drained?

# Risk Assess

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, you maybe a victim of domestic violence, but remember that only you can judge your own situation.

## Indicators of Domestic Violence

- Everyone argues with their partner now and then. When you argue do you ever change your behaviour because you are afraid of the consequences? Is there anything that goes on at home, which makes you feel afraid?
- Has your partner ever hurt or threatened to hurt you or your children? Has your partner ever put their hands on you against your will or ever forced you to do something that you did not want to do?
- Has your partner ever tried to keep you from taking medication you need, seeking medical help or even refused to let you sleep at night?
- Has your partner or anyone in your household ever used your immigration status and fear of deportation to control you?
- Has your partner ever destroyed your clothing, objects in your home, or something you cared about during an argument, or as a result of an argument?
- Does you partner act jealously, for example, always calling you at work or home to check up on you? Is it hard for you to maintain relationships with your friends, relatives, neighbours, or people at work because your partner disapproves of, argues with, or criticises them? Does your partner accuse you unjustly of flirting with others or having affairs?
- Has your partner ever tried to keep you from leaving the house? Or make it hard for you to find or keep a job or go to college etc?

- Every relationship has their own way of handling finances. Does your partner withhold money from you when you need it? Do you know what your partner's assets are, or know where important documents are like bankbooks, cheque books, financial statements, birth certificates and passports for you and your dependents? If you wanted to use or see any of them would your partner make it difficult for you to do so?
- Has your partner ever forced you to have sex or made you do things during sex that made you feel uncomfortable? Or do they demand sex when you are sick, tired or sleeping?
- Has your partner ever used or threatened to use a weapon against you? Are there guns or other weapons in the house?
- Does your partner abuse drugs or alcohol? If so what happens?

**One important factor is that you are not to blame for the violence you experience, you have no control over when, why and how the abuse may occur. The one thing that you do have control over is the choice that you make about what you want to do about the situation.**

The options that you have are:

- Choose to leave temporarily or permanently
- Choose to stay hoping your partner will change.
- Choose to stay accepting that your partner will not change

# Domestic

- Choose to take legal action against your partner i.e. an injunction, reporting incidents to the police.
- Choose to talk to someone, either a family member, friend, colleague or a Domestic Violence organisation, (support contact numbers are at the rear of this booklet).

As before the decision is up to you and only you can decide which choice to make. Whatever your choice may be, there are people and organisations willing to support you in your decision. Always remember that **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**, and whether or not you feel able to leave an abuser, there are things you can do to make yourself and your dependents safe.

# Violence



# Protection Planning

Once you have acknowledged that you are experiencing domestic violence, you may wish to make a safety plan to protect yourself and your children and also to keep safe after leaving.

**Protecting Yourself in an Emergency, when being attacked or threatened at home.**

TRY TO:

- Stay away from the kitchen (the abuser can find weapons, like knives, there).
- Stay away from bathrooms, cupboards, wardrobes or small spaces where the abuser can trap you.
- Get to a room with a door or window to escape.
- Get to a room with a phone.
- Call 999 right away for help
- Go to a neighbour or friend for help.
- Call for help, shout loudly and continuously. You have nothing to be ashamed of.

# Action Plan for Preparing to Leave

- Keep with you any useful telephone numbers or try to learn them.
- Photocopy or know where important documents are such as birth certificates, passports, marriage certificates and financial papers.
- Open a savings account in your own name to establish your independence. Make sure the bank has a safe address to contact you.
- Try and get an extra set of keys cut for the house, car etc., and leave them together with an extra set of clothes for you and your children in a bag, either give the bag to a trusted neighbour or friend, or keep it in a safe place.
- Decide who you could stay with, and if the need arises - who would lend you some money.
- Try and keep some spare change or a phone card with you at all times for emergencies. Also spare change for taxis, bus fares etc.
- Arrange to leave when your partner is not around.
- Keep all medicines needed for you and your children together in a box.
- Making the decision to leave can be the beginning of a long process, please remember that you don't have to go through this process alone.

Action Plan

# Safety Plan for Keeping Safe

- If still in the same house change all locks and install window locks to secure house.
- Install security systems including additional locks, burglar alarms etc.
- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor of your house.
- Install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person comes near the house.



- Call a local phone company to ask for an unlisted number or dial 141 before dialling a person's number on the telephone, so that your number is non-obtainable by that person.
- Inform neighbours etc. that your partner no longer lives with you, or show a picture of your partner to them, so they may inform you if they see them near your home, and also to contact the police.
- Again keep a list of emergency contact numbers with you at all times.
- Use an answering machine if possible to screen all calls.

# Safety Plan for Protecting Yourself Out of Home

- You must make the decision as to whether you tell people that you have suffered domestic violence and may still be at risk.
- Inform your boss or the security workers about your situation.
- Plan a few safe routes home from work if possible and different modes of transport.
- Think about what you would do if something happened while you were on your way home.
- Do not go to lunch alone, especially if going out of the building.
- Avoid usual routines that you had when living with your partner, i.e. shopping times and places and also appointments etc.
- Choose a different bank to go to or even change bank accounts to a totally different bank and cancel credit cards you shared.
- Keep any court orders with you and emergency numbers at all times.
- Keep a mobile phone with you if possible at all times.
- Make sure that any person or organisation does not pass on your telephone number or address.

# How to Keep Children Safe

A safety plan is a simple, clear plan designed to teach children how to get out of a dangerous situation and reach safety. It is also a plan of how to let other people help to keep your children safe.

Teach them:-

- Not to get involved in the fight between you and your partner even if they want to help, their safety is also a priority.
- How to get out of the house safely.
- How to contact the police using 999, and practice what they should say, their full name, address and telephone number.
- Who to call for help - a neighbour or friend etc.

And also

- Give copies of court orders to anyone looking after your children. Tell them not to release the children to anyone without talking to you; also if you have a recent photograph of your partner give this to them.
- Discuss a password with the school so they know that it is you on the phone.
- Encourage children to identify an adult they feel they are able to talk to and trust, in case they are ever scared or need someone to talk to at school etc.
- Make sure that the school does not give your address and telephone number to anyone.

# Checklist: What You Need to Take With You

Please remember that these items are not as important as the lives of you and your children

- Identification, drivers licence, car registration documents
- Welfare books and identification
- Birth certificates for you and your children
- Police reports and documentation of previous abuse
- Money
- Bank books and or bank account numbers
- Chequebooks, credit cards
- House documents, rental agreements etc.
- House/car keys
- Medications/medical records
- Address book
- Pictures/photographs
- National Insurance Card/number
- Passport or Visa
- Court orders, restraining orders
- Divorce/marriage permits
- Children's clothing and favourite toys
- Jewellery
- Other personal items important to you

This booklet is designed to raise the issue of domestic violence and is also a guide to keeping safe.

**If, however, you are not able to take this pack, please take any of the detachable cards that may be appropriate to your situation.**

If you need any further information, or just need to talk, please do not hesitate to contact the agencies listed on the next page.



## Protecting Yourself in an Emergency

- Stay away from the kitchen
- Stay away from cupboards, wardrobes or small spaces
- Get to a room with a door or window to escape or call for help, or get to a room with a phone in it
- Call for help, shout loudly and continuously, you have nothing to be ashamed of
- Get out of the house
- Call 999 straight away
- Teach children not to get involved and also how to get out of the house quickly and safely

## Keeping Safe at Home

- Change all locks and install window locks to secure house
- Install security systems including additional locks, burglar alarms etc.
- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
- Install outside lighting system that lights up when a person comes near the house
- Use an answering machine to screen all calls
- Call a local phone company to ask for an unlisted number, or alternatively dial 141 before ringing out to make your number unobtainable

## Preparing to Leave

- Keep with you any useful telephone numbers
- Photocopy of know where important documents are
- Open a savings account
- Get an extra set of keys cut
- Organise a bag of clothes for yourself and children, include toys and medicines
- Try to keep some spare change for any calls you make or for bus, taxi fares
- Keep all medicines in a box for both yourself and your children
- Arrange to leave when your partner is not around

## Protection Out of Home

- Inform your boss or security workers about your situation
- Plan a few safe routes home from work/college, and also different modes of transport
- Don't go to lunch alone, especially if going out of the building
- Avoid usual routines that you had when living with your partner, such as shopping times, and certain places you go to shop
- Make sure no one passes on your address and telephone number