

# DOMESTIC ABUSE & VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) FACTSHEET



## What is Domestic Abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as any abusive behaviour between people who are in a relationship, have separated, or are family members. It includes:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Threatening or violent behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse (e.g. financial control)
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Stalking and harassment in relationships
- Harmful practices like forced marriage, 'honour'-based abuse, and female genital mutilation

Domestic abuse affects people of all backgrounds regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion, belief, or sexual orientation. It can also impact children who witness or experience it.

## What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that:

- Violates someone's dignity
- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

It can happen in public, at work, or online even if the impact wasn't intended.

## Why It Matters

- 1 in 8 women and 1 in 12 men experienced sexual assault, domestic abuse, or stalking in the year up to March 2025 (ONS).
- These behaviours are rarely isolated and often escalate over time.

## Creating Safe Workplaces

Employers have a duty of care to safeguard the wellbeing of staff. Key legislation includes:

- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** - Employers should consider the impact of domestic abuse.
- **Worker Protection Act 2023** - From October 2024, employers must take steps to prevent sexual harassment.

## If You're Worried About Someone

- **Call 999** in an emergency
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0808 2000 247
- **Barnet Council:** [barnet.gov.uk/domesticabuse](https://barnet.gov.uk/domesticabuse)
- **SafeLives:** Supporting friends and family - [safelives.org.uk/about-domestic-abuse](https://safelives.org.uk/about-domestic-abuse)
- **Hestia:** Free advice for employers - [hestia.org/respond-to-abuse](https://hestia.org/respond-to-abuse)

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