

Improving Support for people with Learning Disabilities Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Transform Toolkit



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About the toolkit

Accessibility

A saying in the 'learning disability world' about accessibility of information and services says: "If you get it right for people with a learning disability you get it right for everyone".

We developed this toolkit to support people with a learning disability to identify and escape domestic abuse. We needed to develop and present it in a way that would work for as many people as possible, and we endeavoured to follow best practise guidelines for production of accessible information.

The selection of red, amber and green as key colours in the first three factsheets reflects the traffic light systems used in health passports and other individual plans for adults with a learning disability. (These use red to denote vital information, amber to represent important information and green to indicate more holistic detail about a person.) We felt that the wide familiarity with these colours may support some intuitive understanding for certain people with a learning disability.

Sources of information

The resources in this toolkit were developed from a mixture of source material including educational information by Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Services, and the vital contributions of project research participants, who provided a compelling picture of a lack of understanding of both domestic abuse and sources of help.

We held feedback workshops on the draft versions. We involved a diverse audience of disabled and non-disabled people, survivors and professionals at our project conference and incorporated many of their amendments and suggestions into the final versions.

Intended use

These resources were designed to be as flexible as possible and it is hoped that factsheets 1-5 may be used by some people with a learning disability themselves (with sufficient levels of literacy to read them unsupported).

We anticipate, however, that they will have a much wider application in helping different professionals to support and enhance understanding, among people with a learning disability, about domestic abuse and sources of help.

Factsheet 6 - the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) Risk Assessment prompt sheet is specifically aimed at frontline professionals. Staff from Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Service identified the need for this document; to support their use of the national MARAC form with a person with a learning disability, when assessing the risk of serious harm.

Factsheets 7 and 8: Useful questions for Police to ask (created in partnership with Dyfed Powys Police) and the Assessment prompt sheet for frontline services (based on “How to spot signs that a person has a learning disability” by BILD) are included to help professionals think about, and reflect upon whether an individual may have a learning disability and require further support.

Factsheet 9 briefly outlines a number of National Learning Disability bodies and organisations. It is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully one that will signpost the user to local or more specific sources of support.

All the resources in this toolkit are free and designed for open use. Carmarthenshire People First and Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Services will include downloadable pdf versions on their websites. The project team hope that interested organisations and professionals in the sectors will also upload and use these tools in their work.

A word from the team

We do not consider this toolkit to be the definitive accessible guide to domestic abuse. Rather, we hope it can provide a basis for to support accessibility, discussion, collaborative work and development.

Our thanks to:

Lloyds Bank Foundation

The many organisations and individuals who have supported the development and evaluation of these resources and to Photosymbols who helped bring them to life.



People use lots of different words to talk about domestic abuse.

Abuse means treating badly.

Domestic Abuse is when someone hurts or bullies their partner, their ex, or someone in their family.

Domestic Abuse means the same as **Domestic Violence**.

Domestic abuse is wrong!



The person who does the hurting is called **the abuser**.



Anyone can be an abuser.
They can be a man or a woman.



They can be a parent or a child.



Hurting the other person is called being **abusive**.



The action that hurts them is called **abusive behaviour**.



It can happen between people who are:



- Living together



- Living apart



- Dating / Going out together.



- Married to each-other.



- And to people who have children together.



People can be abused by their boyfriend or girlfriend.



Domestic abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished.



Children and young people can be affected by abuse.



Domestic abuse is bad treatment that happens again and again.





There are different kinds of abusive behaviour like:




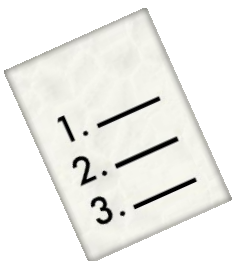



Physical abuse:
Hurting someone's body.







	<p>Emotional abuse:</p> <p>Hurting someone's feelings on purpose.</p>
	<p>Sexual abuse:</p> <p>Doing sexual things to someone when they don't want it.</p>
	<p>Financial Abuse:</p> <p>Taking someone's money.</p>
	<p>People use domestic abuse to control people they have a relationship with.</p> <p>They make you do things their way not your way.</p>
	<p>There are people who can help!</p>
	<p>This Easy Read factsheet was made using photosymbols.</p>





	<h2>How to keep safe if you live with an abuser</h2>
	<p>Keep money and spare keys in a safe place if you can.</p>
	<p>Find out about your rights. Talk to an advocate if you can.</p>
	<p>An advocate is someone who can help you make changes you want in your life.</p>
	<p>They will see how the law can help keep your abuser away from you.</p>
	<p>It is helpful if you can keep copies of important papers in a safe place.</p>








 <p>Live Fear Free Helpline</p> <p>Llinell Gymorth Byw Heb Ofn</p> <p>0808 80 10 800</p>	<p>Carry emergency numbers for: police, family, friends, and Live Fear Free Helpline</p> <p>Disguise helpline names if you can.</p>
	<p>Use a friend's phone or a phone box.</p> <p>Call a Helpline for advice. Call the police if something is happening right now.</p>
	<p>Tell someone you trust about the abuse.</p>
	<p>Tell your GP about your injuries.</p>
	<p>Talk to family and friends about staying with them if you need to.</p>
	<p>Think about safe ways to escape.</p>

	<h2>How to get away</h2>
	<p>It takes courage to leave someone who controls and scares you.</p>
	<p>Leaving can be dangerous.</p>
	<p>It is important to plan how you will do it.</p>
	<p>But not everyone has time. Sometimes people must leave in a hurry.</p>

	<h2>Things to remember!</h2>
	<p>Call 999 if you or your children are in danger.</p>
	<p>Make notes after you are abused. Put down names, times, dates and injuries.</p>
	<p>If you take photos, you must tell the police about your injury when it happens.</p>
	<p>This is in case you need legal help.</p>
	<p>Keep copies of nasty texts, mails and letters.</p>

	<h2>What to pack if you plan to leave</h2>
	<p>ID. This means proof of who you are.</p>
	<p>Birth certificates for you and your children.</p>
	<p>School and medical records. School and GP numbers.</p>
	<p>Money, bank books, credit and debit cards.</p>
	<p>Keys for your house, car, and work.</p>

	<p>Driving licence and car documents.</p>
	<p>Medicines from your doctor.</p>
	<p>Cards or payment books for Child Benefit and any other benefits.</p>
	<p>Passports. Visas and work permits if you come from another country.</p>
	<p>Copies of papers about your housing.</p>
	<p>Bills you need to pay.</p>

	<p>Insurance documents.</p>
	<p>Address book.</p>
	<p>Family photos, diary, jewellery, small items that are special to you.</p>
	<p>Clothes and toiletries for you all.</p>
	<p>Your children's favourite small toys.</p>
	<p>Xbox or laptop for older children.</p>
	<p>This Easy Read was made using photosymbols.</p>



You can talk to someone you trust, like a support worker.



You can call the **Live Fear Free Helpline** wherever you are in Wales. It is free.



The number is: 0808 8010 800

Or you can text: 078600 77333



This is their website:

info@livefearfreehelpline.wales



Most towns also have organisations to help you.



They have people you can talk to.
They can support you to:



- make the changes you need



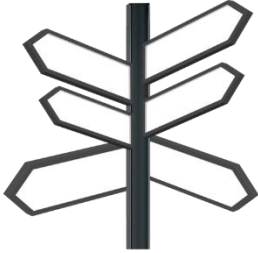
- understand things you are confused or worried about



- meet other people who have been through the same as you





- do activities to help you recover from what you went through












- tell you the organisations that can help with other parts of your life









The first step is to ask for help!

	
	<p>The Police - call 999 if you are in danger</p>
	<p>A local Domestic Abuse Organisation</p>
	<p>Your local People First or other advocacy organisation</p>
	<p>A professional you trust - maybe a social worker, key worker, doctor or nurse</p>
	<p>Wales has:</p> <p>the Live Fear Free Helpline:</p> <p>0808 801 0800</p>

	<p>BAWSO - if you are from another culture.</p> <p>Their number is: 0800 731 8147</p>
	<p>There are also Domestic Abuse helplines outside Wales:</p>
	<p>The England number is:</p> <p>0808 2000 247</p>
	<p>The Scotland number is:</p> <p>0800 0271 234</p>
	<p>The Republic of Ireland number is:</p> <p>1800 341 900</p>
	<p>The Northern Ireland number is:</p> <p>0800 917 1414</p>
	<p>This Easy Read factsheet was made using photosymbols.</p>

	<h2>Where can I go for help?</h2>
<h1>999</h1>	<p>Always call the police if you are in danger.</p>
	<p>But there are also people who can give you help and advice.</p>
	<p>You can talk to them on a free helpline number like the Live Fear Free Helpline.</p>
	<p>They are open all the time.</p>
	<p>Staff will tell you about services in your area that can help you be safe.</p> <p>They may talk to you about a refuge.</p>

	<h2>What is a Refuge?</h2>
	<p>A refuge is a safe house where people can stay and not be afraid any more.</p>
	<p>You may be able to go into a refuge.</p>
	<p>There are more than 500 refuges in the UK.</p>
	<p>Where can I find a refuge?</p>
	<p>Refuge addresses and numbers are kept secret. That is to keep people safe.</p> <p>But a helpline can find a refuge for you.</p>



What support will be there for me?

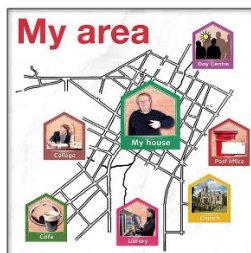


The refuge staff are there to support you.



They will help you deal with what has happened

And they will sort out your benefits.









They will help you get to know the place you have come to.


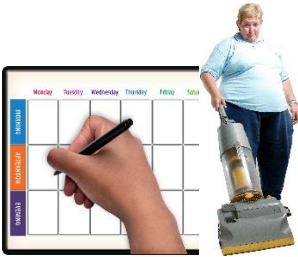




And help you move forward one step at a time.















To create a safer happier life.

	<h2>What is it like in a Refuge?</h2>
	<p>Some refuges have lots of space. Others are small houses. Some are just for women and children. Others are just for men</p>
	<p>Some refuges are just for women from the same backgrounds.</p>
	<p>Some have disabled access and special adaptations.</p>
	<p>You will usually share a room with your children.</p>
	<p>You may have your own bathroom.</p>

	<p>Other rooms in the refuge are shared.</p>
	<p>People take it in turns to do housework</p>
	<p>You can spend time on your own if you want.</p>
	<p>Or you can be with other people.</p>
	<p>Everyone who stays in the refuge agrees to follow the rules.</p>
	<p>The rules are important because they help keep everyone safe.</p>

	<p>The rules are about things like:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rent you will pay
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long you can stay
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using drink or drugs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the washing machine
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's bedtimes

	<h2>Who can go into a refuge?</h2>
	<p>If you need to escape domestic abuse you can ask to go into a refuge.</p>
	<p>A support worker will ask questions to see if the refuge is the right place for you to stay.</p>
	<p>They will look at everything that puts you at risk (in danger).</p>
	<p>They will also look at the risks to other people in the refuge.</p>
	<p>That means things like mental health problems, drinking a lot or taking drugs.</p>

	<p>If there is space, you may be able to choose a refuge near your family.</p> <p>But only if that is safe for you.</p>
	<p>You should be able to go into a refuge on the day you call.</p>
	<p>If you want to go into a refuge you need to give:</p>
	<p>Your name.</p>
	<p>The ages of any children with you.</p>
	<p>A phone number, so you can be told when a place has been found for you.</p>



Then a member of staff will talk to you about how to get to the refuge.



Housing benefit can be paid at the refuge and your own home for a while.




A local refuge may not be safe if the person abusing you lives nearby.



Every case is looked at to see what is best for each person.



But you must not tell your abuser where you are going.

	<h2>What can you take into a refuge?</h2>
	<p>Clothes and personal belongings.</p>
	<p>Anything from the “Important things to pack” list.</p>
	<p>But there won't be room for big things.</p>
	<p>Furniture is not allowed. It must be stored somewhere else.</p>
	<p>Pets are not allowed. But a domestic abuse organisation may be able to find someone to look after them for a while.</p>
	<p>This Easy Read factsheet was made using photosymbols.</p>



Law



What is it?



Clare's Law started in 2014 to help people keep safe in their relationships.



It is named after a woman called Clare Wood who was killed by her ex-boyfriend.



Anyone can use it to see if their partner has ever hurt someone close to them.



You need to contact the police and say:









"I want to use Clare's Law to ask about my partner."



Someone else can ask them If you find it too hard,



You can use Clare's Law at any time, as long as you are in a relationship with your partner.

	<p>This is what happens if you ask:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A police officer will talk to you in a safe place.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will ask some questions and write down your answers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should contact you in a few days if they find something about your partner and Domestic Abuse.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will talk to you face to face.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is nothing on their records, they will call to tell you.

	<p>You will have to sign to say you have been told the information.</p>
	<p>You must not tell anyone else about what you have been told.</p>
	<p>This is very important, because telling people may be dangerous.</p>
	<p>That rule is there to protect you.</p>
	<p>After you hear what the police say, you can decide what you want to do about your relationship.</p>
	<p>This Easy Read factsheet was made using photosymbols.</p>



We are going to write things down so we know the best way we can help you.






It isn't anything to worry about.
We go through these questions with everyone.







We won't rush you - we'll go at your pace.






Would you like us to call someone to give you a bit more support?

	<p>Q1</p> <p>Are you hurting anywhere because of what happened?</p> <p><i>Do you have any cuts / bruises / burns?</i></p> <p>Has anything like this happened before?</p>
	<p>Q2</p> <p>Are you very scared?</p>
	<p>Q3</p> <p>What are you scared of?</p> <p>Are you scared of being hurt again?</p> <p>What do you think they might do?</p> <p>Who do you think they might hurt?</p> <p>What are their names?</p>
	<p>Q4</p> <p>Do you feel cut off from your family and friends?</p> <p>Have they made it hard for you to spend time with them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stopped you seeing or talking to them? - made it hard for you to see your doctor or anyone else?

	<p>Q5</p> <p>How are you feeling?</p> <p>Do you sometimes feel you don't want to live anymore?</p> <p>Do you care what happens to you?</p> <p>Have you thought about killing yourself?</p>
	<p>Q6</p> <p>Have you tried to leave in the last year?</p>
	<p>Q7</p> <p>Do you argue about seeing the children?</p>
 	<p>Q8</p> <p>Do they hassle you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - follow you? - text or call you all the time? - use social media to make you feel bad? <p>Do you think they are doing it to confuse you?</p> <p>Do you think they are doing it to scare you?</p>

	<p>Q9</p> <p>Are you expecting a baby?</p> <p>Have you recently had a baby?</p>
	<p>Q10</p> <p>Is the abuse happening more than it used to?</p>
	<p>Q11</p> <p>When it happens is it getting worse?</p>
	<p>Q12</p> <p>Do they get very jealous?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try and control you? - tell you what you can wear? - tell you where you can go? - tell you who you can see? - say you bring shame on the family? <p>Are there other things they do to stop you living your life the way you want?</p>

	What kinds of things do they do / say?
	Q13 Have they ever used something to hit or hurt you?
	Q14 Have they ever said they would kill you or someone else and you thought they would?
	Q15 Have they ever tried to stop you breathing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - put their hands around your throat? - covered your nose and mouth? - held your head under water / pushed you into water

	<p>Q16</p> <p>Do they ever say they will do bad things to you sexually?</p> <p>Do they make you watch porn?</p> <p>Do they say they will force you to do things?</p> <p>Do they ever hurt your private parts?</p> <p>Do they do that to anyone else?</p> <p>Do they touch you in ways you don't want?</p> <p>Do they make you have sex?</p> <p>Do they do that to anyone else?</p> <p>Who else do they hurt like that?</p>
	<p>Q17</p> <p>Are you scared of anyone else?</p> <p>Why are you scared of them?</p> <p>Have they said or done something to make you afraid?</p> <p>Who are they?</p>

**Q18**

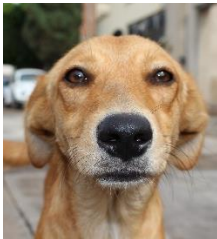
Have they hurt anyone apart from you?

Do you know them?

Have they hurt children?

Someone they used to go out with?

Older people in the family?

**Q19**

Have they ever hurt a pet or an animal?

**Q20**

Are there money problems or worries?

Do you rely on them for money?

Have they recently lost their job?

Do they take your card or money?

**Q21**

Have they had mental health problems in the last year?

Have they used drugs?

Do they get drunk?

**Q22**

Have they ever said they would kill themselves?

Have they ever tried?

**Q23**

Have they ever broken bail? Or rules about:

- Coming near you / the children?
- Contact with you / the children?
- Threatening or scaring you / the children?
- Trying to make you marry someone?
- Anything else?



Q24

Have they been in trouble with the police?
Was it for:

- Domestic abuse?
- Sexual abuse?
- Another attack?
- Something else?



This Easy Read factsheet was made using
photosymbols.

What to look out for -

Useful questions for Police to ask

1. Does the person struggle to give information about themselves?
2. How is their concept of time - can they say what time of day it is?
(Morning, evening etc)
3. Can they tell you their address?
4. Can they read or write - at least a few sentences?
5. Do they live independently without support?
6. Can they manage their personal care? Or would they need reminding?
7. Can they get around their local area - catch buses and trains and get to appointments on time?
8. Do they need help recognising and understanding money and working out change?

Assessment prompt sheet for frontline services - Could this person have a learning disability?

Is the person struggling to:

- Express what has happened?
- Understand what has happened?
- Follow instructions or conversations?
- Control their anger and other emotions?
- Remember their address or date of birth?

If so, the sensitive asking of certain questions may help suggest whether they have a learning disability

- Do you struggle a bit with reading and writing? Do you need help to fill in forms or read?
- What school did you go to? Did you get extra help there?
- Do you work? What job do you do?
- Do you use your own bank account? Do you deal with your own money?
- Can you say where you live and who you live with?
- Do you have anyone helping you day to day with things at home? How about shopping? Cooking? Paying bills etc?
- Do you ever see a.....(key worker, support worker, social worker, nurse, doctor, psychologist)?
- Have you got a Pegasus password?
- Do you sometimes join in any groups like People First or Mencap?

Learning Disability Organisations

If you think someone you are working with might have a learning disability and need further support, the following organisations may be useful sources of advice, guidance or signposting:

Your local **Community Team for Learning Disability**. This will be the hub for learning disability social workers and related professionals in your area. They may be accessed by calling a general social services number.

Local or National **Advocacy Organisations**. Advocacy provision varies widely from region to region, but the most well-known body for learning disability advocacy is People First. This is a movement run by and for people with learning disabilities. It aims to speak up and campaign for their rights and to support self-advocacy groups in their work. If your local People First does not provide advocacy in your area, they should be able to tell you who does.

Mencap is a national charity, committed to changing the world for people with a learning disability. It delivers local and national campaigns as well as services, information provision and opportunities for people with a learning disability and their families.

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support>

BILD (British Institute for Learning Disabilities) helps those supporting people with complex needs to champion rights, ensure excellent support and improve professional practice. They also publish a range of useful factsheets.

<http://www.bild.org.uk/our-services/bilds-services/>

Wales-specific organisations include:

Learning Disability Wales. This is a national charity which represents the learning disability community across Wales. Their projects enable people with a learning disability, and those who support them, to develop new skills and relationships.

<https://www.ldw.org.uk/our-work/>

All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers of People with Learning Disabilities exists to bring a national voice and recognition to parents and carers of people with a Learning Disability in Wales. They work in partnership with a number of voluntary organisations.

<http://www.allwalesforum.org.uk/allwalesforum/about-us/>

If you think someone is experiencing Domestic abuse within the Carmarthenshire County Council area you can contact:

Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Services,
Ty Myrddin, Cambrian Place, Carmarthen, SA31 1QG

Tel: 01267 238410

Refuge & 24 hour line: 01267 234725

info@carmdas.org

www.carmdas.org.uk

Calan DVS – Amman Valley
2 Church Street, Ammanford, SA18 2NR

Tel 01269 597474

enquiries@calandvs.org.uk

www.calandvs.org.uk

Threshold DAS
32 Station Road, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, SA15 1AN

Tel 01554 741212

enquiries@threshold-das.org.uk

www.threshold-das.org.uk

Live Fear Free 24hr Helpline

Tel 0808 8010800

www.welshwomensaid.org.uk

