

**Hull
Women's Aid**



About Us

Hull Women's Aid (HWA) has been established for 35 years. HWA is a member of the Women's Aid Federation of England, (a national organisation that co-ordinates the work of individual groups and regions to provide temporary refuge and support to victims and survivors of domestic violence).

HWA is the sole provider of safe and secure refuge accommodation on the north bank of the Humber for women and children fleeing domestic violence. HWA supports women and children who are experiencing/fleeing domestic violence/abuse, by providing temporary accommodation, telephone and direct advice and individual support to any woman who requests it.

We work with partner organisations to improve the quality of life for women and children who are living with/fleeing domestic violence.

What can we offer

All staff are trained in areas relating to domestic violence. We are able to give advice on benefits, housing, legal, court matters and accessing other services. In addition to this we provide emotional support and counselling, and are able to arrange specialist counselling if required.

Refuge

A refuge is a safe house for women and children escaping domestic violence. The address is confidential and no men other than professionals are allowed in the building. Every woman in the refuge is escaping abuse, therefore they can share their experiences and offer each other support in an environment where they feel safe and free from abuse. **Peer support can sometimes be the most beneficial support a woman can receive.**

HWA have an Open Door Policy which means that, "no woman or child needing refuge accommodation will be turned away without assistance." The aim of this policy therefore, is to ensure the safety and support of women and children experiencing abuse by making effective use of the accommodation and services available, within the context of 24 hour access.

Information and advice

The telephone number to call for refuge and advice and information is **01482 446099**. HWA offer a help line where individuals and agencies can obtain advice and support. Through this service refuge space can be found not only in Hull but, via the Women's Aid network of refuges, in most major towns and cities throughout the UK.

This service is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 7pm and 9am to 4.30pm on Saturdays,

Outside of office hours please contact The Emergency Duty Team on **01482 788080** who will contact HWA for emergency accommodation.

Floating Support

The Domestic Violence Floating Support Service has been in existence since 2003. The service provides a tenancy support service to vulnerable women and children, who have experienced domestic violence to improve their ability to live independently and free from abuse in their own homes.

Children's services

Hull Women's Aid Children Services offers refuge and outreach support for young people aged 0-19 years. The service provides a range of appropriate activities to meet the physical, emotional and development needs of children and young people residing in the refuge or in the community who have experienced/living with domestic abuse.

The team of support workers help children and young people come to terms with and recover from their experiences of domestic violence and listen and respond to their views through consultation and participation.

Women and children receiving HWA's services are treated equally regardless of their race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, class, cultural beliefs or health status. This applies to all aspects of receiving services including application, referral and acceptance, needs assessment, individual support planning, risk assessment, consultation, involvement, move on and aftercare.

What is domestic abuse?

Hull Women's Aid define domestic abuse as *"the actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse of a woman by a partner, family member or someone with whom there is, or has been, a close relationship. This abuse also relates to the perpetrator allowing or causing a child to witness, or be at risk of witnessing, domestic abuse."*

Domestic abuse essentially involves the misuse of power and exercise of control by one person over another with whom there is or has been a close relationship.

Domestic abuse occurs irrespective of gender, race, class, age, religion, sexuality, mental ability, physical ability, income, lifestyle or geographical area of residence.

Statistics show that 81% of reported incidences of domestic abuse are perpetrated by men against women. However, Hull Women's Aid recognises that domestic abuse can occur within same sex relationships and that, in a small number of cases, women are the perpetrators of abuse. There are many different forms of domestic abuse but they fall mainly into 4 categories. These are:

Physical Abuse

Emotional / Psychological Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Financial Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse describes many different types of physical violence, assault and harm. Physical abuse includes:

Hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, slapping, biting, scalding, pulling hair, poking, pinching, pushing, shoving, burning, setting alight, binding limbs, tripping over, choking, beating, cutting, imprisonment, starvation, deliberate dehydration, twisting arms, sleep deprivation, stabbing, shooting, drowning, torture, attempted murder, murder.

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse occurs between two adults where there is financial co-dependence. Financial abuse includes:

Unreasonably denying money to someone who is financially dependant, making them beg for money, threatening to kick them out of the house and make them homeless and destitute, withholding information about welfare benefits, taking a persons earnings off them and not giving them back.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of adults covers a range of inappropriate sexual behaviours that cause distress or harm to an individual. Sexual abuse can be actual or threatened and causes physical and emotional damage. Sexual abuse includes:

Rape, forcing someone into sexual activities against their will for example when they say no, are ill or tired, using objects violently during sex, forcing someone to have sex with another person when they do not wish to, forcing someone to perform sexual acts in front of others when they do not want to, forcing someone to mimic pornography, forcing someone to be photographed or filmed during sex / whilst sexual abuse is taking place, forcing someone to watch or look at pornography.

Psychological / Emotional Abuse

Emotional and Psychological abuse includes a range of non-physical controlling behaviours that cause emotional damage and undermine a persons sense of well-being.

Emotional and Psychological abuse includes:

Telling someone they are worthless, telling them no one else wants them, forcing someone to do things at an exact time or in an exact way, undermining a persons actions, thought and beliefs, telling someone they are weak and could not manage to look after themselves on their own, making someone believe they are mad, telling someone that the domestic violence and abuse is their fault.

Not allowing someone to have visitors, controlling who a person is friends with, not allowing them to go out, not allowing someone to see their family and friends, not allowing someone to be left alone with other people, not allowing someone to use the phone, send letters or emails. Locking someone in a room or house, not allowing someone to go out to work, not allowing someone to go to college or evening classes, accompanying someone everywhere that they go in order to keep control over what they do, who they see and what they say.

Telling someone they are a bad parent, getting children to say and do things to upset someone, encouraging children to get involved in the abuse.

Effects of domestic violence on women

Abused women experience conflicting emotions such as fear, anger, shame, resentment, sadness and powerlessness.

They live in fear, unable to predict when the next attack will come. They often blame themselves for the abuse, or deny it is taking place. They may ignore it, hoping it won't happen again.

Abused women become isolated from family and friends and increasingly dependent on the abuser. In this situation it can be hard to make sense of what is really happening.

The abused woman hopes the violence will end. She believes her partner - the man she loves - will change.

Over time her self esteem is worn down. She starts to believe the insults and criticism. It's a mistake to think that abused women are submissive victims. It takes a lot of strength to stay with an abusive partner. Women have to be strong and resourceful, adopting all kinds of coping strategies and survival techniques.

They may feel weak and helpless, but in reality they have an enormous amount of strength. That strength is used on surviving from day to day.

Effects of domestic violence on children

In 9 incidents out of 10, children are in the same or next door room during a domestic violence incident.

Children can experience both short and long term cognitive, behavioural and emotional effects as a result of witnessing domestic abuse. It is important to remember that each child will respond to the trauma differently and some may be resilient and not exhibit any negative

effects. Children's responses to the trauma of witnessing domestic Violence may vary according to a multitude of factors including, but limited to, age, race, sex and stage of development.

The ways children respond to violence are varied. Some can become withdrawn and find it difficult to communicate, others express their feelings through behaviour problems, some bed wet or experience difficulties at school. **All children living with abuse are under stress.**

Myths and Realities

There are a lot of things that people say about domestic abuse that are wrong. Myths serve as convenient excuses for abusers not to take responsibility for their behaviour. There is no excuse for domestic abuse .

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"It's not violence, they just fight."

Repeated violence is often accompanied by continual emotional abuse and threats. The fact that some women may attempt to defend themselves by resisting physically during an assault should not be taken to mean that the violence she is experiencing is "mutual fighting".

"It's just the odd domestic tiff, everybody has arguments."

The difference between the occasional argument and domestic abuse is that domestic abuse is deliberate behaviour which is used by the abuser to exert power and control over the other person.

A range of different controlling behaviours are used in abusive relationships. They include depriving someone of sleep, criticising their appearance, telling them what to wear or where they can go, controlling who they are friends with or denying them access to their family, locking them up, threatening them with violence, hitting them, raping them or torturing them.

"She seems to chose violent men."

Women do not seek out relationships with violent men. Frequently, men who will become violent do not reveal this aspect of their behaviour until the relationship has become well established – and often not until their first pregnancy. The first incident of domestic violence occurred after one year or more for 51% of the women surveyed; between three months and one year for 30%; and between one and three months for 13%. It occurred in less than one month for only 6% of women (Walby &

"Abusers are violent towards their partners because of unemployment, drugs, alcohol, childhood experiences etc"

Domestic abuse takes place irrespective of income, lifestyle, sex, race, class, age, religion, sexuality and mental or physical ability. Factors such as unemployment, alcohol and drug dependency and so on, do not cause domestic abuse but contribute to exasperate the abuse. There is no excuse for domestic abuse and violence.

"She must get something out of it, or else she would leave."

There are many reasons why a woman stays in an abusive relationship but none of them are related to getting something out of the violence and abuse.

Often a woman is too frightened to leave, her partner may have threatened to kill her, the children or the pets. He might even have threatened to kill himself if she leaves. Research shows that most domestic murders take place at the point of leaving or after leaving and when a woman is in another relationship.

A woman may be worried about uprooting her children or having to leave them behind or having them taken into care if people find out about the abuse.

Many women blame themselves for the abuse, they think it is their fault. They may lack the confidence to leave or feel guilty and shameful about having allowed the abuse to happen to them and their children.

Many women are still unaware of the help and support available from agencies such as Women's Aid.

Often abusers withhold money from their partners so women have no money with which to escape.

The woman's abuser may have stopped contact with her family and friends so in a crisis she feels she has nowhere to turn.

Some or all of these reasons lead many women to believe that there is no way out of the abusive relationship and that they would be better off staying with their partner and putting up with the incidences of domestic abuse. Women cope by finding ways of appeasing their abusive partner by being ultra sensitive to his moods of behaviour. This helps reduce the violence but it is short-lived as the abuser will always find something that 'upsets' him so that it justifies his abuse and violence against the woman or his children.

The Facts

An analysis of 10 separate domestic violence prevalence studies by the Council of Europe showed consistent findings: 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence over their lifetimes and between 6-10% of women suffer domestic violence in a given year. (Council of Europe,2002)

Repeat victimisation is common. More than half of all victims of domestic violence are involved in more than 1 incident. No other type of crime has a rate of repeat victimisation as high (BCS Home Office, 2000)

Every minute in the UK, the police receive a call from the public for assistance for domestic violence. This leads to the police receiving an estimated 1,300 calls each day or over 570,000 each year (professor Stanko 2000)

The Day to Count found that 81% of reported domestic violence cases, were of female victims attacked by male perpetrators, 8% were male victims attacked by female perpetrators, 4% were female victims attacked by female perpetrators and 7% were male victims attacked by male Perpetrators (Professor Stanko, 2000)

What we believe

We believe that everyone has a right to live in safety and to have a future without fear.

We recognise that:

Domestic violence is a violation of women and children's human rights. It's the result of an abuse of power and control, and is rooted in the historical status of women in the family and in society

Our aims are to:

- Empower women who have been affected by domestic violence
- Meet the needs of children affected by domestic violence
- Support and reflect diversity and promote equality of opportunity
- Promote cohesive inter-agency responses to domestic violence and develop partnerships



HWA accept referrals for emergency accommodation, floating support and children's services from individuals and agencies.

Contact Numbers

**Refuge, Advice and Information
Tel: 01482 446099**

**Floating Support
Tel: 01482 446099/474133**

**Children's Services
Tel: 01482 475112**

www.hullwomensaid.org



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