

Support services and how to respond

Gender-Based Violence Helplines

Domestic abuse

National UK Domestic Abuse Helpline

- Free helpline, 24/7.
- Online Live chat support and British Sign Language options.
- Number: 0808 2000 247
- Website: <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline

- Free helpline, 24/7.
- Online chat and email support available.
- Number: 0800 027 1234
- Website: <https://sdafmh.org.uk>

Welsh Women's Aid

- Free helpline, 24/7.
- Online chat and email support available.
- Number: 0808 80 10 800
- Website: <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk>

Domestic abuse and sexual abuse helpline Northern Ireland

- Free helpline, 24/7.
- Online chat support available.
- Number: 0808 802 1414
- Website: <https://dsahelpline.org/>

Women's Aid Ireland National Helpline

- Free helpline, 24/7.
- Number: 1800 341 900
- Website: <https://www.womensaid.ie>

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

- Free helpline, open Mon – Fri, 10am – 5pm; Wed and Thurs, 10am – 8pm.
- Online chat available Wed and Thurs, 5pm – 8pm.
- Number: 0800 9995428
- Website: <https://galop.org.uk/get-help/helplines>

Men's Advice Line

- For men experiencing domestic abuse.
- Free helpline, open Mon–Fri 9am–8pm.
- Online chat and email support available.
- Number: 0808 8010 327
- Website: www.mensadvice.org.uk

Men's Aid Ireland

- For men experiencing domestic abuse.
- Online chat and email support available.
- Number: 015543811
- Website: <https://www.mensaid.ie/>

Respect Phonenumber

- For men using violence or abuse.
- Free helpline, open Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm.
- Number: 0808 8024 040
- Website: www.respectphonenumber.org.uk

Sexual violence and abuse

Rape Crisis England and Wales

- Free helpline, open every day, 12 – 2.30pm and 7 – 9pm.
- Online chat available.
- Number: 0808 802 9999
- Website: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help>

Rape Crisis Scotland

- Free helpline, open every day 6pm – midnight.
- Email support available.
- Number: 08088 01 03 02
- Website: www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Rape Crisis Northern Ireland

- Free helpline, open Mon and Thurs, 6–8pm.
- Email support available.
- Number: 0800 0246 991
- Website: <https://rapecrisisni.org.uk>

Rape Crisis Help Ireland

- Free helpline, 24/7.
- Email support available.
- Number: 1800 778888
- Website: <https://www.rapecrisishelp.ie>

Forced marriage

Honour Network Survivors Helpline by Karma Nirvana

- National helpline for forced marriages and honour-based killings.
- Number: 0800 599 9247
- Website: www.karmanirvana.org.uk

UK Government Forced Marriage Unit

- Open Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm.
- Number: 020 7008 0151
- Website: <https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline

- Details above under 'domestic abuse'.

Stalking

National Stalking Helpline (UK)

- Free helpline, open Mon – Fri, 9:30am – 4pm.
- Number: 080 8802 0300
- Website: <https://www.suzyamplugh.org/refer-someone-to-us>

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM Helpline by National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

- Free helpline.
- Email support available.
- Number: 0800 028 3550
- Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Legal advice

Rights of Women

- Helpline open Tues, 2pm – 4pm and 7pm – 9pm; Thurs, 2pm – 4pm; and Fri 10am – 12pm. Closed bank holidays.
- Number: 020 7251 887
- Website: www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

FLAWS (Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors) – England and Wales

- Open Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm.

- Number: 0203 745 7707
- Website: <https://www.flows.org.uk>

Responding to Domestic Abuse Survivors - Do's and Don'ts

DO'S

- Find a safe place to talk.
- Have someone else present if this is acceptable to the survivor. It is advisable that at least one person is the same sex as the survivor.
- Allow time for the person to talk.
- Listen to what they have to say - and take it seriously.
- Believe them. Their description of the abuse is probably only the 'tip of the iceberg'.
- Give priority to their immediate safety (and that of any children involved).
- Support them to make their own decisions.
- Support and respect their choices. If they choose to initially return to the abuser, it is their choice. They have the most information about how to survive. If there are children involved, however, their safety must come first, and child safety procedures must be followed.
- Give them information about relevant support agencies available (as detailed above). Offer to support them to contact an agency and offer a safe and private place to do this from.
- Be aware of your own limitations and use the expertise of those who are professionally trained.

DON'TS

- Don't judge them or what they tell you.
- Don't make unrealistic promises.
- Don't suggest that they should 'try again'. Evidence shows that survivors experience several violent incidents before seeking help.
- Never minimise the severity of their experience or the danger they are in.
- Don't react with disbelief, disgust, or anger at what they tell you or react completely passively.
- Don't ask them why they did not act in a certain way.
- Never blame them for the violence or abuse.
- Never act on the person's behalf without their consent and/or knowledge (unless children are involved).
- Don't expect them to make decisions quickly.
- Never make decisions for them or tell them what to do.
- Don't encourage them to forgive their abuser and take them back.
- Don't recommend couple counselling/family meditation/praying for them/ marriage courses/healthy relationship courses. These will not help and increases risk in domestic abuse situations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure them that it is not their fault, they don't deserve this treatment, and (only if it is appropriate and you know they have faith) it is not God's will. • Assure them gently that what the abuser has done is wrong and completely unacceptable. • Be patient and kind. • Protect their confidentiality. Keep any information in a secure place and consider coding the information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't send them home with a prayer/directive to submit to her spouse/bring them to church/be a better Christian spouse. • Refrain from contacting the person at home unless they have agreed to this. • Don't approach their partner for their side of the story, as this will endanger them. • Don't give information about them or their whereabouts to the abuser or to others who might pass this information on to the abuser. • Don't discuss the situation with church leaders who might inadvertently/unintentionally pass information on to the abuser. • Don't encourage dependence on you or become emotionally involved; this can be problematic and make you seem to be the answer to her problems.
---	---

For more information on how to support others, see advice from Women's Aid [here](#) and Safe Ireland [here](#).