

What should I do if I'm a victim?

The first step towards getting help is recognising and acknowledging what is happening. The following questions may help you decide what to do. Remember that it is your choice at all times.

- Have you ever been shoved, slapped, punched, kicked or hit?
- Have you ever been called names, humiliated and made to feel worthless?
- Have you believed them when they promised not to do it again, but they did?
- Have you ever believed that you deserve to be beaten?
- Have your friendships and your relationship with your family changed?
- Do you feel isolated from them?
- Do you feel ashamed that you stay in an abusive relationship?
- Are you frightened of upsetting someone and live your life walking on eggshells?
- Are you told that you are watched and followed?
- Are your telephone calls checked?
- Do you have to account for every penny or is your money restricted?
- Do you have to account for your time and actions when you have been alone?
- Is your partner jealous? Are you accused of turning people against them?
- Have you ever been forced to do something against your will? This may be sexual acts or illegal acts.

It may be one, some or all of these things and may escalate over a period of time - domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident.

I've answered yes to a lot of those questions – who can help me?

First of all remember, in an emergency **always** dial 999.

If you want help and advice then you can call any of the following helplines (not all of them are available 24/7).

- North Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Support Line (not 24hr) 0300 33 00 717
- North Lincolnshire Women's Refuge - 01724 289299
- Housing Advice Team - 01724 747654
- Police Domestic Violence Unit – 0845 60 60 222
- Sanctuary Carr Gomm domestic violence support service - 01724 855921
- Victim Support - 01724 871324
- Samaritans - 01724 860000 - 24 hour help line
- Childline - 0800 1111 - 24 hour help line
- National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 2000247 - 24 hour help line
- Rape Crisis - 01724 593953

Remember that a telephone call can be traced - you may want to use a phone box or a trusted friend's telephone.

Options

Remember that you are not alone and you are not to blame for the abuse committed against you. You have options and only you can decide which you want to follow. The options open to you include:

- Choose to leave temporarily or permanently
- Choose to stay, hoping your partner will change
- Choose to stay, accepting your partner will not change
- Choose to take legal action against your partner i.e. an injunction
- Choose to talk to someone, whether it is a family member, friend, colleague or an agency such as the ones listed above.

Protecting yourself in an emergency

When being attacked or threatened at home, try to:

- Stay away from the kitchen (the abuser can find knives and weapons there)
- Stay away from bathrooms, cupboards, wardrobes or small spaces where the abuser can trap you
- Get to a room with a door or window to escape
- Get to a room with a phone
- Call 999 immediately for help
- Go to a neighbour or friend for help
- Call for help, scream loudly and continuously - you have nothing to be ashamed of.