

# Understanding Post Separation Domestic Abuse and ways to help

## 1. What is Post Separation Domestic Abuse

Post-separation abuse occurs when an abuser continues to exert control or inflict harm after the relationship has ended. It is important to understand that risk is likely to increase when the person has left or trying to leave as the perpetrator seeks to reassert control. Most domestic murders occur within the first six months after separation with 30% dying within the first month and 70% within the first year. Therefore support and safety planning needs to be in place.

## 2. What forms does post separation abuse take

- Emotional Abuse: Persistent verbal assaults, manipulation, threats, or attempts to instil fear.
- Economic Abuse: Controlling finances, withholding child support, or damaging credit.
- Legal Harassment: Misusing family courts, filing frivolous lawsuits, or repeatedly seeking custody modifications.
- Stalking: Monitoring, following, or excessive contact.
- Physical Violence: Threats or actual harm, which can escalate after separation
- Use of the children and counter parenting

## 3. How services can support someone

**Document Everything:** Advise the person to keep detailed records of abuse incidents, including dates, times, and evidence such as screenshots or voicemails

**Legal Protection:** The individual can seek advice about restraining or protective orders and consult legal professionals specialising in domestic abuse. There may be help available obtaining a non-molestation order or Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) so talk to the local specialist DA service

**Enhance Safety Plans:** discuss with the person how to update their routines so it is not predictable. Secure digital devices - are there any location finding apps that need deleting, change locks, and inform schools or caregivers about risks

**Access Specialist Support:** Domestic abuse services can provide guidance, safety planning, and emotional support

## 7. Helping someone to build a safety plan

Implement immediate safety measures through practical steps:

- Change locks, phone numbers, and work schedules where possible – consider referring to a Sanctuary Scheme
- Notify children's schools about authorised collection arrangements
- Vary daily routes to work and reschedule known appointments
- Keep certified copies of any protection order accessible at all times
- Encourage conversations with employers who often have dedicated policies and processes in place
- Offer emotional support especially to address feelings of helplessness and hopelessness if they perceive they will not be free of the abuse.

## 6. Stalking and Surveillance Tactics

Perpetrators monitor ex-partners through social media surveillance, spyware installation, or physical stalking. This behaviour creates persistent fear and demonstrates the abuser's determination to maintain control despite separation. Treat this as high risk and involve partners and if possible the police. See box 4.



## 5. How to counter myths and promote hope

A person is likely to be most vulnerable when they have left or contemplating leaving.

Leaving is not easy the person will need to counter the effects of [coercive and controlling behaviour](#). Economic abuse can be most apparent after separation -it includes withholding child support payments - Damaging credit scores deliberately - Hiding assets during divorce proceedings · Coercing victims into debt or extra housing and travel costs. It is important to acknowledge these issues and understand how they can keep someone in contact with the abuser -it is important not to judge and be empathetic and to remember decision-making abilities frequently deteriorate when confidence has been systematically undermined.

## 4. Where can someone get further help

If in immediate danger, call [999](#). If it is not safe to speak, you can use the police's Silent Solution system by calling 999 and pressing 55 when prompted

Access Specialist Support:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline, available 24 hours a day, on [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)
- Cranstoun Telford and Wrekin Domestic Abuse service <https://cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/domestic-abuse/telford-das/>
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service <https://www.shropsdas.org.uk/>
- Sanctuary Schemes: Shropshire – [sanctuaryscheme@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:sanctuaryscheme@shropshire.gov.uk) – Telford - 01952 381925
- West Mercia Women's Aid: 0800 840 3747
- Mankind Initiative: 01823 334244
- Galop (LGBTQ+): 0800 999 5428
- Karma Nirvana (Honour Based Abuse): 0800 5999 247
- Domestic Abuse Alliance (Civil Legal Support): 0800 101 7110