

Safety guide

Safety planning is crucial to protect yourself and your children from future violence and abuse. Below are guidelines for creating a safety plan, but it's not an exhaustive list and seeking professional support and guidance is important.

This guide has been broken down into the following categories:

1. [Living with abuse](#)
2. [Planning to leave an abusive relationship](#)
3. [Safety after you have left the abusive relationship](#)

1. Living with abuse

Mobile phone

Ensure that your mobile phone is always charged and within reach. Save domestic abuse support numbers using a generic name or, if it's not safe, memorise the numbers instead.

Delete call history and messages you do not want the abuser to know about. If you suspect that the abuser is accessing your phone or has installed a tracking app, think about alternative ways to seek help. **Consider hiding an emergency phone** that is switched off or set to silent to avoid alerting the abuser to it.

In immediate danger?

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call the **police** on **999**.

Silent solutions

If you're in an emergency situation and **need police help but can't speak**, try to make yourself heard by tapping the handset or coughing if you can. Once prompted by the automated system, **press 55**. This lets the operator know it's a genuine emergency and you will be put through to a police call handler trained to deal with 'silent calls'.

If you don't press 55, the call will be terminated. Pressing 55 does not allow police to track your location. [Click here](#) for further information.

Report non-emergency domestic abuse/incidents to the police

Contact the police on the non-emergency telephone number **101**. Alternatively, visit your **local police station** or contact Lincolnshire [Police online](#).

Consider keeping a log and storing evidence

Consider keeping a log and securely storing any evidence you have in a safe place. If you feel comfortable and safe to do so, keep a record of incidents and take photos of any injuries. Even if you are not yet ready to report the abuse, having this evidence on hand can be useful for future protection orders or legal action.

Here are some steps you can take to document the abuse if you are able and it's safe to do so:

Inform a professional, such as your GP and/or domestic abuse worker about the abuse to create a record of it.

Keep a detailed log of incidents, and consider using the [Bright Sky App](#) as a helpful tool. If you cannot keep your own log, think about whether a trusted friend, family member, or co-worker would be willing to help.

Take photos of any injuries. Using a digital or phone camera may not always be safe, so consider using a disposable camera instead. Alternatively, someone else could take the pictures and keep them for you.

Recognising predictable patterns, signs, and triggers

Are you able to anticipate an escalation of violence and abuse? Recognising predictable patterns, signs, and triggers, as well as locations that may be dangerous, can help increase your safety.

Consider what has worked in the past to keep you safe or minimise injury and impact.

Avoid the following high-risk rooms if you sense things are beginning to escalate:

The Kitchen... where there is access to sharp, dangerous objects.

The Bathroom... where there is access to water and large ceramic objects.

The Stairs... where you may become stuck and unable to run to safety or may be pushed.

Trust your own judgment and intuition

Trust your own judgment and intuition. If you sense an escalation of violence and abuse, try to de-escalate the situation if possible, and do what is necessary to keep yourself and your children safe. Position yourself near a door or window if possible so that you can exit the room easily and your escape isn't blocked.

Develop and rehearse an escape plan and pack an emergency bag

Pack an emergency bag in case you need to flee your address quickly.

Plan safe routes in and out of your house, and prioritise your immediate safety.

Park your car facing the exit point, keep it fuelled, and leave some money and car keys near your escape route.

Create a 'safe room' in your house

Consider creating a 'safe room' in your house. Is there a room where you can protect yourself from the abuser and call for help if you can't escape the property? Ideally, the room would have a **lockable door**, but this may not be possible if you're still living with the abuser.

You may want to consider other measures. For instance, you could **discreetly place a door wedge by the room door** to use in an emergency situation. Putting the door wedge firmly under the door may make it harder for the abuser to gain access and buy you enough time to dial 999. Also, plan ahead and think if there's a safe place in the room where you could **hide an emergency phone**, in case you don't have access to your usual phone.

Alerting neighbours and passers-by if you are in danger

If you're in danger, you could discreetly open a window to try and alert a neighbour or passer-by. If it's possible and safe to do so, make your neighbours aware of the situation at home so that they can help you if they hear or see anything abusive. Discuss with a neighbour a "tell-tale sign" that you need assistance, such as a certain object placed in a window or three bangs on the wall.

Tell a trusted person and set up a code word

Share your situation with a trusted person and discuss a plan on how they can support you, including in an emergency. Consider having a code word or sentence that you and your children can use to alert your trusted person/s to call for help.

You can also consider using the [Hollie Guard App](#). Where you can set up emergency contacts and they can be alerted to a situation by either a shake of your phone or a press of a button. Your emergency contacts can then take action to help you quickly.

It's also helpful to have a phrase or code word to let trusted individuals, including professionals, know that it is unsafe to talk, but that you don't require emergency assistance.

Your workplace

Inform your workplace of your abusive relationship so they can safeguard you at work.

Be aware of the risks of alcohol

Alcohol can make an abuser unpredictable, leaving you more vulnerable to abuse and less able to keep yourself and your children safe. If possible, do not drink alongside the abuser.

Download a domestic abuse app

Download a domestic abuse app that suits your situation, but only use it if safe to do so and you are sure your phone is not being checked or monitored.

Here are a couple of popular apps used by domestic abuse survivors.

Bright Sky – is a free-to-download mobile app providing support and information for anyone experiencing abuse. It has a number of features including a secure 'my Journal tool', where

incidents of abuse can be logged in text, audio, video or photo form, without any of the content being saved on the device itself. For further information - [click here](#)

Hollie Guard - is a free personal safety app that can be downloaded onto any iOS or Android device. With Hollie Guard, if ever you feel threatened, you can send out an alert by either shaking your phone or pressing the icon button. Once you activate an alert, your location along with video and audio evidence is automatically sent to your emergency contacts via SMS and/or email. Your emergency contacts can then take action to help you quickly. For further information – [click here](#)

Safety plan with your children

Safety planning can help protect you and your children from future violence and abuse. See our **Safety plan guide for parents/caregivers** for further information.

2. Planning to leave an abusive relationship

Along with the advice on *living with abuse* outlined above, there are some crucial points to keep in mind when preparing to leave an abusive relationship:

- 1. You are most at risk when planning to leave an abusive relationship.** It is essential to only confide in people you trust and seek professional support and guidance to increase your safety and that of your family.
- 2. Know your rights and options** - If you are experiencing domestic abuse, it's helpful to understand your rights and options. Understanding your rights and options can help you take control of your situation and make informed decisions about your safety and well-being. If possible, seek professional support and guidance to fully understand and exercise your rights and options.
- 3. Plan where you will go.** When planning to leave an abusive relationship, it's important to have a safe destination in mind. Domestic abuse refuges are one option to consider. These refuges provide a secure and supportive environment for individuals and families fleeing abusive situations.

If refuge accommodation is not suitable, there are other options available. You can consider staying with a friend or family member who is supportive and trustworthy or find temporary accommodation such as a hotel or B&B. You can reach out to your local council for assistance. They can offer support in finding temporary accommodation or even provide a "managed move" service, where they can help you move to more permanent housing and provide support throughout the process.

4. **Financial barriers to leaving can be addressed** with the help of financial aid and support services. Saving money in a safe place or with a trusted person can assist with emergency transport or setting up a new life.
5. **Packing a small bag of essential items** like identification, medication, money, mobile phone, charger, and a few clothing items for you and your children can make a significant difference in a crisis situation. Avoid taking anything that could arouse suspicion or put you at greater risk.
6. **Inform your workplace that you are planning to leave or have left** your abusive relationship, and the abusive person is no longer named 'next of kin.' Ensure that they don't share any information that would put you in danger.
7. **Inform your children's schools.** It is important to inform your children's schools if you plan to leave an abusive relationship. This will allow them to provide support and ensure the safety of your children while they are at school. Additionally, it is crucial to clearly communicate with the school who is authorised to collect your children and who is not, to prevent the abuser from taking them.
8. **Choose a safe time to leave.** When planning to leave an abusive relationship, it's important to consider choosing a safe time to do so, such as when the abuser is away or at work. If you feel you can't leave safely, you can always contact the police for assistance.

If you are experiencing any form of domestic abuse, you can seek help and support at one of the **6,500 "safe spaces" located across the UK**. These safe spaces are conveniently located in **pharmacies, banks, and selected job centres**, and provide a national network of local venues where you can feel safe and ask for help.

To use a **safe space**, simply walk into any participating location and ask a member of staff at the counter to use their safe space. You will be directed to a private room where you can use the space in whichever way works for you. Safe spaces provide a safe and discreet way to reach out to friends and family, contact specialist support services, and begin your journey to recovery. To find your nearest safe space, click here [Safe Spaces](#).

9. **Take precautions with your phone and SIM card** when leaving an abusive relationship. If possible, discard your phone and SIM card, especially if there is a chance that the abuser could track you through it. However, if you choose to keep your phone, take these steps:
 - Turn off your phone completely when leaving or immediately after leaving to prevent tracking.
 - Perform a full factory reset on your phone.
 - Ensure that location services are turned off on your phone and social media accounts.
 - Change the passwords on your phone and accounts such as email, Amazon, social networking sites, internet banking, iCloud, Google and Apple ID.

If you believe the abuser could be tracking you, report it to the police for assistance. These steps will help protect your privacy and ensure your safety as you move forward.

3. Safety after you have left the abusive relationship

Safety planning should continue after you have left an abusive relationship to protect yourself and your children.

In immediate danger?

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call the **police** on **999**.

Silent solutions

If you're in an emergency situation and **need police help but can't speak**, try to make yourself heard by tapping the handset or coughing if you can. Once prompted by the automated system, **press 55**. This lets the operator know it's a genuine emergency and you will be put through to a police call handler trained to deal with 'silent calls'.

If you don't press 55, the call will be terminated. Pressing 55 does not allow police to track your location. [Click here](#) for further information about silent solutions.

Report non-emergency domestic abuse /incidents to the police

Contact the police on the non-emergency telephone number **101**. Alternatively, visit your **local police station** or contact Lincolnshire [Police online](#)

If the abuser turns up at your property.

If the abuser turns up at your property do NOT open the door (keep it locked) and call the police immediately.

Mobile phone / digital and online safety.

Ensure your location services are turned off on your phone and social media accounts. **Change the passwords** on your phone and accounts such as email, Amazon, social networking sites, internet banking, utilities, iCloud, Google and Apple ID.

If you are concerned that the abuser may still have access to your information (including your location), via your mobile phone or similar device, **discard the device and sim** and purchase a new one **or carry out a full factory reset** on your existing device.

Report to the police if you believe the abuser may be tracking you so they can provide assistance. Once you know the phone you are using is safe and secure, always ensure it's on you, with credit and fully charged.

See our **technology and privacy safety tips guide** – for further information.

Secure your premises

Where needed, take steps to secure your premises to ensure your safety. This can involve **changing locks** and **installing smoke detectors, window and door alarms, outdoor lighting, video ring doorbell** and **CCTV** cameras. These measures can help to deter the abuser and give you peace of mind.

Speak to your local housing department about their "Sanctuary Scheme," which can help you to stay safe in your own home. They may even be able to assist with the cost of securing your premises. If you are not eligible for assistance or it's not feasible to change your locks, consider investing in a portable lock, bolt or chain for the door.

Vehicle safety

When parking your car, try to back it into the driveway or park it facing the exit point if it's on the road. Keep your car fuelled to ensure you can leave quickly if necessary.

If you suspect the abuser has put a tracker on your vehicle, report it to the police immediately. You can also take your car to a reputable garage to have it inspected for spyware devices. Be aware that there may be a fee for this service, so it's important to ask about the cost beforehand. If you're unable to afford the fee, there may be financial assistance available, speak to your domestic abuse worker about this.

If you do find spyware devices or trackers on your vehicle or in your home, report it to the police right away. They can provide advice and assistance to help keep you safe.

Keep important documents safe

Make sure to keep important documents such as your identification, children's passport, birth certificate, and financial documents in a safe and secure place.

Stay alert when out and about:

Be vigilant when you are out and about and carry a personal alarm. Consider using the [Hollie Guard App](#).

Change your normal routes if you are worried about being followed/approached.

If you feel uncomfortable or threatened, trust your instincts and take the necessary precautions to protect yourself. If possible, go to the nearest public place/shop and call the police immediately.

If you are experiencing any form of domestic abuse, you can seek help and support at one of the **6,500 "safe spaces" located across the UK**. These safe spaces are conveniently located in **pharmacies, banks, and selected job centres**, and provide a national network of local venues where you can feel safe and ask for help.

To use a **safe space**, simply walk into any participating location and ask a member of staff at the counter to use their safe space. You will be directed to a private room where you can use the space in whichever way works for you. Safe spaces provide a safe and discreet way to reach out to friends and family, contact specialist support services, and begin your journey to recovery. To find your nearest safe space, click here [Safe Spaces](#).

Inform others of your situation:

Share your situation with those that you trust and discuss a plan on how they can support you, including in an emergency:

Neighbours: If it's possible and safe to do so, make your neighbours aware of the situation at home so that they can help you if they hear or see anything suspicious or abusive.

Trusted family/friends: Consider having a code word or sentence that you and your children can use to alert your trusted person/s to call for help.

Make use of the [Hollie Guard App](#) where you can set up emergency contacts and they can be alerted to a situation by either a shake of your phone or a button press. Your emergency contacts can then take action to help you quickly.

Your workplace: Inform your workplace that you have left your abusive relationship, and the abusive person is no longer named as 'next of kin.' Ensure that they don't share any information that would put you in danger.

Professionals: Keep professionals informed regarding what's going on, such as your GP, your domestic abuse worker, your solicitor, social worker or mental health worker if you have one. Not only with this create a record, which may be useful for the future but they can also help and support you.

Know your rights and options

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, it's helpful to understand your rights and options. Understanding your rights and options can help you take control of your situation and make informed decisions about your safety and well-being. If possible, seek professional support and guidance.

Consider applying for civil protection orders

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, seeking legal protection can be an important step in ensuring your safety. One option is to apply for civil protection orders, such as an injunction, to protect yourself and your children. You can contact a **local solicitor** or the **National Centre for Domestic Violence** for help with this.

If you cannot afford legal representation or do not qualify for legal aid, you can make a DIY application for a civil protection order and represent yourself in court. Although this may seem daunting, many abuse survivors have done this successfully, and the process is straightforward.

If you already have a court order in place, such as a restraining order, non-molestation order, or prohibited steps order, it is important to keep the records safe and inform trusted individuals of the conditions of the orders. This can help to ensure that you and your family remain safe. If you do not have a copy of a court order, you can request one from the court or your solicitor if you have legal representation.

Keep a log and store evidence

Keep a diary of events, including a detailed log of contacts and incidents, the [Bright Sky App](#) is a useful tool for this.

Report all unwanted contact and incidents to the police.

Take photos of any injuries, even if you do not feel ready or able to report incidents to the police, you may change your mind at a later date.

Your children's safety and child arrangements

Communicate with your child's school

Tell your child's school about domestic abuse and safety concerns. Speak to the safeguarding lead to ensure your child is safe during school hours. Let them know about any bail conditions or court orders. Discuss with the school who is allowed to pick up your child and set a password for added protection.

Child contact/handover arrangements

Consider child arrangements carefully to protect your child from harm. Seek legal and children's services advice if unsure. Safe and appropriate child contact should be facilitated through a trusted third party or in a public place, not at home. You are not legally required to allow contact unless there is a court order. Victims of domestic abuse should not supervise child contact alone. Explore alternative safe options such as child contact centres.

Safety plan with your children

Safety planning can help protect you and your children from future violence and abuse. See our **safety plan guide for parents/caregivers** for further information.

Create a safety plan in case you encounter the abuser

Are you able to anticipate an escalation of violence and abuse? Recognising predictable patterns, signs, and triggers, as well as locations that may be dangerous, can help increase your safety. Consider what has worked in the past to keep you safe or minimise injury and impact.

Avoid the following high-risk rooms if you sense things are beginning to escalate:

The Kitchen... where there is access to sharp, dangerous objects.

The Bathroom... where there is access to water and large ceramic objects.

The Stairs... where you may become stuck and unable to run to safety or may be pushed.

Trust your own judgment and intuition. If you sense an escalation of violence and abuse, try to de-escalate the situation if possible, and do what is necessary to keep yourself and your children

safe. Position yourself near a door or window if possible so that you can exit the room easily and your escape isn't blocked.

Develop and rehearse an escape plan in and out of your house, in case you need it.

Consider creating a 'safe room' in your house. Is there a room where you can protect yourself from the abuser and call for help if you can't escape the property? Ideally, the room would be **lockable from the inside**. **Consider placing a door wedge by the room door** to use in an emergency situation. Putting the door wedge firmly under the door may make it harder for the abuser to gain access and buy you enough time to dial 999. Also, plan ahead and think if there's a safe place in the room where you could **keep an emergency phone**, in case you don't have access to your usual phone.

Download a domestic abuse app

Here are a couple of popular apps used by domestic abuse survivors.

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Check your tech

Access the [Digital Breakup](#) tool provided by [Refuge charity's Technology Safety Team](#). It is an interactive tool designed to help with keeping safe when using technology.

Useful contacts

Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Specialist Service - 01522 510041- Option 2

[EDAN Lincs Refuge](#) – 01522 510041 – Option 1

[The 'National Domestic Abuse Helpline'](#) – This is a free 24-hour helpline service run by 'Women's Aid' and 'Refuge' – Telephone: 0808 2000 247

[National Centre for domestic violence](#) - Provide a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic abuse. Telephone: 0800 970 2070

Police – Call 999 in an emergency, or for general advice or non-emergency, call 101.

Social Worker – Talk to your assigned social worker if you have one, or for general advice phone: Lincolnshire Adult Social Care at 01522 782155 or Lincolnshire Children's Services at 01522 782111

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – Specialist support and advice regarding incidences of sexual abuse contact – Telephone: 01522 524402

Lincolnshire Rape Crisis – Support for those who have been affected by any form of sexual violence at any point in their lives. Telephone: 0800 334 5500

GP, Nurse, Midwife, or Health Visitor – Contact your local medical centre, or children's centre for confidential advice and support.

Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is a national network of local venues where you can go to feel safe and ask for help, search the website to find the nearest safe place within a 15-minute walk of your location.

Clare's Law

Under UK law, anyone has the right to ask the police if they believe that they, or someone they know, is in a relationship with someone that could be abusive towards them. Clare's Law (also known as the domestic violence disclosure scheme), allows you to find out whether your partner has a history of violence, abuse or assault. To apply for disclosure under Clare's Law, contact your **local police force**.