

For Website / Guardian / Volunteers briefing:

Home isn't always a safe place for children or adults and the current restrictions can make home even less safe. There have been reports in the National and International Press of an increase in domestic abuse during the Covid-19 restrictions. At this time Warrington has not seen a significant increase in referrals. However, we cannot be complacent, especially at this time when abuse is even more hidden and it is important that we all help people at risk of abuse within their own homes. Domestic abuse impacts on adult victims and children.

We need your help. Friends, neighbours, keyworkers; if you are worried about someone you know or someone you have come across in your role as a keyworker don't allow the abuse to go unnoticed / unreported.

What Are the Signs of Domestic Abuse?

They're not always as obvious as you might think. That's because domestic abuse is about controlling someone's mind and emotions as much as hurting their body. Being abused can leave victims scared and confused. It can be hard for individuals to see their partner's actions for what they really are. We can all help by keeping an eye out for the signs.

Signs Someone Is Being Abused

It is very difficult to create a definitive list of signs that domestic abuse is happening because abuse can occur on many levels and both victims and alleged or known perpetrators can behave and respond in a range of different ways. The following list of signs of behaviour for victims is not exhaustive, and should not be used as a definitive list but should be used as guidance.

Keep an eye out for things like:

- May have unexplained bruises / injuries, and may give other reasons for the injuries which refer to them being accidental
- Anxious about using video conferencing; may only use telephone / text
- Personality changes, like low self-esteem in someone who was always confident / becoming unusually quiet or withdrawn;
- Constantly checking in with their partner / Overly worried about pleasing their partner
- Never having money on hand
- Skipping out on social interaction for no clear reason
- Wearing clothes that don't fit the season, like long sleeves in summer to cover bruises
- Has panic attacks;
- Has frequent absences from work or other commitments;
- Stops talking about her/his partner;
May never be seen alone, and is always accompanied by their partner;
- May become more isolated, withdrawing from friends and family;
- Go along with everything their partner says and does;
- Check in often with their partner to report where they are and what they're doing;

Additional Information and Support:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3FQFSnx6SZWsQn3TJYYIFNy/information-and-support-domestic-abuse>

<http://safelives.org.uk/news-views/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19>

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

If you know someone at risk or you are at risk yourself you do not need to stay where you are not safe.

Adult Social Care First Response Team & Children's Safeguarding/Social Work Team - **01925**

443322 (Out of office hours **01925 444400**)

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/report-abuse-vulnerable-adult>

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/mars>

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/domesticabuse>

If you think a crime has been committed, ring the police on **101**. If you think someone is at immediate risk ring the Police on **999**.