

**Domestic Abuse**

This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this DA Act

- Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—
- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

**Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:**

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;(controlling or coercive behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

**This can include but is not limited to:**

- Psychological abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Honour-based violence
- Forced Marriage
- Coercive control
- FGM ( female genital mutilation)

People with multiple needs can often be overlooked when it comes to experiencing domestic abuse, and struggle to get access to specialist support. They can be hidden victims, sometimes invisible, making it difficult for themselves and professionals to identify. Different client groups may face unique barriers when seeking help for domestic abuse, including fear of not being believed, cultural or language differences, stigma, disability-related communication challenges, financial dependence, immigration status concerns, and limited access to safe, trusted support services.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse happens when someone is made to take part in any kind of sexual activity without their consent, or when they are pressured, coerced, or manipulated into doing so. This can include being shown sexual materials, being asked or forced to remove clothing, unwanted or inappropriate touching, or more serious forms of sexual contact. People who have experienced sexual abuse may show signs that are physical, emotional, or behavioural. Physical indicators can include injuries, unexplained bleeding, sexually transmitted infections, or damage to clothing. However, many impacts of sexual abuse are not visible and may only be understood through sensitive, trauma informed conversations and observations.

**Coercive Control**

Coercive control can take many forms, and perpetrators use a range of tactics to manipulate and dominate the person they are targeting. Some examples might include: controlling a victim’s daily activities, isolating them from friends and family, criticism of their role as partner or parent, threats of suicide/homicide/familicide, prevention of medication or care, using children as a form of control, extreme dominance, extreme jealousy, threats to damage property and injure pets, exposing sensitive information and ‘honour’ crimes.

**Think Family Approach**

The Think Family agenda promotes a whole-family approach based on the principle of “Reaching out – think family,” ensuring that every service provides an open door into a coordinated system of support across both adult and children’s services. It emphasises understanding the needs and circumstances of the entire family, tailoring support packages accordingly, and strengthening resilience by recognising and building on family strengths. This approach encourages joint working—for example, combining adult treatment services with parenting support or using family group conferencing to empower families to find their own solutions.

**Signs of Psychological Abuse:**

Psychological abuse is any action that hurts a person emotionally. This can include being controlled over what the victim does, who they see and where they go. Below are some of the signs victims may face:

- Shouting
- Name calling
- Insulting
- Threatening
- Imitating and mocking
- Swearing
- Ignoring
- Exclusion
- Isolation

**Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, bruises, welts, discolouration, burns, bone fractures and skull fractures
- Untreated injuries
- Skin conditions and poor skin hygiene
- Dehydration and/or malnourished not caused by illness
- Loss of weight
- Broken glasses/frames
- Burns
- Inappropriate use of medication, overdosing or underdosing

**Signs of Economic Abuse:**

Economic abuse can include exerting control over income, spending, bank accounts, bills and borrowing. It can also include controlling access to and use of things like transport and technology, which allow people to work and stay connected, as well as property and daily essentials like food and clothing. It can include destroying items and refusing to contribute to household costs.

**Isolation:** In many cases of domestic abuse, the perpetrator begins the isolation by creating emotional distance between the person they are abusing and that person’s family and friends.

**What should you do when you’ve identified signs of domestic abuse?**

- Talk to the person in private and support them to feel comfortable, listened to and cared for.
- Do not rush them. It can be incredibly difficult to open up when suffering abuse.
- You may mention some of your concerns.
- Do not promise you won’t share information with anyone else as you may have to inform the appropriate professionals.
- Ensure you stay calm yourself to avoid distressing the person.
- Unless there is an immediate threat to their safety, do not feel like you have to act immediately.
- Make a plan in conjunction with the person.

**Where to report domestic abuse:**

- Police**
- Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership (01482 318 759)**
- Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership Male Support Service (01482 613978)**
- Hull Safeguarding Hub (01482 616 092)**
- Hull City Council (01482 300 300)**
- Person’s GP**
- Person’s Social Worker**
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0800 5999 247)**
- Forced Marriage Unit (020 7008 0151)**
- Karma Nirvana (0800 5999 247)**
- Think Family—[Think Family - NHS Safeguarding](#)**