



Keeping Yourself Safe

Safety Planning

Below are some suggestions you may want to consider in order to make yourself as safe as possible. Following these suggestions is not a guarantee of safety, but could help improve your safety. Remember, you know your abuser so only do what you think will help.

Always call 999 if you or your children are in danger and call our advice number for support - Freephone 0808 802 5565

If you are still in an abusive relationship:

- Plan an escape route from every room in your home
- Think of a safe area in your home to go if an argument happens – stay away from rooms with no exits and hard surfaces where there are objects which can be used as weapons i.e. bathroom, kitchen. If an argument happens, try to move to one of the safe areas.
- Think about and make a list of safe people to contact, if possible memorise all important phone numbers.
- Speak to a trusted neighbour about your situation who will call the police if they hear a disturbance
- Develop a 'code word' or 'sign' so that family and friends know when to call for help.
- Keep money / change with you at all times – know where the nearest working phone box is.
- Think about what you will say to your partner if they become violent. Use your judgement of the abuser to protect you and your children. You are in no way colluding with the abuser if you give them what they want in order to protect you and your children. Call the police as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Know where to go and what to do in an emergency and have an alternative.
- Teach your children what to do in an emergency – tell them to call **999 and be able to give the address but not to get involved – they should never use a phone in front of the abuser as this may endanger them**
- Call **999** in the event of an emergency – think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond straight away

Remember, you have the right to live without fear and violence.

You may also be able to do some of the following:

- Keep a record of the violent and controlling behaviour to support any future action you may take – civil or criminal.
- Log incidents with the police, even if you do not want to press charges at present (**numbers for borough CSUs or a link to the met website for the information**)
- Seek legal advice (SWA Solicitors 020 7619 1352, SWA Advice can give you numbers of Solicitors, *Rights of Women / Community Legal Service Directory link/ National DV Helpline*)

If you are planning to leave

You may not feel able to leave immediately, but you can plan and be prepared for when an emergency does arise and you need to leave your home. Leaving is often the most dangerous time so plan leaving so you can increase your safety. You can:

- Have any bruises or injuries recorded by a doctor for future use in any legal proceedings, rehousing procedures, etc. You can also take a picture using a camera or your mobile phone. SWA can also do this for you
- Have a packed bag ready and keep it in a secret, but accessible place so you can leave quickly.
- Keep important documents in a safe place, either hidden in your home at with friends / family (e.g. marriage / birth certificates, national insurance card, passport, driving licence etc,) including items of sentimental value, so that they can be grabbed in a hurry.
- Only tell people you trust where you will be. Lie if you have to – this will protect you and them.

The following items will be useful but are not essential for you to take if you decide that you decide that you want to leave in a hurry. Remember we can always help you to get these items later and with police support:

- ID – passports, birth / marriage certificate, NI number, driving licence etc
- Money – bank / credit cards
- Medical – prescribed medicines, prescriptions, medical cards, children's medical records
- Legal – injunctions, divorce papers, mortgage documents, tenancy agreement
- Special Items: photos, child's favourite toy, house and car keys.

Always try to take your children with you or make arrangements to leave them with someone safe.

Remember: If the last number you called was a refuge, taxi or the place you are going to stay, dial another number – for example, the Speaking Clock (dial 123)