

Support Agencies

There are several organisations which can help by offering emotional and practical support

24 Hour Free Phone Domestic Violence Helpline

Tel: 0808 802 1414

Women's Aid Federation

Tel: 028 9024 9041

Cara Friend: Lesbian Helpline

Tel: 028 9023 8668

Cara Friend: Gay Helpline

Tel: 028 9032 2023

Victim Support

Tel: 028 9024 3133

Law Society (Legal and Solicitor Advice)

Tel: 028 9023 1614

Men's Advisory Project

Tel: 028 9024 1929

Men's Action Network

Tel: 028 7137 7777

Disability Action

Tel: 028 9029 7880

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

Tel: 028 9023 8645

Age NI

Tel: 0808 808 7575

Support Agencies

(Continued)

Parents Advice Centre

Tel: 0808 8010 722

Samaritans

Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Homeless Advice Centre

Tel: 0344 892 0900

Out of Hours Contact, Tel: 028 9504 9999

The Rowan

Tel: 0800 3894424

Your Case Officer Details

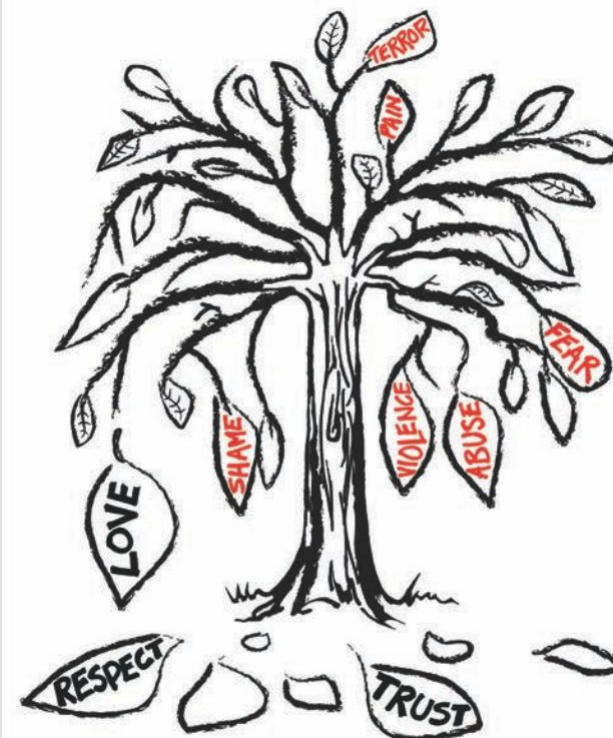
Officers Name:

Station:

Contact Number:



Domestic Abuse



Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can be broadly defined as a pattern of abusive behaviours by a partner in a relationship or a family member. Domestic abuse can manifest in several ways: assault or threats, sexual violence, verbal or emotional abuse as well as financial control and social deprivation. 30% of domestic violence either starts or will intensify during pregnancy or after giving birth (Department of Health report, October 2004). Domestic abuse during pregnancy puts the mother and the unborn child in danger.

Sexual Violence

The Rowan Centre is a specialist regional centre which provides support and services for victims of sexual violence. Victims can report directly to the Rowan Centre. See 'Support Agencies' for contact details.

Children

Domestic abuse can have an impact on children (including unborn children) which may not be immediately obvious. Early intervention will ensure that any impact is kept to a minimum. We will discuss with you what information will be confidently shared and with whom. It is police policy to share information with the local Family and Child Care Manager where children are resident or present at home at the time of a domestic incident or where the victim is pregnant.

Contacting the Police

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has a positive policy of action against perpetrators of domestic abuse. On arrival at a domestic incident, the officer will conduct an investigation. This will include recording a 'witness statement' from you at the time. This statement is important as it may be used in evidence in court at a later date and so should contain as much information as possible about what has happened that led to the incident for which you contacted police. If due to circumstances, for instance, needing hospital treatment, you can't provide a statement at the time, police will contact you to at a later date.

If the abuser has been arrested, then police can release them either with or without bail conditions. Whilst there is a presumption in favour of bail, there are circumstances in which this can be refused: that there is a risk that the abuser will fail to appear; will interfere with the course of justice; will commit further offences; will be at risk of harm; or a risk to the preservation of public order, if released on bail. Bail conditions may be placed on an abuser pre-charge, after charging or when at court, court imposed bail conditions. If any bail conditions are breached, the police may arrest the abuser and for those that are imposed after charging or by the court, the abuser will be taken to the next available court.

You may at a later date be required to attend court and give evidence on the basis of the content of your witness statement. This will occur if the defendant denies the charge and pleads 'not guilty' or pleads guilty, but denies an important part of the offence which might affect the type of sentence he or she receives.

Extra help is available to support vulnerable or intimidated witnesses when giving evidence. These are intended to facilitate best evidence and relieve some of the stress and worry associated with giving evidence in court. The Public Prosecution Service has to apply to the court for permission to use 'special measures' to assist in giving evidence. Examples of special measures include the use of screens, live-link television, removing wigs and gowns, giving evidence in private, etc.

In an emergency you should call 999.

In non-emergency cases you should call 101.
Text Phone users 18000.

Domestic Abuse Officers

Domestic Abuse Officers are available across Northern Ireland and are specifically trained to investigate incidents of this type and to support victims of domestic abuse.

Further information is available on the Police website psni.police.uk, in the advice and legislation section.

Safety Planning

Prepare an emergency strategy if you are returning to a violent situation:

- Know where the nearest telephone is located.
- Know where refuge/safe accommodation can be sought.
- Make a list of emergency and other important numbers – store them in your mobile phone.
- Save money for bus or taxi fares.
- Obtain an extra set of keys to your home and car.
- Pack an emergency bag – take enough clothes, including school uniforms and children's favourite possession (where appropriate). Put the bag in a safe place or give it to a relative or a friend you can trust.
- Plan an escape route out of your home, teach this to your children.
- Consider when it is best to leave. It is important to try to take all of the children with you. If possible leave when the abuser is not around.
- Keep important documents together e.g. benefit books, medical cards, certificates, bank books, legal orders, etc.
- Keep a note of the family's essential medicines and have an immediate supply available.

Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order provides the Family Court with the power to issue non-molestation and occupation orders.

A non-molestation order prevents you or your children from being molested by a partner or close family member. An occupation order regulates who lives in the family home and can require individuals to leave the home.

A solicitor can assist you to obtain an order. Legal Aid may be available to support this application.