



Sligo Leitrim Domestic Violence and Coercive Control Resource Handbook



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A word of thanks

We are very grateful for the sharing spirit of Safe Ireland who gave us permission to use content from their excellent resources (www.safeireland.ie).

Thanks also to the generosity of Hayley Murphy of Wicklow Domestic Violence Service, Siobhan McKenna of Tearmann Domestic Violence Service and Marie Hainsworth of Donegal Domestic Violence Service, along with their local CYPSC for sharing the content of their Domestic Violence Resource Handbooks.

This Domestic Violence Resource Handbook came about through the effective interagency work of the following organisations through Sligo Leitrim CYPSC's Safe and Protected from Harm Committee:



This handbook is intended as a guide only. Please do not rely on it solely to make important decisions about your future. We encourage you to talk to DVAS or another relevant agency who can support you and your children.

Contents

PAGE

1. Introduction	2
2. DVAS Services	3
3. DVAS Group Support Programmes	4
4. What is Domestic Violence and Coercive Control?	6
5. Types of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control	9
6. The Cycle of Violence	12
7. Relationship Warning Signs / Profile of Abusive Behaviour	14
8. Myths and Facts	16
9. How Irish Law Can Protect and Support You	17
10. Applying for Legal Protection and Going to Court	19
11. Making a Safety Plan	20
12. Safety Planning – After You Leave the Relationship	21
13. Phone and Internet Safety	22
14. Role of An Garda Síochána	24
15. Role of Túsla - the Child and Family Agency	25
16. Moving Forward	27
17. Taking Care of Yourself	28
18. Women’s Refuges and 24 hour Helplines	30
19. National Support Services	31
20. Local Support Services	33

Introduction

This handbook outlines the services available to women in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan who are experiencing or have experienced Domestic Violence and Coercive Control.

This guide outlines what options are there for you, to empower and enable you to take the steps necessary to increase your safety as you begin to take control of your life and make your own choices and decisions.

Help is available, whether you want to talk, explore your options or take further action. Support, advocacy and information are available at your local specialist domestic violence service, which is Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan (DVAS).

Contact DVAS to talk to a trained and experienced support worker about what is going on in your life. All DVAS services are free and confidential. Our team understands the devastating impact Domestic Violence and Coercive Control can have on your life. We realise it can be hard to reach out and to make contact with us. Our workers are experienced in supporting women to talk when you are ready. We understand you may not know what to say or how to start.

When you ring or email DVAS you will talk to a Support and Advocacy Worker, who will offer you the option of phone support or a face to face meeting. We meet women in our support centres in Sligo town and Carrick On Shannon or in another venue in your community that is safe for you.

You will have an opportunity to talk to your Support and Advocacy Worker about your particular circumstances and together we will identify your support needs and create a support plan. This will include looking at your personal safety; health and well-being issues; education and training; housing and finances.

For many women living in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan access to supports and services is limited due to issues of transport, social exclusion, rigid stereotypes and family, cultural and community pressures. Some or all of these can feel insurmountable. We want to assure you that you have options and choices. Reach out to DVAS or another trusted support to take a step towards safety and freedom.

DVAS Services

DVAS supports women in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan, who have or are experiencing Domestic Violence and Coercive Control.

DVAS provides a range of services including:

- Telephone helpline and support email
- One to one support - face to face and phone support sessions
- Court support
- Outreach service
- Advocacy work with other agencies and organisations
- Group support
- Education and training programmes
- Awareness Raising and Training

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control occur in all sections of society. Here in Ireland, it is reported that as many as 1 in 3 women have experienced some form of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control at some time in their lives, whether in childhood, or in past or present relationships.

DVAS provides support to survivors of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control through our range of free and confidential services. We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment where women can be their true selves and feel empowered to stand up to all forms of oppression.

We believe that freedom from harm is a basic human right for all individuals including physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological harm. We know that Domestic Violence and Coercive Control, oppression and power-based tactics affect physical, emotional and psychological safety and we work to help survivors heal the wounds caused by power-based violence.

We value the dignity of all individuals while appreciating our differences and celebrating and honouring our diversity. Respect is reflected in the way we treat our service users, ourselves and members of the community. We believe our work requires us to reach out to marginalised individuals and communities and to create space to celebrate and nurture them. We commit to empowering women and facilitating them in having a voice. We listen, hear, believe and respect women who contact us for help – only they know the reality of their abuse.



DVAS Group Support Programmes

DVAS runs a number of group-based support programmes including, 'Power to Change' and 'Assertiveness and Confidence Building'.

Power to Change Programme

The Power to Change Programme is a personal development group based process for survivors of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control.

The programme aims to create a positive, safe space for women to come together to share their thoughts and feelings, to address their individual and collective experiences of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control, and to enable women to move on and create positive change for themselves and their children.

This course allows women to explore the effects of their abusive relationship both on themselves and their children, highlighting the patterns which may have existed in their abusive relationship.

Power to Change aims to empower women to take back control of their lives.



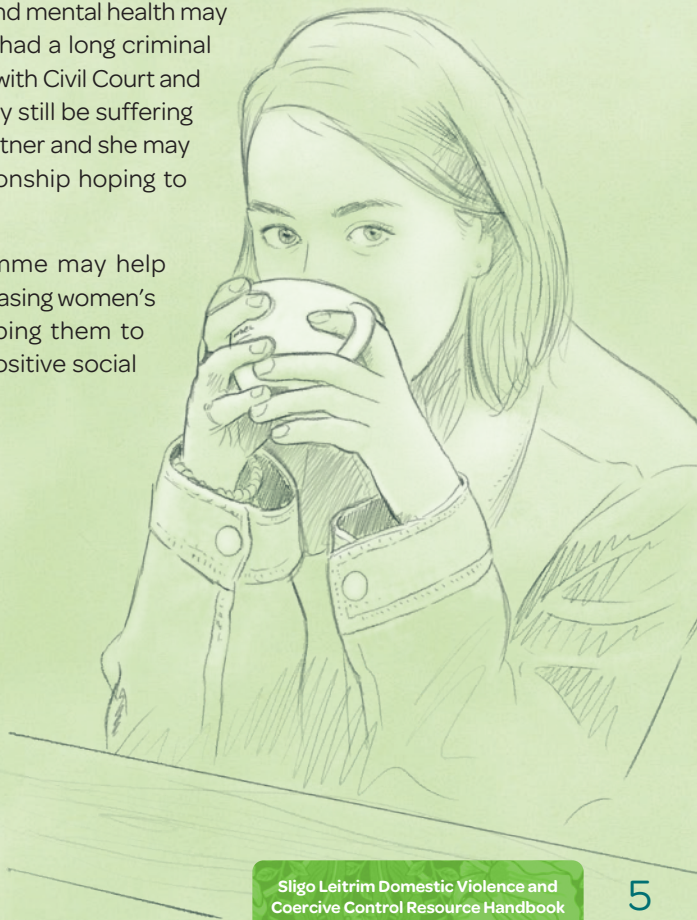
Assertiveness and Confidence Building Programme

This programme focuses on ways to enhance self-esteem, assertiveness and confidence. We explore effective communication skills, how to develop assertiveness and greater self-awareness.

The programme is designed to give back what is lost in an abusive relationship. It is recognised that survivors of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control may lose their confidence and self-esteem. They may carry a lot of guilt and believe the abuse is their fault.

The impact of systematic abuse may affect all areas of a woman's life from the way she parents to losing employment. Her physical and mental health may be affected. She may have had a long criminal court case to manage along with Civil Court and Family Proceedings. She may still be suffering harassment from her ex-partner and she may remain in an abusive relationship hoping to gain courage to leave.

Taking part in this programme may help reduce the isolation by increasing women's support networks and helping them to experience some joy and positive social connection.



What is Domestic Violence and Coercive Control?

Domestic Violence (DV), often referred to as domestic abuse (DA) or intimate partner violence (IPV), is a human rights abuse and a form of gender-based violence with its roots in gender inequality.

The Istanbul Convention defines domestic violence as *'all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim'*. (As defined by Ireland's Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy, 2022)

Coercive Control is a crime. It is the very heart of domestic abuse. It does not have to be physical to be abuse.

It is a persistent and deliberate pattern of behaviour by an abuser over a prolonged period of time designed to achieve obedience and create fear.

It may include coercion, threats, stalking, intimidation, isolation, degradation, and control. It may also include physical and/or sexual violence. (Safe Ireland 2019)

**IT IS NOT
YOUR IMAGINATION**

**IT IS NOT
YOUR FAULT**

**IT IS NOT
ACCEPTABLE**

**IT IS
A CRIME**

Coercive Control is all about making a woman's world smaller - trapping her, restricting her independence and freedom. A controlling partner may shut out her friends and family, control her movements, micro-manage what she eats or wears, restrict her access to money - all the time chipping away at her confidence and destroying her self-respect.

It's the law

If it happened after January 1st 2019, Coercive Control is a criminal offence in Ireland.

Section 39 of the new Domestic Violence Act 2018 sets out that:

(1) A person commits an offence where he or she knowingly and persistently engages in behaviour that

- a). is controlling or coercive
- b). has a serious effect on a relevant person,
and
- c). a reasonable person would consider likely to have a serious effect on a relevant person.

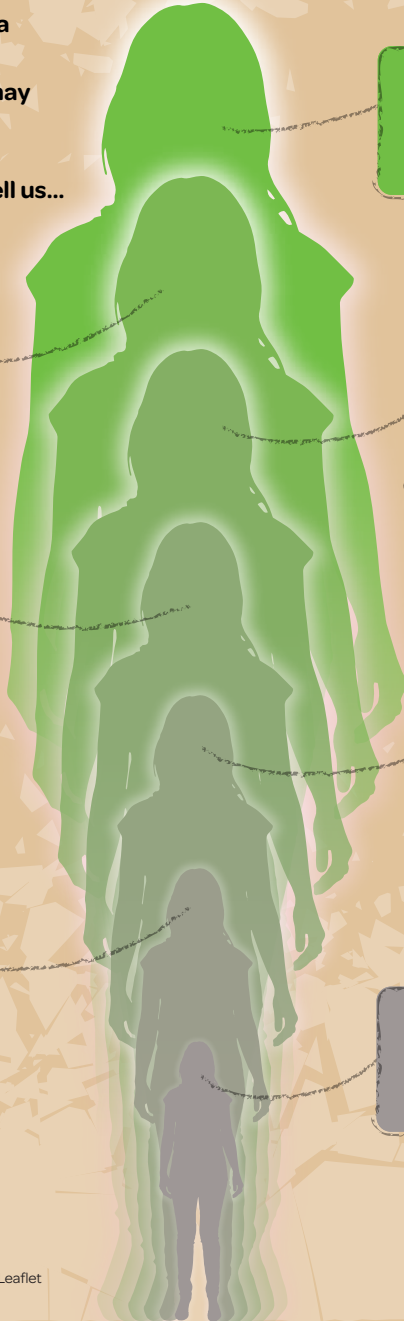
The legislation explains that behaviour has “a serious effect” if the “relevant person” – that is an intimate partner – fears that violence will be used against them or if it causes serious alarm or distress that has a “substantial adverse impact on usual day to day activities”.

This law makes Coercive Control more serious precisely because it relates to tactics used by an intimate partner - a spouse, non-spouse or civil partner - now or in the past. You do not have to be in a sexual relationship for a partner to be an intimate partner.

Coercive Control has a terrorising pattern.

An abuser's actions may vary but the eroding impact is the same.

This is what women tell us...



HE WAS SUCH A CHARMER

I'M AFRAID OF THE 'OR ELSE'

I DON'T DO THE THINGS I USED TO ANYMORE

I'M GOING CRAZY

IF I DON'T ANSWER THE TEXTS I KNOW THERE'LL BE TROUBLE

IT'S LIKE WALKING ON EGG SHELLS

IT'S PROBABLY ME

Source: Safe Ireland Coercive Control Leaflet

Types of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control

The following will help you recognise the signs of an abusive relationship.

Not all signs are included here as some are hard to define. BUT, if you are nervous, frightened, or anxious around your partner, then your relationship is likely to be unequal and abusive.



If you are experiencing Domestic Violence and Coercive Control, it is important to get the right help and support. Your first priority must be your safety and that of your children. We know it is hard to reach out and make that call for support. We know how scared you might feel. But we also know calling DVAS will be your first step to freedom away from the abuse.

Not everyone understands domestic abuse and how an abusive relationship works. Some people may dismiss your concerns or minimise your experiences. Trust your instincts. If you feel that people are not listening, or are not taking your issues seriously, speak to DVAS.

Physical

Any intentional and unwanted contact or something close to a person's body.

- Biting
- Punching or slapping
- Strangling
- Pulling Hair
- Pushing
- Burning
- Bruising
- Using Weapons (knives)
- Using objects as weapons (phones, cups, etc)

Sexual

Any form of sexual coercion (physical or emotional) or sexual degradation against an individual in the family or the domestic unit.

- Unwanted Sexual Touching
- Sexual Assault - forcing/unwanted/unsafe degrading sexual activity
- Sexual Harassment/Grooming
- Reproductive Coercion- forced sterilisation/forced pregnancy/forced abortion
- Sexual Exploitation-Forcing victim to watch pornography
- Revenge Porn
- Rape/No Consent
- Rejecting Sex and Intimacy
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Circumcision

Financial

Where an abuser uses money as a means to control their partner.

- Withholding money/social welfare/credit card
- Stealing from or defrauding a partner of money or assets
- Preventing a partner working or choosing an occupation
- Forcing you to take out a loan

Emotional

Emotional/Psychological is a form of control to intimidate, threaten or humiliate.

- Threatening or Intimidating you
- Destruction of personal property
- Shouting/Screaming/Name calling
- Stalking/Harassment/Monitoring
- Embarrassing/ Mocking in Public
- Gaslighting/ Spreading rumours/ lies
- Criticising /Diminishing your goals
- Blaming You
- Locking Doors
- Feeling like you're "Walking on Eggshells"
- Excessive Possessiveness
- "Love Bombing"

Social

Systematic isolation of a victim.

- Systematic Isolation from Family and friends
- Forbidding or physically preventing you from going out and meeting people
- Limiting your transport to socially isolate you
- Refusing to allow you to work
- Constant criticising of your family and friends
- Never being left by your own without perpetrator

Digital

Use of technology to bully, pursue, cyber-stalk or intimidate a partner.

- Sharing/Threatening to share intimate/private pictures online
- Harassment by sending insulting/ threatening text messages
- Making false social media profiles
- Monitoring your online activity and social media
- Checking your Internet Search History
- Using Technology to track your whereabouts
- Demanding Passwords

Cycle of Violence

Domestic Violence and Coercive control follows a pattern. No matter when it happens or who is involved the pattern or cycle repeats. At every stage of the cycle, the abuser is fully in control of themselves and is working to control and further isolate you.

If it is safe to do so, keep a diary of the abuse to help you identify the cycle. Understanding the cycle and the thinking of the abuser will help you see that you are not to blame for the abuse and that the abuser is the one responsible.



The Three phases of the Cycle of Violence

TENSION BUILDING PHASE

- The abuser is argumentative, angry, uses angry gestures, yelling, criticising, swearing.
- You may feel as if you're 'walking on eggshells' and feel something bad is going to happen.

VIOLENCE 'EXPLOSION' PHASE

- As tension builds, violence is likely.
- This 'explosion' may include physical violence, sexual violence, threats to harm and verbal abuse.

RECONCILIATION OR 'HONEYMOON' PHASE

- Following the explosion, the abuser may say they feel sorry and act apologetically and lovingly, saying it will never happen again.
- The abuser may make promises to get help.
- The abuser may blame the abuse on alcohol, drugs, etc. He may blame you. 'if you hadn't done xyz'.
- The abuser may shower you with gifts, act like the person you first fell in love with and things may get better for a while.... but the honeymoon phase doesn't last - the tension starts all over again and the cycle continues.

The abuse usually builds over time as the abuser gains more control and your autonomy and self-esteem are eroded. It's rarely a once-off event. There may be good times in the relationship, but tension builds up again and the cycle continues. The three key dynamics of love, hope and fear, keep the cycle in motion and make it difficult to end the relationship.

This cycle might look exactly like what's happening in your relationship or it might not, but remember...

**THE VIOLENCE IS
NOT YOUR FAULT**

**YOU ARE NOT
RESPONSIBLE FOR
SOMEONE ELSE'S
BEHAVIOUR**

**YOU DO NOT
DESERVE
THE ABUSE**

Relationship Warning Signs

It is important to identify the level of risk you are exposed to in your relationship.

Everyone has arguments, and everyone disagrees with their partners, family members and others close to them from time to time.

But if this begins to form a consistent pattern and you feel afraid of your partner, then this is a sign of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control. You may feel like you have no power over your life and that you are being controlled by your partner.

Please complete the profile of abusive behaviour to help you make sense of your situation. Any one of the following signs is serious. You do not need to experience several, or all of them for your relationship to be abusive.

Profile of Abusive Behaviour

If someone in your household inflicts the following behaviours on you, you may be living with Domestic Violence and Coercive Control:

1. Jealous: often accuses you of having affairs. May be jealous of family or even his own children.
2. Bad temper: either flares up over every little thing or lets anger build up and then explodes.
3. Tells you everything is your fault: projects his own faults onto you ("if you didn't.... then I wouldn't....").
4. Jekyll and Hyde personality: other people may not believe you when you tell them what is happening.
5. He has strong beliefs of sex stereotype roles for men and women, i.e. the man is the head of the house and the woman cooks, cleans and cares for the children.

6. He may have a problem with alcohol or drugs.
While this does not cause the abuse it can make it worse.
7. May have other problems with the law.
8. May play with weapons such as knives or guns.
9. Tries to isolate you. Discourages you from seeing family and friends, or from working or getting a better education.
10. Tries to control your behaviour and/or thoughts through brainwashing.
11. Verbally assaults you (insults, put-downs, slanderous names).
12. May expect you to act like a mother to him but then resent it when you do. Whatever you do, you are wrong.
13. He will do whatever he can to drive you away, then whatever it takes to get you back. (Grab the children, apologise profusely, take you out to dinner, buy you gifts, cry real tears, promise you everything - knowing exactly what you want to hear: "I'll go to church/counselling/AA, "I'll never.... Again").
14. If he physically assaults you he may tend to follow a pattern. Some abusers always hit the woman in the face. Others are careful to hurt you where the bruises won't show.
15. When the abuse has occurred he minimises the seriousness of it or denies it completely.
16. After the explosion he feels better and can't understand why you may remain hurt, upset or angry.
17. He may apologise for the abuse and promise it will never happen again, but while he apologises he may be subtly blaming you.
18. He comes from a family where abuse was used on women and/or the children.

Myths and Facts

MYTH

FACT

Alcohol and drugs cause Domestic Violence and Coercive Control

Alcohol and drugs do not cause Domestic Violence and Coercive Control. Many abusers will make sure they have alcohol and drugs on hand to use as an excuse for their actions. Abusers will also claim their actions resulted because they could not access alcohol or drugs.

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control only happens in low-income families.

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control happens in all kinds of families, rich and poor, in every part of the country, and in every race, religion and age group.

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control is an anger control issue.

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control have nothing to do with anger. Anger is the way they get what they want. We know that every abuser is in complete control over what they are doing because they can stop when someone is at the door or they leave bruises only in places that can't be seen. They are not abusing you because they are angry. They are abusing you because they choose to.

Abusers have low self-esteem.

Abusers believe they are entitled to have power and control over their partner. Abusers will pretend to have low self-esteem to make others believe the abuse is not their fault.

I am not physically hurt so it's not really domestic abuse.

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control are not just physical. Psychological abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and financial abuse have significant effects on someone's life, mental health and emotional well-being.

There are people in worse situations than me.

Every situation is different so you can't compare your experiences to others. It doesn't matter what your circumstances are, if you are experiencing Domestic Violence and Coercive Control - no matter what form it takes - you are entitled to access support and advice, whether you are in a relationship or not.

We are separated so it can't be Domestic Violence.

A lot of Domestic Violence and Coercive Control is carried out by an ex-partner. Sometimes Domestic Violence and Coercive Control becomes evident only when you leave the relationship or try to leave the relationship. This is when the abuser feels they are losing control and they want to punish you.

How Irish Law Can Protect and Support You

You can apply to the court for a Domestic Violence Order, including one of the following.

Protection Order

This allows an abusive partner to remain in the home, but they may not use violence or threaten you. If the abuser does not live with you the Protection Order may prohibit them from watching or being near your home. A Protection Order may also prevent them from following you or communicating including by phone, email, and social media with you or a dependent.

Interim Barring Order

This is similar to a Barring Order. It means the abuser may not come into your home. It may also prohibit them from watching or being near your home or following or communicating, including by phone, email or social media with you or a dependant. To apply for an Interim Barring Order, you must have an equal or greater interest in the property.

Barring Order

If the court grants a Barring Order, the abuser has to leave the family home until the order expires. This can be for any time up to five years.

Emergency Barring Order

If you do not have equal or greater property rights, you can apply for an Emergency Barring Order if there is an immediate risk or harm to you. This Temporary Order is similar to an Interim Barring Order and means the abuser may not enter the home for eight days.

Safety Order

A Safety Order means an abuser can remain in the home but may not use violence or threats against you or a dependant. If the abuser is not living with you, the Safety Order may prohibit them from watching, or being near your home. A Safety Order may also prohibit the abuser from following or communicating including by phone, email or social media, with you or a dependant. A Safety Order made in the District Court can last for up to five years.

Child Custody Orders

Custody is the day-to-day care of children under the age of 18. You should apply for a Custody Order when you apply for a Protection Order. The judge decides which parent the child will live with. If you are not married to the father of your child, it is important to note that an unmarried father does not have automatic guardianship rights. He must apply to the court to get these rights.

Maintenance Order

A Maintenance Order is designed to give financial support for you and your children. You do not have to be living apart or intending to separate. If your spouse/partner is unemployed, you can still apply for maintenance as a Maintenance Order may be important for applying for social welfare.

Child Contact Orders

Child Contact is usually known as access. It is the right to see and communicate with a child. When you have custody of your child, the other parent will usually be given access, unless there is a proven risk to the child and even then, supervised access may be given.

Legal Separation

A Legal Separation is a written contract through which married couples agree to separate. It covers maintenance, custody of children, ownership, and occupation of the family home.

In a Legal Separation, the spouses can decide the terms of separation rather than have the terms imposed by the court and usually a solicitor or mediator can help negotiate an agreement. However, where there has been domestic abuse, it is unlikely that the perpetrator will be concerned about your best interests and negotiating a fair agreement will be difficult. In this case a Judicial Separation may be necessary, and a judge decides on these issues.

Applying for Legal Protection and Going to Court

Q Do I have to tell the abuser that I am applying for an Order?

A **No.** You do not have to tell the abuser if you are applying for a Protection Order, Interim Barring Order or Emergency Barring Order. They do not have to be in court for an order to be granted. You attend the court and complete the application, outlining the reasons why you need the order. Based on the information provided, the judge will then decide whether to grant it.

Q Will the Abuser get a criminal record if I apply for an Order?

A **No.** A Domestic Violence Order is a Civil (not Criminal) Order.

Q Will I need a Solicitor?

A **No.** You don't need a solicitor for a Temporary Order. **However**, it is recommended to engage a solicitor when going to court for all other Orders. You may be eligible for Legal Aid.

Q Do I need to contact the Gardai?

A Once you receive your Temporary Court Order, (Protection Order, Interim Barring Order or Emergency Barring Order), **it is recommended** that you go to your local Garda Station straightaway and give them a copy.

Q What do I do if the order is breached?

A If the abuser does not obey the conditions in the Order for example, if they enter your home even though they are barred from entering, this is called a Breach of the Order. If this happens, contact the Gardaí immediately. The Order clearly states the conditions that must be followed. **If you are uncertain, contact the Gardaí.** Make a statement and let them decide if the Order has been breached.

Q What happens at the full hearing?

A The hearing of an application for a Safety Order or Barring Order is held in private. You, the respondent (the abuser), the judge and the court clerk attend. The judge may hear evidence from a third party where relevant. Your solicitor will talk you through this process.

Making a Safety Plan

A safety plan is a way of protecting yourself and your children. It helps you increase your safety within your relationship, or if you decide to leave.

Plan in advance how you might respond in different situations, including crisis situations, and think about the different options available.

- Keep important and emergency telephone numbers with you at all times.
- Teach your children how to respond in an emergency, including how to ring emergency services (999/112), giving full name, address, and telephone number.
- Is there a neighbour you can trust and where you can go in an emergency? If so, tell them what is going on and ask them to call the Gardaí if they hear sounds of a violent attack.
- Rehearse an escape plan, so in an emergency you and the children can get away safely.
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself and children and hide it somewhere, for example at a neighbour's or a friend's house.
- Try to keep a small amount of money on you at all times.
- Try to keep your mobile phone charged and with you at all times.
- Be prepared to leave the house in an emergency.

What to pack

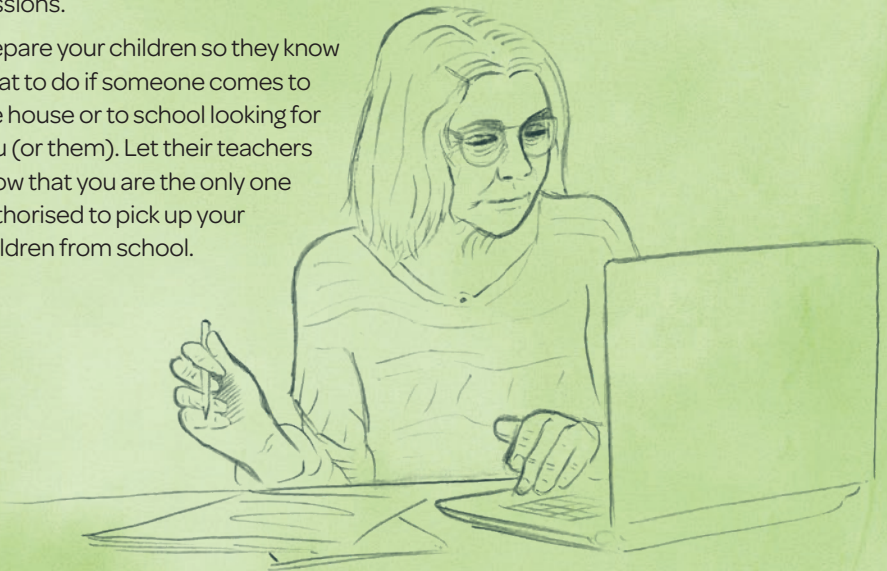
- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Some form of ID | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Medication | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Birth certificates for you and your children | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Copies of legal documents, for example: mortgage details | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Passports, visas, and work permits | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Insurance documents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Money, credit/debit cards, other financial documents | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Address book | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Public Services Card | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Family photographs, diary and jewellery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Keys for house, car and place of work | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Clothing and toiletries for you and your children | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Phone and phone charger | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Children's favourite small toys/school books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Driving licence | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Safety Planning – After You Leave the Relationship

We know that leaving an abusive relationship does not always mean an end to the violence. Many people experience abuse from former partners (this is called post separation abuse).

Here are some things you can do to stay safe after you leave.

- Keep in touch with DVAS. We can help you plan your safety as your circumstances change.
- If possible, change your phone number
- Screen your calls. Don't answer calls from numbers you don't know.
- Save all messages that are threatening or which violate a Domestic Violence Order.
- Open your own accounts (banks, household, etc.)
- Vary your daily routine - change your commute to work and don't visit the same bank or shop too often.
- If you have to meet your ex-partner for access (a visit with the children) try to do it in a public place. We will explore these issues with you during safety planning sessions.
- Prepare your children so they know what to do if someone comes to the house or to school looking for you (or them). Let their teachers know that you are the only one authorised to pick up your children from school.



Phone and Internet Safety

If you feel your internet and phone activities are being monitored, they probably are. Here are some ways you can use your computer or phone safely.

- Don't Change your computer activities suddenly.
- Continue to use the monitored computer or phone for harmless tasks, such as checking the weather.
- Use a safer computer to research an escape plan or ask for help.
- You can find a safer computer in the library, an internet café or at a trusted friend's house.
- Email, text and instant messenger accounts can be easily monitored, so use different accounts that the abuser isn't aware of.
- Contact DVAS who will help you create a safety plan and tell you about other options.



Signs you might be experiencing technology-facilitated abuse:

Are you receiving constant messages or phone calls?

Is the perpetrator controlling all your technology devices and accounts?

Are your images being shared online without your consent?

Does the perpetrator appear in locations where you are?

Is the perpetrator using your children as a medium to access you?

Does the perpetrator have access to or control of all finance and online banking?

Are smart home devices being used to monitor and spy on you?

Are you being stalked online?

Does your partner/ex-partner check up on you all the time, asking you to drop a pin or send a picture to prove current location?



Role of An Garda Síochána

“An Garda Síochána, the Irish Police Service, takes domestic and sexual abuse seriously and is here to help.”



Domestic abuse can take a variety of forms. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial. It can occur within a family or involve a current or ex-partner, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you may feel isolated and alone. You may not know who to trust or who you can confide in. It can be daunting contacting the Gardaí but if you are in danger, we want you to **call 999**.

When you **call 999**, a Garda in uniform will arrive at your location in a marked patrol car. They will ensure that you are not in immediate danger. When they are sure you are safe, you will have time to discuss with the Garda exactly why you called.

If you are not in immediate danger and you require advice and assistance, you can visit your local Garda Station. There you will be met by a uniformed Garda. You can ask to speak with the Garda in private. They may sit down with you and ask you a number of questions. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. An Garda Síochána just need to find out as much information as possible to ensure that you are safe and that you stay safe.

When Gardaí attend an incident of reported domestic abuse, they will introduce themselves and speak to those involved separately and ascertain what occurred. They will get details of those involved and the relationship between them.

Where there is a domestic abuse order in place and that order has been breached, the Gardaí will arrest the person. If there is no domestic abuse order in place and the Gardaí have grounds to suspect that an offence has been committed and they have a power of arrest, they will utilize that power of arrest.

Gardaí will investigate all offences that have occurred and will take a statement of complaint from you as well as gathering all available evidence for their investigation. The Garda you speak with will supply details of relevant support services and will conduct an in person call back within 7 days. The Garda will make further call backs if appropriate within one month and three months after the incident / initial call.

Role of Túsla, the Child and Family Agency

Túsla has a primary responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of children in Ireland.



In the case of Domestic Violence, referrals are generally made by the Gardaí (called to attend an incident, where there is a child/children present in the household) to the local Duty Social Work Team. Referrals may also be made by parents, other family members or by someone else outside the family such as teachers, the family doctor, or the Public Health Nurse.

Role of the Túsla Social Worker

The role of the Túsla social worker is to work with children, young people, and families to make sure they are safe and well cared for.

When a Túsla social worker receives a referral, the first concern is for the immediate safety of the child.



...continued

Many people with children who are experiencing domestic violence are afraid to reach out for help because they have a fear that if Túsla becomes involved, the only result is that their children will be taken into care. This only happens in severe situations when it is necessary to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the children and when all other options have been fully exhausted.

If children are received into care, reunification takes place when it is safe to do so.

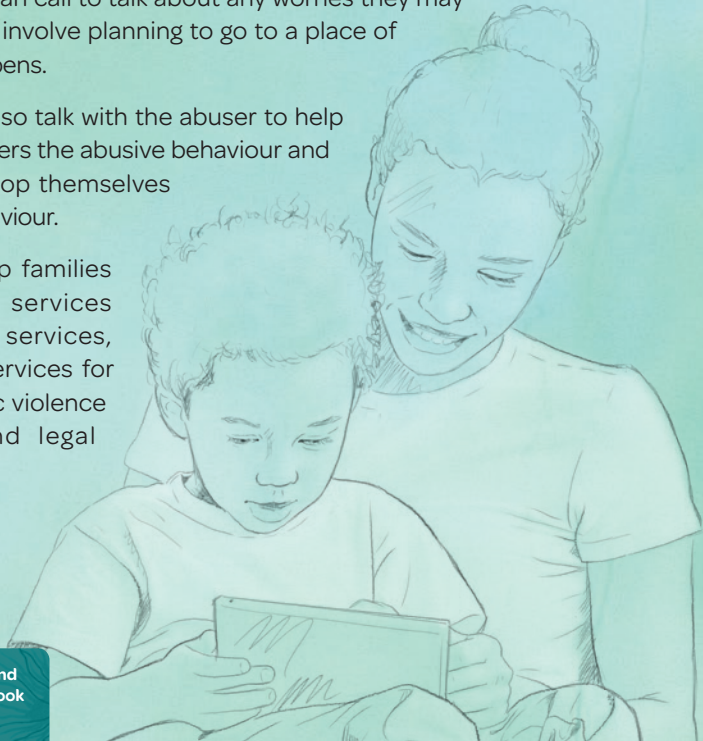
On foot of a referral, a duty social worker will work with the family using the National Framework, Signs of Safety. Signs of Safety means Túsla works together with families and other professionals to help protect the child.

Signs of Safety makes sure the parents views and the views of their child and extended family, or close family friends are part of the solution. It is about family members and professionals as well as the wider network working together to meet the children's needs in the best possible way.

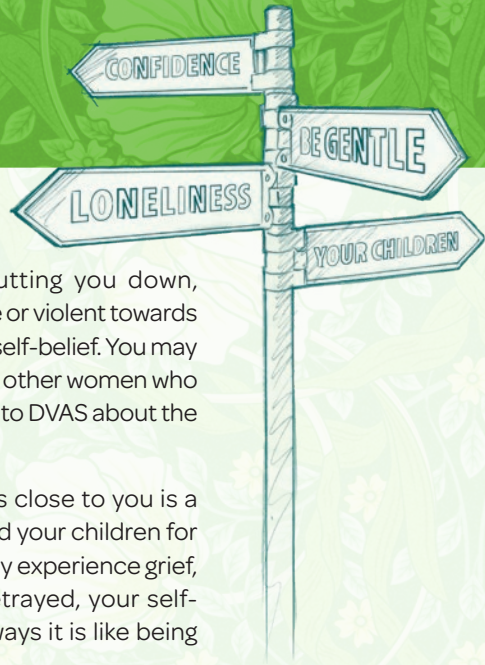
The social worker will work with the family to come up with the best possible plan to keep the child or young person safe. For example, the plan might involve putting together a list of extended family members or friends who the parent or the children can call to talk about any worries they may have, or the plan might involve planning to go to a place of safety if an incident happens.

The social worker will also talk with the abuser to help them identify what triggers the abusive behaviour and what they can do to stop themselves engaging in abusive behaviour.

Social workers will help families to access necessary services including counselling services, therapeutic support services for their children, domestic violence support services and legal services.



Moving Forward



Gaining confidence

Living with someone who is constantly putting you down, criticising you, controlling you and being abusive or violent towards you may leave you lacking self-confidence and self-belief. You may find it helpful to talk about your experience with other women who have been in abusive relationships. You can talk to DVAS about the Power to Change Programme.

Recovering from abuse by someone who was close to you is a process and the damage may stay with you and your children for a long time. Once away from the abuse you may experience grief, pain and a deep sense of loss, your trust betrayed, your self-esteem and confidence shattered. In many ways it is like being bereaved and healing will take time.

Be gentle with yourself

Don't expect to achieve everything you want all at once. It's great to have hopes and ambitions for the future, but try to set realistic goals and move at your own pace.

Loneliness

Sometimes when you come home to an empty house, trailer or apartment, it may seem that an abusive partner was better than no one. Perhaps your partner isolated you from family and friends, so you now feel you have no one to talk to or go out with. It's never too late to re-establish contact with estranged family or friends- plus you can also begin to make new friends and acquaintances.

Helping your Children

Your children too will need time to adjust to the new situation. They will almost certainly have been affected by the abuse they witnessed or experienced directly. They may be finding it really difficult to cope with all the changes in their lives including shock at leaving their home and friends and pets and perhaps some of their possessions. They will look to you to give them the answers.

Listen to your children's concerns and help them to find other sources of support, for example, from grandparents or other relatives, from teachers or youth workers.

Taking Care of Yourself

The most important thing you can do for you and your children is to take care of yourself and be healthy, so you can take care of them.

Here are some ideas:

Engage in Self-Care

- Have positive thoughts about yourself.
- Get enough sleep and eat properly.
- Listen to music, read poetry or novels, be creative.
- Start an exercise programme or take a walk every day.
- Find a new hobby.
- Find a little piece of every day to be yours, even 10 minutes. Close your eyes and be mindful of your surroundings.
- Keep your life and activities at a manageable level, so you don't feel overwhelmed and stressed.
- Avoid use of alcohol and non-prescribed drugs as a stress reliever or comfort.



Build support networks or access existing supports

- Don't be afraid to ask for what you need.
- Find a support group of other women who meet regularly.
- Spend time with friends who make you feel good and avoid people who bring you down.

“

There is a misconception that when you separate from your husband that the abuse is over, this is far from the truth. DVAS have supported myself and my children in the short term and the long term. There is no quick fix but with good support and advice from DVAS it makes leaving and building a better life possible.”

(DVAS Service User)

Break the isolation

- Volunteer or otherwise get involved with community activities.
- Find a new course, join a club or find other places where other adults are engaged in fun or educational activities.

Women's Refuges and 24-hour Helplines

Clare	Clare Haven Service	 065 682 2435
Cork	Good Shepherd Cork	 021 427 4240
Cork	Cuanlee Refuge	 021 427 7 698
Dublin	Saoirse Domestic Violence Services	 01 463 0000
Dublin	Sonas Domestic Violence Charity	 01 866 2015
Dublin	Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support for Women and Children	 01 867 0701
Galway	COPE Galway Domestic Abuse Service	 091 565 985
Kerry	Adapt Kerry Women's Refuge and Support Service	 066 712 9100
Kildare	Teach Tearmainn	 045 527 584
Kilkenny	AMBER, Kilkenny Women's Refuge	 0818 424 244
Limerick	ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services	 1800 200 504
Louth	Women's Aid Dundalk	 042 933 3244
Louth	Drogheda Women's Refuge	 041 984 4550
Mayo	Mayo Women's Support Service	 094 902 5409
Meath	Meath Women's Refuge	 046 902 2393
Tipperary	Cuan Saor Women's Refuge	 1800 576 757
Waterford	Oasis House Refuge	 0818 272 372
Westmeath	Esker House Refuge	 090 647 4122
Wexford	Wexford Women's Refuge	 1800 220 444
Wicklow	Bray Women's Refuge	 01 286 6163

National Support Services

Safe Ireland

Safe Ireland has a clear ambition: to end domestic violence and make Ireland the safest country in the world for women and Children. The Safe Ireland website will help direct you towards Local Supports and has excellent information and resources.



090 6479078



www.safeireland.ie



info@safeireland.ie

Women's Aid

Women's Aid run a 24 hour National Freephone Helpline, which offers confidential information, support and understanding to women in the Republic of Ireland, who are being abused by current or former boyfriends or partners or husbands.



**National Freephone
Helpline: 24/7**

1800 341 900



www.womensaid.ie



helpline@womensaid.ie

AKIDWA

Akina Dada Wa Africa, or AKIDWA for short (means *sisterhood* in Swahili) network of migrant women living in Ireland. AKIDWA's work focuses on female genital mutilation (fgm), domestic violence, forced marriages and trafficking.



01 8349851



www.akidwa.ie



info@akidwa.ie

Men's Development Network

The National Male Advice Line (MAL) offers confidential phonenumber advice and support to male victims of domestic violence and abuse.

It is a FREEPHONE service.



FREEPHONE

1800 816588

Mon & Wed: 10am-6pm

Tue & Thur: 12-8pm

Fri, Sat, Sun,

Bank Holidays: 2-6pm

Men's Aid

Men's Aid Ireland supports men and their families experiencing Domestic Violence including coercive control in Ireland.



01 5543811

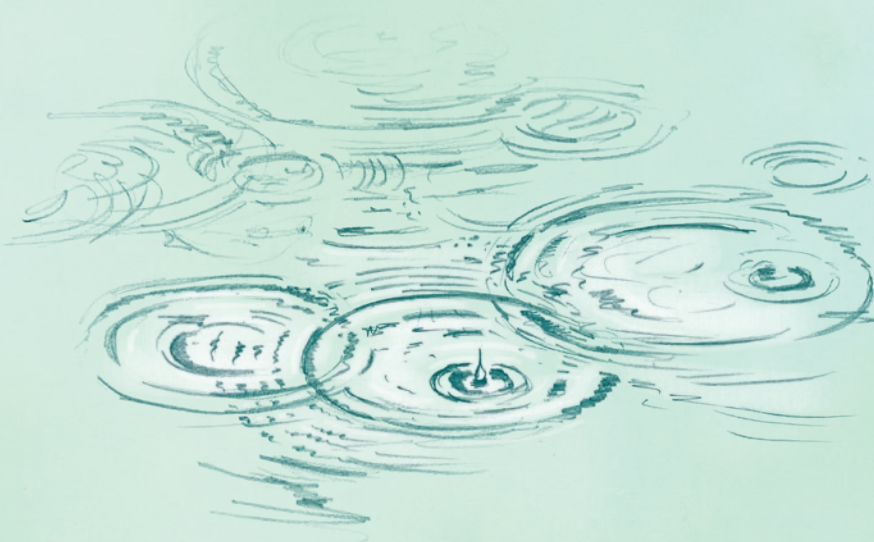
Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm



www.mensaid.ie



Hello@mensaid.ie



Local Support Services

Sligo Rape Crisis Centre

Provides a professional counselling and support service, for people who have been affected by abuse or sexual violence.



FREEPHONE

1800 750 780

Mon-Fri: 10am-12noon

Voicemail system in place.

Leave contact number to receive response within 24 hrs



www.srcc.ie



info@srcc.ie

Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Provides support for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. On call 24 hours a day.



087 0681964

(Ring at any time)

Sligo Traveller Support Group

Provides a range of services including primary healthcare, counselling, mediation service, education support.



SLIGO

071 9145780



TUBBERCURRY

071 9120616



info@stg.ie

Citizen's Information Centre

The citizensinformation.ie website provides comprehensive information on public services and on the entitlements of citizens in Ireland. We gather information from various government departments and agencies, and make sure that you have all the information you need, presented in an easy-to-understand way.



Sligo

081 8076390



Ballymote Outreach

076 1076390



Tubbercurry Outreach

071 9120433



Carrick on Shannon

0818 075670



Manorhamilton

0818 075710

Family Resource Centres (FRC)

Services include provision of information, advice, education, training, delivery of child and family programmes, Meitheal. Counselling and Networking.

SLIGO FRC



071 9146315



sligofrc@gmail.com

TUBBERCURRY FRC



071 9186926



info@tubbercurryfrc.com

WEST SLIGO FRC



096 37444



info@westsligofrc.ie

BALLYMOTE FRC



071 9197818



ballymotefrc@gmail.com

BREFFNI FRC

(CARRICK ON SHANNON)



071 9622566



info@breffnifrc.ie

MOHILL FRC



071 9631253



support@mohillfsc.info

North Leitrim Women's Centre

Committed to addressing the needs of women through the provision of information, training and education and the development of support services in North Leitrim.



071 9856220



info@northleitrimwomencentre.ie

Samaritans

Free 24-hour helpline offering support to anyone who is in distress, lonely, struggling to cope or feeling suicidal.



116 123

365 days
a year




Sligo Samaritans Branch
3 The Mall Sligo

Mon-Fri: 12pm-9pm

7 days a week

St Michael's Family Centre

Offers counselling services to individuals, couples and children who are not in a position to access private help. Play Therapy and Rainbows programme is available for children bereaved by separation/ divorce or death.

 071 9170329

MABS

Mabs is the Irish Money advice service. If you're struggling with debt and need help, contact MABS for impartial advice to help you manage your money and take control of debt.

SLIGO MABS

 0818 072730
Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm & 2pm-5pm

 sligo@mabs.ie


LEITRIM MABS

 0818 072630
Mon-Fri, 9.15am-1pm & 2pm-5.15pm

 ballinamore@mabs.ie


Legal Aid Board (Sligo)

Provides legal aid and advice to people in Ireland who meet certain requirements mainly their means must be below a certain limit.

 071 9161670



FLAC (Carrick on Shannon)

Offers free and confidential legal information and advice.

 076 1075670



Focus Ireland (Sligo)

Working toward ending homelessness in Ireland.

 071 9156874
 help@focusireland.ie

North West Simon Community

Working with those at risk of homelessness in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal.

 071 9147522
 info@northwestsimon.ie

Garda Stations

An Garda Síochána (Sligo) Station phone numbers:

SLIGO —————  **071 9157000**

BALLYMOTE —————  **071 9189500**

ROSSES POINT —————  **071 9177143**

GRANGE —————  **071 9163144**

ENNSICRONE —————  **096 36103**

An Garda Síochána (Leitrim) Station phone numbers:

CARRICK ON SHANNON ———  **071 9650510**

MANORHAMILTON —————  **071 9820620**

KINLOUGH —————  **071 9841412**

An Garda Síochána (West Cavan) Station phone numbers:

BLACKLION —————  **071 9853002**

“

DVAS – where would I be today without their support and advice? From day one when I phoned them not knowing what to do, DVAS has been there for me – a friendly voice to reassure me that I will be ok, to advise me on what to do in total confidence, and to make sure I look after myself. They have helped me to get back to the real me! One thing I can say to others is ‘it’s good to talk’ - talk to DVAS. I owe DVAS so much for helping me get through everything and to see the light on the other side.”

(DVAS Service User)



We are here to **LISTEN...**

Not to work miracles

We are Here to **HELP** women
DISCOVER what they are **FEELING...**

Not to make feelings go away

We are here to **HELP** a woman
IDENTIFY HER OPTIONS...

Not to decide for her what she should do

We are here to **DISCUSS STEPS** with a woman

Not to take the steps for her

We are here to **HELP** a woman
DISCOVER her own strength...

Not to rescue her and leave her still vulnerable

We are here to **HELP** a woman **DISCOVER SHE CAN
HELP HERSELF...**

Not to take the responsibility for her

We are here to **HELP** a woman **LEARN TO CHOOSE...**

*Not to make it unnecessary for her
to make difficult choices*

We are here to provide support for **change.**

Caroline Parsons
Memphis, Tennessee

Personal Thoughts

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Funded by...

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh



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An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality

ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund



DVAS 071 9141515
support@dvas.ie

www.domesticviolence.ie