



DRAFT

**SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL FROM
EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE**

Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy

DECEMBER 2020



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1.0 - Introduction

1.1 - The Council promotes the view that abuse against any individual is totally unacceptable and that every employee who is experiencing domestic abuse can raise the issue and be assured that the Council will support them.

1.2 - The Council will take seriously cases where its employees are perpetrators of domestic abuse and will investigate such cases as misconduct/gross misconduct in accordance with its [disciplinary procedure](#).

1.3 - The Council has developed this policy to support employees' health and wellbeing at work and underlines our duty of care to staff. It covers the internal and external support available to employees experiencing domestic abuse, including special leave provisions and signposting to external sources of advice and help.

1.4 - Domestic abuse reduces an employee's ability to work and has an economic and attendance impact far beyond any sickness absence resulting directly from abuse. These indirect costs include time off work, talking to lawyers and medical professionals, reduced productivity and promotion prospects for the individual as a result of working below their potential.

1.5 - Individuals may even lose employment as a result of poor attendance or work performance, or as a result of the need to move to a different area to escape an abuser. Costs to the employer arise from lower productivity due to poor concentration on the part of abused employees, and the possibility of business disruption if an abusive partner presents at the workplace.

1.6 - The facts:

- Domestic abuse accounts for 24% of all (reported) violent crime
- Nearly 1 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse each year
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime
- At least 750,000 children witness domestic violence each year

- Two women are killed each week by their partner or ex-partner (40% of all female homicide victims)
- Women experience at least 35 incidents of domestic abuse before reporting it
- 40% of gay and bisexual men have experienced domestic abuse from a family member
- Almost one in four gay men have experienced domestic abuse from a family member
- 576,000 men (2.5% men) and 1.2 million (4.8% women) were victims of partner abuse in 2018/19 equating to a ratio of two female victims to every one male victim.
- In 2017/18, 11% of male victims (7.2% women) have considered taking their life due to partner abuse.
- In 2017/18, nearly half of male victims fail to tell anyone they are a victim of domestic abuse (only 51% tell anyone). They are nearly three times less likely to tell anyone than a female victim (49% of men fail to tell anyone as opposed to 19% women). This has worsened since 2015/16 where the figures were 61% for men (88% women).
- In 2018/19 – 16 men (80 women) were killed at the hands of their current or ex-partner.
- In terms of refuges/safe houses, currently, there are 37 organisations with 204 spaces with only 40 of those places are dedicated for men. Many parts of the UK have no or limited places at all – for instance London has no spaces.

2.0 - Equalities Statement

2.1 - Medway Council is committed to providing equal opportunities and access to all. This policy embraces the spirit of managing a diverse workforce and those managing employees experiencing domestic abuse must ensure that no employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly or victimised on the grounds of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marital or civil partnership status or any stage of gender reassignment. Likewise the council expects all employees to treat their colleagues and customers with dignity and respect.

3.0 – Priorities and ways of working

3.1 - This policy supports the Council's priorities and ways of working. The council believes that a consistent approach to all areas of people management is fundamental to the delivery of quality services to the public.

4.0 - Scope

4.1 - The policy applies to all employees of Medway Council with the exception of schools based staff. This is because schools do not have to adopt the Council's policies. This policy will be recommended to schools for adoption.

5.0 - Purpose

5.1 - The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support employees experiencing domestic abuse;
 - Enable employees experiencing domestic abuse to remain productive and at work;
 - Aid managers seeking to support team members experiencing domestic abuse;
 - Assist colleagues of those experiencing domestic abuse; and
 - Reinforce organisational corporate social responsibility objectives by demonstrating that the employer values, and is prepared to support, staff during difficult periods.
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6.0 - Definition

6.1 - The term “domestic abuse” rather than “domestic violence” is being used to ensure clarity that it is not only physically violent behaviour that constitutes abuse. It means that one person is abusing their power and control over another. The term domestic abuse reflects that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Some other agencies still use the term domestic violence, but the agenda remains the same. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, denying access to money and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

6.2.0 - Home Office Definition:

6.2.1 - “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse

6.2.2 - Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

6.2.3 - Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.” *

6.2.4 - This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group”

6.3 - It is impossible to know with certainty what goes on behind closed doors, but there are some telltale signs and symptoms of domestic violence and abuse. If you witness a number of warning signs in a colleague, you can reasonably suspect domestic abuse. These may include:

- Frequent injuries, with the excuse of “accidents”
- Frequent and sudden absences from work
- Frequent, harassing phone calls from the family member or family members
- Fear of the family member(s), references to the family member(s)' anger
- Personality changes (e.g. an outgoing person becomes withdrawn)
- Excessive fear of conflict
- Reluctance to finish work, starting work earlier
- Submissive behaviour, lack of assertiveness
- Isolation from friends and family
- Insufficient resources to live (money, credit cards, car)
- Depression, crying, low self-esteem, lack of confidence

6.4 - It is important to be aware of the signs so that you may approach the subject with the person sensitively if you have concerns either as a colleague or as a line manager. You may for example wish to approach the subject at a return to work meeting after persistent or sudden absences if some of the other signs are also present.

6.5 - It is also important to remember that most research also suggests that domestic abuse occurs in all sections of society irrespective of race, gender, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, marital status, class or educational level. Whilst predominantly affecting women, there is evidence that the number of reported incidents of abuse are increasing in same sex relationships, from women to men, from children to parents and relatives to their carers, for example.

7.0 - Internal Support

7.1 -In order to support employees who experience domestic abuse, the Council will:

- Nominate two appointed persons in the workplace (one male, one female) as a confidential first point of contact for those experiencing domestic abuse ([see Appendix 2](#))
- Offer employees experiencing domestic abuse access to counselling, and publicise the availability of this support regularly through notice boards, the intranet and ongoing health and wellbeing initiatives;
- Offer access to counselling and other support as appropriate, to employees perpetrating domestic abuse who seek help from the employer; and
- Undertake to raise workplace awareness of domestic abuse issues through a programme of regular information initiatives.
- Provide training for managers so they understand domestic abuse and how to support staff, especially around honour crimes.
- Appoint specific staff who can be mentors for managers ([see Appendix 2](#))

7.2 - It is appreciated that some employees may find it difficult to raise these types of issues with their immediate line manager. If this is the case, the employee can raise the issues with any other manager, or HR Services or their trade union representative. Employees can also contact the appointed person as a confidential first point of contact. Contact details for these persons are on the Intranet site or can be obtained from HR Advice [via Service Desk](#) or on 01634 334499.

8.0 - External Support

8.1 - Details of organisations providing external support are attached at [Appendix 1](#).

9.0 - Line Managers' Role

9.1 - Line managers have a crucial role to play in enabling employees experiencing domestic abuse to seek help. [Care First](#), the Council's external Counselling Service provides management support to any manager requiring advice and assistance in handling sensitive issues including domestic abuse (Telephone **0800 174319**). HR Services can also provide advice and guidance. The details of the specific managers who can be mentors for others can be found on the intranet site.

9.2 - The role of the line manager is to:

1. Foster an open management culture that enables team members to disclose sensitive issues;
2. Be sympathetic and non-judgemental;
3. Provide support in the first instance, including specific advice on the options available – the Domestic Abuse Discussion Checklist ([Appendix 4](#)) can facilitate this and must be used. Managers must also recognise the limitations of their role as they are not professional counsellors or experts);
4. Protect confidentiality in all instances except where to do so would leave children of the relationship at risk of harm or place a vulnerable adult at risk of significant harm/danger;
5. Refer the individual to the appropriate internal or external source of help and support, for example the organisation's confidential point of contact or external agency;
6. Ensure that the safety of all employees in the team is protected; and
7. Enable the affected employee to remain productive and at work during a difficult period in his/her domestic life, for example by using the organisation's [special leave](#) policies and procedures.

9.3 - If the line manager or anyone else supporting the employee considers that any children in the family or vulnerable adult may also be at risk of abuse, they must request a consultation with the Duty Manager of the relevant Area Team. For families living in the Medway Council area, the contact number is 01634 334466 from where they will be redirected to the Duty Manager of the relevant Area Team. For families living outside of the Medway Council area, they must contact the relevant local authority for advice.

9.4 - To support managers, or others to whom an employee approached regarding domestic abuse, a checklist of issues to discuss is attached as [4](#). This provides a framework for discussion, ensures consistency in advice and support offered and can be reviewed as situations develop and change. It can also give the employee the confidence that they are being treated seriously and sincerely.

9.5 – HESTIA is a national charity that offers support to employers. Employers, HR teams and managers who are seeking advice can call HESTIA on 07770480437 or email Adviceline.EB@hestia.org between 10am-3pm Monday to Friday for support.

Further information:

Everyone's Business: www.hestia.org/everyones-business

Advice Line: www.hestia.org/everyones-business-advice-line

10.0 - Attendance

10.1 - The Council recognises that those experiencing domestic abuse may need to be absent from work at times and will assist them by using its special leave or short-notice leave provisions.

10.2 - Individual absences can be discussed and agreed between the employee and the line manager, with HR support where appropriate.

10.3 - Flexible working, change of workplace and changes to hours of work will be considered wherever possible.

11.0 - Security and Safety

11.1 - As far as possible, the Council will protect the safety and security of all employees at work, including those affected by domestic abuse and their colleagues.

11.2 – The Council considers safeguarding to be of the highest priority. Should any child or adult be considered to be at risk of harm, employees are required to report this immediately. If a child is at risk the Local Authority Designated Officer must be notified. (See para 9.3 above) Further advice and to make a referral in Medway please contact: 01634 334466. See also Appendix 3.

12.0 - Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

12.1 - The Council will treat any criminal convictions related to domestic abuse as misconduct/gross misconduct and employees will therefore be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure, which could result in the termination of their employment with the council.

12.2 - In the event that an employee is imprisoned as a result of a conviction related to domestic abuse depending on the circumstances the council will consider treating such absence as frustration of the employment contract which is likely to result in the termination of the employee's employment with the Council.

12.3 - In cases where abusers are genuinely looking for help and support to change their behaviour etc, the council will "signpost" them to organisations that can offer this very specialised support. Information given will be treated in confidence unless it affects children or vulnerable adults, and will be dealt with as referred in [paragraph 9.3](#) above.

Appendices

- [Appendix 1 - Organisations providing External Support](#) (pdf 18KB)
 - [Appendix 2 - Internal Support contact details](#) (pdf 62KB)
 - [Appendix 3 Safeguarding children and adults \(word 15.8kb\)](#)
 - [Appendix4 - Domestic Abuse discussion checklist](#) (word 88KB)
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Appendix 1 - Organisations providing external support

24 Hour support: Women's Aid Women's Aid work to end violence against women and children, supporting over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the country. www.womensaid.org.uk Tel: 0800 2000247

Choices Domestic Abuse Service: Helpline Freephone* 0800 917 9948 (Open Mondays to Fridays 9.00 am to 4.00 pm) * Freephone 0800 - From UK landlines, calls to the 0800 number are free and will not appear on bills. However, mobile networks usually charge for calls to 0800 numbers and will itemise these calls on bills. Check with your provider for specific prices.
Email: admin@choicesdaservice.org.uk www.choicesdaservice.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau: Domestic Abuse Helpline 01634 383765.
Email: advice-medwaycab@hotmail.co.uk

Care First is a confidential service for information and advice or counselling, available to you free of charge. Calls to Care First are voluntary – you decide when and if you want to use the service and you make the call yourself – from wherever you want. Care First are available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year – your call will be answered by a professional and there is no limit to the number of times you can contact them. Telephone number: 0800 174319

Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence: CAADV is a leading force in fighting against domestic violence in the UK. www.caadv.org.uk

Digital Stalking: The site provides advice and information about cyberstalking. www.digital-stalking.com

Domestic Abuse Support in Kent have an excellent website detailing services available in both Medway and areas of Kent, as well as a downloadable handbook: <http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk>.

Domestic Violence Assist. The UK's only registered charity arranging legal support including Non-Molestation Orders, Prohibited Steps Orders & Occupation Orders. Tel: 0800 195 8699 www.dvassist.org.uk

Medway Domestic Abuse Forum has produced a directory of services, which gives full details of where you can go for help, advice and support. Rather than list all of these here (as the contact details may change), you can obtain a copy of the pack from the forum, which is part of Medway Community Safety Partnership from: e-mail: mdaf@medway.gov.uk

Medway One Stop Shop

Anyone experiencing domestic abuse or violence can attend the One Stop Shop every Tuesday morning between 09.30 – 12.00 at The Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road, Gillingham, to access free support and advice from multi agency partners including Domestic Abuse Specialists, housing, health, legal and many more. No need to book – just walk in.

Medway/Kent Police Domestic Abuse Team can be contacted by dialing **101** or by emailing domestic.violence.dz@kent.pnn.police.uk. Call **999** in an emergency.

Men's Advice Line M.A.L.E: 0808 801 0327 freephone, Mon – Fri 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm, email info@mensadviceline.org.uk www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Medway Housing Services: Monday-Friday, 8.30am-5.15pm

Samaritans: 01634 730981, (08457 909090 national link line) Someone to talk to 24/7

Shelterline: 0808 800 4444: Monday-Sunday, 8am-8pm. Emergency access to refuge services or housing advice

Shelter - www.england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/domestic_abuse

Stalking: National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300, www.stalkinghelpline.org.
An information and guidance line for anyone who is affected by stalking or harassment. The service provides guidance on relevant laws, evidence gathering, personal safety and options that are open to each caller. The helpline is open Monday – Friday, 9:30am – 4pm except Wednesday when the Helpline opens at 1pm).

Suzy Lamplugh Trust: www.suzylamplugh.org. Suzy Lamplugh Trust provides advice, information and training about personal safety, enabling people to avoid becoming victims of violence and aggression. They are also able to offer in house and open access courses on personal safety, lone working and stalking.

Network for Surviving Stalking: www.nss.org.uk. NSS is dedicated to supporting victims of stalking.

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247. A Freephone 24 hour a day helpline, run in partnership by Women's Aid and Refuge. It is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV): 0844 8044 999, www.ncdv.org.uk. NCDV provides a free, fast emergency service to survivors of domestic violence, regardless of race, financial situation, gender or sexual orientation.

Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk. Offer a range of services to support women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Karma Nirvana: 0800 5999 247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk, Karma Nirvana provides support to all victims of honour-based violence and forced marriage. They also run a national helpline that provides support and guidance.

GALOP: 0800 999 5428 www.galop.org.uk **Galop** provides confidential and independent advice and support for LGBT+ people who have experienced sexual assault, abuse or violence. We provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe space to talk, whatever your sexual orientation or gender identity.

HESTIA: A national charity that offers support to employers. Employers, HR teams and managers who are seeking advice can call HESTIA on 07770480437 or email Adviceline.EB@hestia.org between 10am-3pm Monday to Friday for support.

Further information:

Everyone's Business: www.hestia.org/everyones-business

Advice Line: www.hestia.org/everyones-business-advice-line

Appendix 2 - Internal Support Contact Details

THIS PAGE HAS YET TO BE COMPLETED – STAFF VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN APPROACHED

Confidential first point of contact for those experiencing domestic abuse:

Medway Domestic Abuse Champions

NAME: XXXXXXXXXX

CONTACT: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

NAME: XXXXXXXXXX

CONTACT: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Advice for managers and for staff affected by domestic abuse:

Antony Sands Health Improvement Programme Manager (Domestic Abuse) | Public Health Directorate 01634 332638 / 0794 753 6066 | antony.sands@medway.gov.uk

Nicola Smith HR Business Partner 01634 334095 / 0771 897 1185
nicola.smith@medway.gov.uk

Appendix 3 Safeguarding of children and adults

When a person's conduct towards an adult or child may impact on their suitability to work with or continue to work with children, this must be referred to the Children's local authority's designated officer (LADO). However, if a crime is believed to have been committed, the Police must be contacted immediately.

In a situation where there is **immediate risk of harm or need for treatment**, all staff in all agencies should call the police and/or ambulance service without referring to a manager, if not doing so would cause unnecessary delay in protecting the adult or others from crime or injury. In fact, not making urgent contact may later be construed as negligent or failing in the duty of care.

If you are uncertain whether or not to refer a matter to the Local Authority, you can consult with professionals, who are there to help. This consultation may be anonymous with regard to the identity of the caller and any other people involved. For Medway phone 01634 334466 and state that you want to consult about an adult safeguarding concern. Kent phone 03000 41 61 61. The timeframe for a consultation should ideally not exceed 24 hours. If it becomes clear during the consultation with the Local Authority, that a child(ren) or an adult(s), with care and support needs, have or may have been abused or is at risk of abuse or neglect a referral to the local authority must be made.

If concerns are raised out of hours, the Out of Hours Team will take any immediate protective action and pass the concern to the appropriate team. Kent and Medway Out of Hours number is 03000 416161

Concern about abuse or neglect of an adult provides sufficient grounds to warrant sharing information on a 'need to know' basis and/or 'in the public interest or vital interest' and unnecessary delays in sharing that information should be avoided. Whenever possible an adult must be made aware about the information being shared in relation to the safeguarding.

If a crime has been committed the police will be informed. The level of risk to the adult or to other adults or children will inform any actions taken by the police.

The principles that should govern the sharing of information include:

- a) confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy
- b) information will only be shared on a 'need to know basis' when it is in the best interests of the adult/child
- c) it is inappropriate for agencies to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse or neglect, particularly in situations where others may be at risk.

The Kent and Medway Multi Agency Protocol for Dealing with Cases of Domestic Abuse to Safeguard Adults with Care and Support Needs is available [here](#).

[Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) provide further information

Appendix 4 Domestic Abuse Discussion Checklist

This checklist should be used every time a manager is presented with a disclosure of domestic abuse from a member of staff. It is important to ensure that the manager has done everything they should have, and considered all angles in which the organisation could support and help the member of staff.

Please note, due to the very nature of domestic abuse, situations and risk can change, develop or escalate very quickly and therefore the Discussion Checklist and the plan of action should be revisited on a regular basis in order to best help the victim and keep them safe.

Domestic Abuse Discussion Checklist

Section 1

NAME OF EMPLOYEE:	REPORTED TO (NAME):	DATE:
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	TASK	ACTION / NOTES	DATE COMPLETE
1	Ensure that any discussion about the employee's situation takes place in privacy and that their confidentiality is respected as far as possible (unless there are overriding concerns such as child protection concerns – please see Para 9. 4 of policy for safeguarding contacts)		
2	<p>What does the employee want to do?</p> <p>What measures do they feel could help them at work?</p> <p>Suggestions –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary flexibility on start/finish times • Change of work location • Screening of external calls/emails from abuser • Stress risk assessment • Share brief information with any colleagues as additional form of support • Prevent lone working • Manager to create log of contact/incidents they are aware of 		

	TASK	ACTION / NOTES	DATE COMPLETE
3	<p>Discuss whether to report the abuse to the police. Highlight the benefits of doing this.</p> <p><i>Remember; do not pressure them if they do not want to report it!</i></p>		
4	<p>Does the employee need to see Occupational Health, a GP or other professional for medical attention?</p>		
5	<p>What methods of support have been discussed and explored regarding the work place?</p> <p>Has work performance or attendance been affected?</p>		
6	<p>Give the employee information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Care First ▪ Local refuges ▪ Help lines 		

	TASK	ACTION / NOTES	DATE COMPLETE
7	<p>Has a referral been made to an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), Housing or the Police for risk assessment and/or further support? Which agency will be involved?</p> <p>Has the employee consented to this?</p> <p>NB: Normally consent should be obtained from the employee unless, in your professional judgement, there is a risk of serious harm or murder</p> <p>(http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/professionals/directory/#advice-and-support)</p>		
8	<p>Has a safety plan (see section 2 of this document) been discussed and drawn up:</p> <p>a) Regarding the workplace b) Regarding the home?</p>		

	TASK	ACTION / NOTES	DATE COMPLETE
9	<p>Have you given the employee information about local advice/support agencies and how to contact them?</p> <p>Has the employee been given a copy of 'organisations providing external support – Appendix 1 of the policy'?</p> <p><i>It may be useful to offer help in contacting agencies if the employee would feel more comfortable that way.</i></p>		
10	<p>If the person completing the checklist is not the employee's line manager, consideration should be given to informing the line manager. Describe to the employee the possible difficulties that could arise from the line manager not knowing, e.g. performance or absence monitoring.</p>		
11	<p>When will the employee's situation next be reviewed?</p>		

Please discuss and complete all of the following fields to help an employee consider their options and plan for their safety.

Ask some of the following questions:

	Action
In what way can I (and others) help you?	
What do you feel would help you keep safe?	
Do you have any concerns about your children’s safety?	
What have you tried in the past to protect yourself and your children?	
Did any of these strategies help?	

Safety considerations at work:

Advise employee to keep emergency numbers at hand where possible.	
Emergency contact person and details in case you can’t contact the employee.	

Have you identified the organisation's contact and given their details to the employee?	
Offer, if possible, changes to the employee's workplace location and work hours, especially if they do front line work or can be seen in the building.	
Consider changing / increasing workplace security:	

Change keypad numbers/ door access codes	
Remind front line staff not to give out personal information, including contact details and working hours.	
Ensure the HR / personnel information is secure.	
Review parking arrangements – does someone need to escort the employee to their car?	
If the employee is experiencing any form of domestic abuse, stalking or harassment, discuss the possibility of getting a restraining order for the workplace/surrounding environment	
If the employee consents, advise colleagues (on a need to know basis) what they should do to help. Do I have the employee's consent?	
Are there any other measures that could help? Discuss with employee.	

General safety advice:

- Talk through the Safety Plan Handout.
- Suggestive appropriate, that the employee talks in more detail about safety outside the workplace with the police.

Domestic Abuse Personal Safety Plan Handout

Safety considerations at work:

1	Keep emergency numbers easily accessible – consider the use of a mobile phone that connects directly to the police.
2	Know who your contact person is in your organisation if you need help or advice.
3	Give your organisation the name and number of an emergency contact person for you.
4	Tell someone if you are receiving any sort of threat or harassment at work
5	Think about how you travel to and from work – try to make sure that you are not travelling alone or in the dark.
6	If there is anything you think your employer can do to help increase your safety, ask as soon as possible.

General safety advice:

1	Arrange where you might go if you have to leave urgently.
2	Find places where you can quickly and safely use the phone.
3	Always carry a list of numbers with you in case of an emergency.
4	Try to save money so that you have bus or taxi fares in an emergency.
5	Get an extra set of keys for the house / car.
6	Keep the keys, money and anything else you may need in a safe place, should you have to leave quickly.
7	Talk to your children. Let them know it's not their fault. Children do not have to see abuse to be affected by it. They hear it, sense it and can be sad and frightened by it.
8	Talk to friends, relatives, your doctor, nurse or others about how you feel.

If you decide to leave home, consider taking:

Birth certificates	Marriage certificate	School records
Medical records	Driving Licence	Car documents
Money	Credit cards	Cheque books
Benefit books	Rent books	Passports
Work permits	Visa	Medications
Several days clothing	Personal possessions with sentimental value	Children's favourite toys

For more information, please go to <http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/search/area-search.asp?areasearch=medway>.