



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)



Department of  
**Justice**

[www.dojni.gov.uk](http://www.dojni.gov.uk)

All forms of domestic and sexual violence are serious crimes

Where there is immediate danger please call the police on 999

Who can I contact for help:

ChildLine Free helpline  
0800 1111

Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline  
0800 917 1414  
email: [24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org](mailto:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org)  
text: Support to 07797805839

Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline  
0800 3891701

They will believe you.

# What's it all about?

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse is a concern for the Northern Ireland Executive (the Northern Ireland Government).

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) lead in planning how we'll tackle domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Our Departments have written a plan (strategy) that sets out the main things we want to do to stop domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Northern Ireland. We've spoken to young people and people and organisations who are experts about what should be in it.

We want to make sure our plan focuses on what victims need and includes their views and ideas. Children and young people who are affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse are an important part of this plan.

We hope this plan will:

- Improve everyone's understanding of domestic and sexual violence and abuse;
- Stop it happening in the first place;
- Help people come forward to report it when it does;
- Support and help victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse;
- Help people change how they act when they are violent or abusive; and
- Hold people responsible for their actions if they have been violent or abusive.

**We want a society where this type of violence and abuse is not accepted.**

# Myth Buster

## Domestic violence and abuse?

It's all about older people, married couples, hitting each other.....isn't it?



**Wrong**

## Sexual violence and abuse?

That's all about people being attacked in dark alleys by strangers. It doesn't happen with people you're going out with. It's only about people touching you when you don't want them to .....isn't it?

It won't happen to me, or anyone I know..... not to my friends, not to my family!

**Wrong**

**Domestic and sexual violence and abuse can happen to anyone.**

Any age, any race, any religion, any ability, girl or boy, whether you're attracted to girls or boys. **ANYONE.**

# What's Domestic Violence and Abuse?

**Domestic violence and abuse is when a current or former partner or family member is violent or abusive to you.**

It can involve physical contact, verbal or emotional abuse.

## **Current or former partner?**

Your latest or previous girlfriend/ boyfriend.

## **Family member?**

Your mum, dad, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws or step-family.

## **Physical contact (violence) can be:**

pushing, punching, kicking, slapping or choking, cutting, burning, biting.....

**It doesn't need to leave a mark to be domestic violence**

## **Verbal and emotional abuse can be:**

- embarrassing you in front of people and in private
- threats or threats to others – “if we split up I’ll kill myself”
- isolation from family, friends or sources of support – it can all seem so innocent... “you never spend enough time with me”, “you’re always with your mates”, “you don’t love me anymore”.
- being controlling, stalking you by following you all the time..... from questioning your choice of clothes, checking your mobile phone constantly to following your activities online.....

**There's no excuse for abuse**

# What's Sexual Violence and Abuse?

**Sexual violence and abuse is when anyone is made to do sexual things they don't want or can't agree to do.**



It can involve physical and non-physical activities.

## Can't agree to do?

Some people, because of their age or level of understanding, legally cannot agree to have sex.....

It could be because of their age, a disability or mental capacity (e.g. too drunk to make a free choice?)

## Physical activities (violence) can be:

intentional touching, rubbing, groping, oral sex or full sex.....  
any physical contact of a sexual nature

**You can report a crime at any time**

**Non-physical activities (abuse)** is often about pressuring children and young people, for example, using peer pressure or the fear of being rejected to make someone do something they don't want to do

## It can include:

- pressured into 'sexting';
- pressured into watching sexual activity (including pornography);
- grooming (including on-line – people pretending to be friends so they can build a relationship and exploit a younger person as a result)
- exploiting a child or young person for personal gain....."if you loved me you would sleep with my mate"

# So what are you going do about it?

**We want a society that will say ‘no’ and ‘no more’  
to domestic and sexual violence and abuse**

**We want to Change how  
we do things.**

We want to improve how we  
work together and share  
information in a better way.

**Working together,  
working better.**

**We want to prevent it from  
happening in the first place.**

We want to change what  
people think and feel about it...

We also want to act early when  
violence and abuse happens.

**We want to Stop it when it  
does happen.**

We want people to be  
able to spot the signs  
that something isn't right.  
We want people to know  
how to report it safely.

The right people,  
with the right  
knowledge and  
skills, in the right  
place, at the right  
time, with the right  
help.

**We want to Improve Services.**

We want people to be able to find  
the help and information they  
need.

We want victims to be supported  
as individuals first.

**We want to protect everyone  
affected.**

We want to protect people  
from more violence and abuse.  
We want to hold abusers  
responsible for their acts and  
help them change to stop them  
doing it again.