If you think a friend or family member is experiencing domestic abuse, there are things you can do to help.
Raise the issue

Don’t wait for your friend to tell you about their situation. Bring the subject up yourself when you know their partner isn’t around. Let them know you are concerned about them and want to help.

Try not to criticise their partner or the relationship. Instead, focus on the abuse and their safety.

You don’t have to know all the answers. The importance of helping your friend break the silence and end the isolation should never be underestimated. Listen to what they say and let them show you how you can be supportive.

Giving support

You need to support your abused friend in whatever decision they are currently making about their relationship, while being clear that abuse is wrong. It’s okay to be truthful or give your opinion, but bear in mind that your friend needs to be supported rather than judged.

Supporting a friend in this way is a huge challenge. You don’t want to see them get hurt, but may have to watch them carry on with their partner when you think they should leave them or have them arrested. Supporting your friend may prove frustrating: they may not take the course of action that you favour. You may find yourself wondering why they stay or how they put up with it. It is important to remember three critical things:

• You are not the person who has to live with the consequences of any decision, they are. Therefore, it isn’t surprising that your friend makes decisions in their best interests (as they see them), rather than doing what you may want them to do.

• Often, leaving a violent partner only signifies the end of the relationship, not the end of the violence. Be aware that your friend will need ongoing support even if they have left their partner.

If you try to offer help to a friend, remember that you are putting yourself in a dangerous situation. Whatever else you do, be sure to keep yourself safe.
Domestic abuse is totally unacceptable. Every individual has the right to live their life free of violence, abuse, intimidation and fear.

Domestic abuse is very dangerous. Each week in the UK, two women are killed by a partner or ex-partner.

It is not your fault. No-one deserves to be abused, regardless of what they say or do.

Domestic abuse is about power and control. An abuser can change if they want to. Their behaviour is within their control and they can choose to stop.

Domestic abuse is very common. One woman in four experiences it at some point in her life. Men can also experience domestic abuse and it can occur in same-sex relationships.

The abuser is 100% responsible for their abuse. Alcohol, culture or unemployment are not excuses.

What to say

The messages on the right may help your friend if you can get them across when talking about their situation.

Above all, be patient. Your friend may need to talk about their situation numerous times. They may try to improve things or give their partner several ‘last’ chances.

Remember that people in abused relationships often leave and return several times. Leaving is an extremely difficult decision to make, involving both emotional and practical considerations.

As their friend, make sure you offer them something the abuser doesn’t. For example, if the abuser tells your friend what to do all the time, it’s no use you doing the same.

Helping to build your friend’s self-esteem can have great benefits. Remind them of their good points, challenge them if they put themselves down or blame themselves, praise them for every step they take, and let them know that they have your support.
Practical help

On a practical level you could:

- Agree a code word or action that your friend can use to signal that they are in danger and cannot access help themselves.
- Offer to keep copies of important documents and any other items for them. That way, if they have to leave in a hurry, they don’t have to waste time collecting important belongings.
- Together or on your own, find out information about local services or help. Offer any practical help you are able (and feel comfortable) to give, such as the use of your telephone or address for information or messages.

Finally, get some support for yourself. You have to be strong if you’re going to be able to help them. Most domestic abuse services are happy to help with any worries you may have or provide suggestions as to other actions you might take. Most importantly, don’t give up on your friend. You might be their only lifeline.

The following information shows examples of “do’s and don’ts”, when supporting your abused friend.

Do...

- Approach them about the abuse in a sensitive way, for example, by saying “I’m worried about you because…”
- Believe what they tell you; it may have taken a long time for them to talk to you and trust you.
- Encourage them to take threats seriously. Abuse can be damaging both physically and emotionally, and is very destructive to someone’s self confidence. Their partner could be placing them in real danger.
- Focus on their safety: talk to them about it and how they could protect themselves.
- Help them recognise the abuse and understand how it may be affecting them. Recognise and support their strength and courage.
- Help them understand that the abuse is not their fault and that no-one deserves to be abused, no matter what they do.
• Listen to them and help them to think about their relationship, whether they want to break up or stay, and how they can protect themselves from any more abuse.

• Offer help to protect them but only if you are not putting yourself at risk. For example, you could offer to be around when the abusive partner is there or give them lifts home.

• Encourage them to talk to a counsellor, or talk to a counsellor yourself about what you could do to support them.

Encourage and help them to develop a safety plan.

Agree with their concerns for their safety as well as that of any children involved. Offer assistance in developing a safety plan that may even include you. Advise them to have the following items ready in case they have to leave urgently; you could store some for them in preparation:

- money for taxis or buses
- essential clothes
- important papers, such as passports, birth certificates, bank books, benefit book, injunction/legal documentation
- a photograph of the abuser (to show the police if necessary)
- phone numbers of friends, family, emergency social services, support helplines and groups etc.
- any medicines
- sentimental items
- food and drink for any children.

If your friend has been in contact with support agencies, don’t forget to let the agencies know their whereabouts and a correct contact number for them to reach your friend on.

One of the most effective ‘tools’ for abusers is the victim’s isolation from family, friends, co-workers or any type of support system. Help your friend find an agency offering counselling and support groups. Help them see how isolated they are.
Don’t...

• Blame your friend or ask judgemental questions such as “What did you do to make them treat you like that?” or “Why don’t you just break up with them?”

• Focus on trying to work out the abuser’s reasons for the abuse. Concentrate on supporting your friend and discussing what they can do to protect themself.

• Be impatient or critical of them if they are confused about what to do, or if they say that they still love the perpetrator. It’s difficult for anyone to break up a relationship and especially hard if they are being abused.

• Maintain a friendship with both the victim and the abuser. This part is hard for a lot of people, but the truth is that if you try to support both parties, you’re not going to be much help to either.

For more help or information:

In an emergency, always contact 999

24 hour
National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247

Police Domestic Abuse Unit
0161 856 5171
7.00am to 8.00pm
The domestic abuse officers are plain clothes officers who can give advice in confidence.

General police enquiries 101
Salford Independant Domestic Abuse Support Services Helpline 0161 793 3232
This service offers the chance to talk in confidence to independent advisers.

Manchester Women’s Domestic Violence Helpline 0161 636 7525
This service is open Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm except Tuesday 10.00am to 7.00pm. They offer advice, support and referral to women across the Manchester area.

Men’s Advice Line 0808 801 0327
This national line offers advice for men experiencing domestic abuse and can also offer advice to male perpetrators of abuse.

Lesbian and Gay Foundation 0845 330 3030
This service is open 6.00pm - 10.00pm
They offer information and advice.

Broken Rainbow 0300 999 5428
Confidential help for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

You may also want to contact:

Solicitors - telephone directories or the internet can give you names of solicitors. Choose a firm that specialises in family law.

Housing advice and support service
visit Salford City Council website: www.salford.gov.uk/contact-housing-advice
Alternatively present to: Unity House, Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, M27 5AW. The housing options assessments are carried out every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 12.30pm to 4.30pm, and every Wednesday from 1.00pm to 4.30pm. Emergency accommodation assessments are carried out every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and every Wednesday from 1.00pm to 4.30pm.

Social Services 0161 793 2241
Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. Outside of these times, you can contact the emergency duty team on 0161 794 8888. This team can offer emergency advice and support and can assist in finding somewhere to stay.

Your GP, health visitor or midwife can provide supportive advice and refer victims on to relevant agencies.

NHS 111 service (24hrs) 111
Visit www.salford.gov.uk/enough for more contact numbers and useful information.
This document can be provided in large print, audio, electronic and Braille formats. Please telephone 0161 793 2530.

If you need this document translated, please contact us on the number below.

Czech
Pokud potřebujete přeložit tenhle dokument do vašeho jazyka, kontaktujte nás na uvedeném čísle.

French
Si vous avez besoin d’une traduction de ce document, veuillez nous contacter sur le numéro mentionné ci-dessous.

Polish
Jeśli potrzebują Państwo kopię tego dokumentu przetłumaczoną na Państwa język, prosimy o kontakt na numer podany poniżej.

Somali
Haddii aad u baahan tahay dukumiintigan oo luuqaddaada ku turjuman, fadlan naga la soo xiriir nambarka hoos ku qoran.

Russian
Если Вам нужен перевод данного документа на русский язык, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с нами по ниже указанному номеру.

Chinese
如果您需要此文件翻译成中文，请用以下电话号码与我们联络。

Hindi
यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का अनुवाद आपकी भाषा में चाहिये, तो कृपया नीचे दिये नंबर पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Punjabi
ਨੇ ਦੁਰਗਾਂਵਾਂ ਸਤਕ ਰਾਮਰਾਤ ਦਾ ਉਤਾਰਨ ਦੁਰਗਾਜੀ ਬਾਗ ਦੜਿਆ ਚੜਿਆ ਤੇ, ਉੱਤਰ ਬਲੀਜ਼ ਬੰਬਰ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਰਕ ਮਾਧਿਕ ਬਣਨਾ।

Tigrinya
አዲ ਅਐਲ ਚੈਂਗਲ੍ਰੇਂਤੇ ਹੋਲੇ ਏਕ ਏਕੈਕਾ ਲੇਢੀਐਲਾਈ ਲੇ ਜੋਨੜੇ ਏਕ ਤੇਲੋਕ ਪੰਛੇ ਪੰਛੇ ਕਰੇਂਦੇ ਇਲੇ।

Arabic
إذا احتاجت نحن نترجم هذه الوثيقة إلى لغتك، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بنا على الرقم المبين أسفله.

Farsi
اگر شما ترجمه این مطلب را به زبان خود نیاز دارید، لطفا از طریق شماره تلفن زیر با ما تماس بگیرید.

Kurdish Sorani
نەگەڕ دەخوازیت نەم دەکەیەمەنتە (بەڵەکە نامەمە) وەرەبەرەنێت بۆ زمانەی خۆنەت، نەوا تەکێکە.

Pashto
کچیره ددى سند ترجمه پخێله زبه غوواری، لەتا پە لەنێدە شیامەری مەنیڕ سەرە ارېکە وەنسی.

Urdu
اگرآپاس دستاویز کا پنیزبان میں ترجمہ چاپی بینٹی بنیا توربائی مہربانی نیچے دئی جگے نمبرپررابطہ کچیئے।