



If you would like a copy of this publication in large print, another language or audio tape, please contact: 01785 619 000



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

YOUR RIGHTS AND HOW WE CAN HELP

Customer Contact Centre

☞ 01785 619 000

Housing Options Team

Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre, Riverside
Stafford ST16 3AQ

☞ Email
housingadvice@staffordbc.gov.uk

☞ Website
www.staffordbc.gov.uk





↘ **Other useful numbers:**

Staffordshire Women's Aid 24 Hour Helpline	0870 2700 123
Victim Support Staffordshire	01785 715 666
Staffordshire Police	08453 30 20 10
In an EMERGENCYs	always dial 999
Social Services	01785 276 800
First Response	0800 1313 126
Citizens Advice Bureau:	[Stafford] 01785 242 524 [Stone] 01785 814 806
Relate	01785 242 779
National Child Protection Helpline	0800 800 500
Shelterline	0808 800 4444
Women's Aid National Helpline 24 hour	0808 2000247



5. Finances

Often those experiencing domestic violence do not take action because they are afraid of not having enough money to live on. There are however, several benefits that may be available which would help give you enough money to live on.

↘ Where can I get help?

You can contact the Housing Options Team on:

- ↘ 01785 619 313
- ↘ Contact times:
 - 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday
 - 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday
- ↘ Emergency Out of Hours:
 - 01785 619 170
 - The out of hours service is for Emergency Homelessness Only

↘ Appointments:

Appointments can be made by telephone:

- ↘ 01785 619 313
- or by visiting Stafford Borough Council at Riverside, Stafford.

↘ Home Visits:

Home visits can be made for people who have difficulty in getting to the office due to ill health, disability or other special reasons.



↘ Introduction

Stafford Borough Council has a zero tolerance attitude to domestic violence. As an organisation, we are committed to working with partners to provide a co-ordinated and holistic multi agency response.

Stafford Borough Council believes that no one should live in fear of domestic violence, and will take steps to assist and support any person experiencing or being threatened with domestic violence and abuse. All staff are fully trained and enquiries will be dealt with sympathetically and in confidence.

↘ Dispelling the Myths

There are still many misconceptions about domestic violence, which often make it more difficult for women and men to talk openly about what is happening to them.

Domestic violence is physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and forms a pattern of controlling behaviour. Domestic violence may occur between former or current partners or family members.

It is called domestic violence because it often takes place in the home, behind closed doors. It is a horrendous crime that affects its victim's, their families and the wider community regardless of race, age, gender or social background.

Domestic violence is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. However, Stafford Borough Council recognise that domestic abuse can also happen in gay and lesbian relationships, within families and against men. The harm caused by domestic violence can also impact upon any children within the relationship.

There is *NEVER* an acceptable excuse for violence.

You may feel, or be told, that it is your fault. No one ever deserves, or asks for abuse. Everyone should be able to live free from the fear of violence or abuse.



Support is Available

If you think you are experiencing domestic abuse, free confidential support and advice is available from a number of different agencies.

The support you may want will vary in each case, such as advice on divorce proceedings, information about custody, maintenance and welfare of your children.

The aim of this booklet is to give a brief outline of the options available to you and whom you can go to for help.

1. Housing

Many people stay within an abusive relationship because they are afraid if they leave home they would have nowhere else to go, or that they would be considered as intentionally homeless.

If you have left your home, or are considering leaving your home because of domestic violence, the Housing Options Team at Stafford Borough Council can help.

We can provide you with advice and information. Depending on your circumstances, we can offer you:

- Temporary accommodation in an emergency
- Permanent re-housing

It does not matter whether you are an owner-occupier, a lodger, a private tenant, a tenant of a housing association or any other housing provider, we can still help.

Those seeking assistance will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence. If you prefer to be interviewed by a woman this can be arranged, although an alternative appointment may have to be made. All staff have had training on domestic violence and abuse.

We will not make decisions for you, but will discuss your options, and leave you to decide what course of action is best for you.

You can contact Stafford Borough Council's Housing Options Team on:

- 01785 619 313 | 8.30am to 5.00pm Mon to Thu, 8.30am to 4.30pm Fri
- 01785 619 170 | 5.00pm to 8.30am (Emergencies Only)

2. Staying in your current accommodation

If you feel you may want to remain in your current home, you can take legal action under the Matrimonial Homes Act. You will need to see a solicitor to take this action or seek advice from CAB. We also have a sanctuary scheme in Stafford Borough, which provides additional security measures to help you remain in your own home safely.

Many women, however, choose the re-housing option as they do not want the abusive partner to know where they are going, or simply as an opportunity to make a fresh start.

3. The Police

Domestic violence is a crime, and is unacceptable in our communities. If you are experiencing domestic violence, you can contact Staffordshire Police on:

- 08453 30 20 10

The perpetrator of any violence may be arrested and charged with violence towards you or your family, or with damage to property. You will be offered support from the police, even if they do not take any formal legal action.

- In an emergency, dial 999

4. Legal Protection

You and your child may also be able to get legal protection from abuse by applying for an:

Occupation Order

This may exclude the other party from the family home, or from a specified area in which the family home is included, or a,

Non-molestation Order

This stops a person from molesting you or a relevant child, which can include persistent phone calls and letters as well as actual violence.

Either may have the 'power of arrest' attached, which means that the police can arrest the perpetrator immediately, if he/she breaks the terms of the Order. You can apply directly to the Court to get either of the above orders. Most people however seek advice from a solicitor who then acts on their behalf. As the situation is usually an emergency, a Court Order can be obtained quite quickly.