

Domestic Abuse



We can help, advise and support you

Information and Support for Hackney Council Residents

This brief guide explains what we can do if you are experiencing domestic abuse. Hackney Council believes that no one should live in fear of violence or abuse. We are committed to providing assistance and support to survivors of domestic abuse by taking a victim centred approach. You have the right not to be hurt.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is abusive behaviour between those aged 16 or above who are personally connected to each other (partners, ex-partners, family members). Behaviour is abusive if it consists in any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse;
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;

Coercive control is when someone you are close to repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel controlled, dependent, isolated or scared.

Financial abuse is when you don't have full control of your own money. Someone may have put you in debt, always check your bank account or make you pay their living expenses.

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or more. Domestic abuse is a crime and it comes in many forms, including 'harmful practices' such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and honour based violence.

Help if you are being hurt

You can contact our Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team for support and assistance.



- We are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
- ASB Housing telephone number is 020 8356 3310, (24 hour service)
- ASB Housing email is asbhousing@hackney.gov.uk

You can also contact the Domestic Abuse Intervention Service (DAIS). Or, you can ask someone else to contact us, for example, your housing officer, doctor, or social worker. We are here to support you. Domestic abuse is never your fault.



- We are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
- DAIS telephone numbers are 020 8356 4458, 020 8356 4459 or 0800 056 0905 (free from a landline)
- DAIS email is dais@hackney.gov.uk

If you are in **immediate danger**, always call the police on **999**.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, you can contact the Police in emergencies by calling **18000**. You can also text 999 if you've pre-registered for the Emergency SMS service on bit.ly/emergency-sms. In non-emergencies or for general advice you can call the Police non-emergency telephone number: **18001 101**.

We can provide confidential translation services both over the phone and in person, if needed.

If you want to speak to someone outside office hours:



- Call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247. It is free to call and always open. They can help you find a women's refuge.
- Call us on 020 8356 2300. We can help you with emergency housing

If you contact us we will:

- listen to you
- assess your safety
- help you with your legal and housing rights
- help you if you go to court
- help you to get legal protection
- work with you and other professionals to help make you safer

Making you safer might involve:

- helping you separate from the person who is hurting you
- involving extra services to help you with your needs
- trying to reduce your risks if you want to remain with the person who is hurting you
- if you need emergency housing you should speak with your Housing Officer as a first point of contact T: 020 8356 3330;
E: neighbourhood@hackney.gov.uk

We can engage with the person who is hurting you to try and prevent the abuse. This will only happen if it is safe. We will work with you and won't force you to do anything you're not ready to do.

We usually see people in central Hackney. If you prefer we can arrange to see you somewhere else that is safe, accessible and comfortable for you.

For example, The Hackney Service Centre, a doctor's surgery, or at your home. We can also visit you with a professional you already know such as your social worker or health visitor.

Confidential Support

Any information you share with us is confidential. We only share information with organisations if you give us permission, unless you or someone else are at risk of serious harm. We never share anything you tell us with the person that is hurting you.

Support with Housing

Our staff in Housing Services are trained to help survivors of domestic abuse explore their options and receive the support they need.

We will:

- Be compassionate, supportive, non-judgemental and treat you with courtesy and respect
- Recognise that people from the Global Majority may have experienced forms of discrimination and may find it harder to ask for support
- Explore your options to help you stay safe and well in your home
- Support you by discussing your alternative housing options, if this is safest and best for you
- If needed, we can also consider rehousing you in temporary accommodation, but please be aware that due to the severe pressure on social housing you may not be rehoused immediately and you could be re-housed outside of Hackney, depending on what is available on the day we apply. We can also help you collect any belongings you need from your home.
- Help to prevent you from becoming homeless
- Ensure that any housing options we offer are affordable and that you have a plan in place to manage the costs of your accommodation
- Discuss any possible actions against the perpetrator with you beforehand and we will not take actions that might compromise your safety
- Tell you about other supportive services that can help you and work in partnership with them

You will have the opportunity to:

- Be interviewed by someone of the same sex or gender, if you wish to
- Be interviewed in a private safe space
- Be provided with confidential translation services, if needed
- Be contacted via a safe telephone, email or address that does not increase the risk of domestic abuse and specific to your individual needs
- Have a friend / support worker present to provide emotional support in the interviews.

Your opinion and feedback on this process are important to us and we may ask you if you could complete a survey when your case is closed, in order to help us improve our service and better support people.

Safety Planning and Advice Options

You can't stop your abuser's violent behaviour – only they can do that. But having a safety plan can increase yours and your children's safety.

- Consider changing your telephone number and email address and blocking who has been abusing you
- Consider changing important passwords, closing your social media accounts, updating your security settings
- Make a copy of relevant documents (such as yours and your children's IDs and medical prescriptions) and keep them somewhere safe
- Consider rehearsing an escape plan, so in an emergency you and your children can get away safely
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself and your children, and hide it somewhere safe
- If the person causing you harm has keys, speak to us about arranging a lock change
- Consider speaking to a solicitor about obtaining an injunction or order to stop your abuser harassing you, or to exclude them from the property
- Consider obtaining legal advice around child contact arrangements, or we can put you in contact with Hackney Children and Families Services
- You can find further useful information and tips on safety planning on Women's Aid website at [womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/)

Further advice and support

Refuge National Domestic Helpline provides confidential support and advice to women experiencing domestic abuse:

- nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- 0808 2000 247 Freephone, open 24-hours a day

Men's Advice Line provides domestic abuse support for male survivors:

- mensadviceline.org.uk
- 0808 8010 327 Freephone

Imkaan is a national umbrella organisation addressing violence against women and girls from the Black/Global Majority:

- imkaan.org.uk/get-help

Galop provides domestic abuse support for people from LGBT+ communities:

- galop.org.uk
- 0800 999 5428

SignHealth provides domestic abuse support for people from the deaf community:

- signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse/
- Text 07966 976749
- Email info@signhealth.org.uk
- 020 3947 2600

NCDV provides support with emergency court injunctions:

- ncdv.org.uk
- 0800 970 2070

Rights of Women provides free legal advice:

- rightsofwomen.org.uk
- info@row.org.uk

Shelter can provide advice and support about your housing situation:

- england.shelter.org.uk/
- 0808 800 4444

You can find other national and London organisations that can help on Hackney Council website at  hackney.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-support/#other