

## Definition of domestic abuse

The PSNI has adopted the definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the Northern Ireland Government Strategy 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland' as:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former partner or family member'.

The following will assist in the application of this definition:

(a) '**Incident**' means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;

(b) '**Family members**' include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.

(c) '**Intimate partners**' means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples.

A crime will be recorded as domestic abuse where it meets the definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime. Domestic abuse crimes are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics.

An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 2.1 of the [Crime User Guide](#).