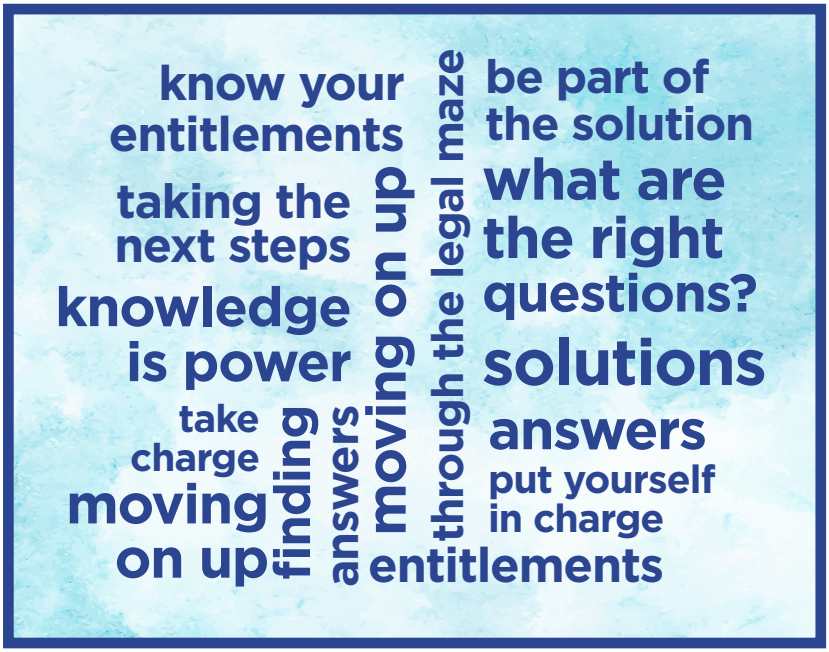
FRESH THOUGHTS

Information and Support for Women Fleeing Domestic Abuse in Wiltshire



Compiled by: Soroptimist International Poole, Purbeck and District

Soroptimist International
Salisbury and Swindon

INTRODUCTION

This booklet was originally produced by Soroptimist International Poole, Purbeck and District Club to provide information and support to women who have experienced or are experiencing, domestic abuse.
SI Salisbury and SI Swindon are grateful to have been permitted to tailor this booklet for use in Wiltshire.
Soroptimist International is a worldwide organisation of women. It works to transform the lives of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities.

Scan the QR code or visit our website to discover all about Fresh Thoughts. Find out how the booklet was developed, how to access the secure club portal and view testimoials

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ONLINE PERSONAL SAFETY

This is about you personally and your digital presence.



Technology, in the form of a mobile phone, may have been used or is being used to abuse/harass you so you'll be very aware that it can be used harmfully. However, you will need to connect with those who are supporting you so it's important that you think carefully about your activities in the digital world.

Here are a few tips which may help to keep you safe:

The Bright Sky App is a free app that lets users assess how safe their situation is and provides a UK-wide directory of specialist support services.

Phoning on a mobile

If you are in a place of safety, you will want your location to remain a secret, so be very careful who you call using your phone. Using mobiles is so much a part of everyday life that we use them without thinking.

Never tell anyone which town or county you are living in.

Don't mention any streets, shops, schools or public buildings that could identify your location.

Remember that photos – taken by other people and even selfies – can identify where you are.

If you always take these precautions when using your mobile phone for any task, then you won't be caught out on a social media platform where someone who doesn't know your situation passes on information innocently.

Location sharing

You may have used these tools in the past to keep track of your child's whereabouts if they have a mobile phone. Make sure they are disabled on your phone. It's also possible to be tracked using an Air Tag if you have an Iphone, so talk to someone you trust about recognising the signs that will alert you if this happening.

Technology makes it 'easy' to share photos with others without selecting anyone. If you use Google pictures, it can happen.

Do not share any photos online

Family members, children and parents

This is much more challenging, as your children will want to talk to their friends. How can they do this safely? Give them things they can write or say in communications, rather than a list of what they can't, but remind them not to name their school(s). If your children attend school or college, ask to speak to the Safeguarding Officer.

They will reassure you about the safety of your children and make sure that teachers or lecturers understand and can be supportive. If you want your child to attend a nursery, or get involved in any local activities, check the Wiltshire County Council Family Information Service website for information. Nurseries also have Safeguarding Officers.

https://wiltshire.gov.uk/children-young-people-schools.support

https://wiltshirefamilyhubs.org.uk/about/https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20045/family/family_support.services

If your parents are aware of your situation, they will have your best interests at heart but they will need to be reminded of the importance of anonymity. Brothers, sisters, and any other close family members, also need to be reminded to protect their communications with you.

Deleting browser history

The person you are worried about must not know that you have been seeking support. As they might track what you are doing online, you can delete your browser history to increase your privacy. If you delete your entire browser history it may look suspicious, so delete only the entries related to seeking support around domestic abuse.



Depending on your browser type and device, there are slightly different ways of deleting entries in your history. If you aren't sure how to do this, you can find instructions on the browser's webpage. Remember to delete this entry in your search history as well. Sign out of accounts such as Google or Facebook before searching the web or on video sites like YouTube/TikTok.

There are lots of tips about how to do this on this website:
https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/browse-safely



BE CAREFUL HOW YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU SWIPE!

MAKING AN URGENT 999 SILENT CALL TO THE POLICE

https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/our-work/key-areas-of-work/silent-solution

How can I be sure I have suffered domestic abuse?

Domestic Abuse is not just physical violence. The Law (DA Act 2021) makes it clear it can also be sexual, psychological, emotional, coercive or controlling and economic abuse.

So, what's the first thing I should do if I think I have been abused?

Tell someone: The Police are the best people to protect you but if you don't want to get them involved yet there are other places you can go to e.g. your local Citizens Advice Centre.

HOW CAN THE LAW PROTECT ME?

If you have been threatened with, or experienced, physical violence in the last 10 days the National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) can provide free legal aid and help you apply for an emergency injunction. The NCDV will assess your eligibility and identify the best course of action for you. Telephone 0800 970 2070 or Text NCDV TO 60777 ***(both free of charge).***

An Injunction describes any court order that forbids someone from acting in a certain way. There are several types of injunctions or Court orders:

Non-molestation Order. This is the most common kind will protect you and any children even if you live together. They could be told not to contact you, not to go to your workplace and not to intimidate, harass or threaten you.

Occupation Order is about who can live in the family home. It could order someone to move out, keep a distance from the home, only use certain rooms in the home, continue to pay the mortgage or rent or allow you back in the home if you have been locked out.

Prohibited Steps Order prevents a person with parental responsibility from taking specific actions regarding a child's upbringing without the court's permission. This could include taking the child to a new area, changing the child's surname or school, and not contacting a specific individual.

Stalking Protection Order protects victims from stalking, even if there is no criminal conviction. They can ban offenders from contacting victims, visiting specific locations or require them to engage with mental health or rehabilitation programs.

Emergency Protection Order is issued to protect a child from immediate physical, mental or emotional harm and occurs where emergency action is needed)

Breaching the terms of an order is a criminal offence and can lead to imprisonment.

Will I have to go to Court?
It depends. There are two different types of Courts:

Family Courts have specially trained magistrates who deal with issues such as contact, parental responsibility and child protection and can also issue orders to protect you.

Criminal Courts are there to punish crimes, protect victims and prevent further crimes and have a range of sentences and options to do this.
Whichever court you go to remember it is your right to ask for **special measures** to protect you

SPECIAL MEASURES IN ALL COURTS

It is your right to ask for Special Measures in the Court to protect you and make you feel more comfortable.

Special measures are available for victims attending the Criminal Courts to give evidence during a trial. In the Family Court, a victim of domestic abuse may have to attend Court because they are a party in the case. Therefore they could be at risk of abuse from:

- Another party in the case
- The relative of another party in the case
- A witness in the case

There may be ground rules to consider which special measures might need to be put in place.
You can request the other party to remain in the Court building for some time after you have left.
If you have given evidence about the same events in the Criminal Court and it has been recorded, the Family Court can use that evidence, so you don't have to repeat it.



Examples of Special Measures:

- Very importantly, the defendant cannot cross-examine you. Instead the court will appoint an advocate ***(usually a local lawyer)*** to do this.
- A live video link can be set up so that you are in a separate room, not in the court although you will still be seen by those in court.
- Screens can be put up in the court so the defendant and complainant ***(that's you)*** can't see each other.

FAMILY COURTS

If the police decide not to charge your abuser you can still go to the **Family Courts** for further protection and assistance. There are protective orders regardless of whether you have children or not. You may also need Child Arrangement orders if there are issues around child contact if these are contributing to the difficulties and abuse in your relationship with your partner or ex-partner.

The Family Court exists to help families resolve disputes involving children and the breakdown of relationships.For instance it may decide who they should live with, how much contact should take place or which school the child should go to. They can also involve grandparents and other relatives. The proceedings are more informal than those of the Criminal Court to reflect the sensitive nature of the proceedings and the need not to increase the distress of those involved.

The primary consideration of the Family Court is the welfare of the children and whether domestic abuse is alleged. There are rules for example, Practice Direction 12J, the Court must follow in cases concerning children when there has been domestic violence.

Victims of domestic abuse include people who have been in a relationship, have been intimate, have lived together or are family members.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service



(CAFCASS) will assist and support the Family Court in making decisions and can, if ordered, report on the welfare of children.

Where legal aid is not available and a parent cannot afford representation, they may represent themselves or have the help of a person sometimes referred to as a McKenzie Friend. A McKenzie Friend can provide moral support, take notes, help with case papers and give advice and can be a family member or friend. Some charities and organisations provide McKenzie Friends for free like the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Family Courts are in the process of changing their name to **Child Focused Courts**. This emphasises that the welfare and safety of children is at the heart of what these courts do. Also being the victim of domestic abuse is not only harmful to the parent, but also to the children who witness it.
Remember, that unlike **Criminal Courts, Family Courts are private** and no-one can be allowed in there unless they are involved or have permission.

WILL I BE ABLE TO GET LEGAL AID IF I NEED TO GO TO FAMILY COURT?

You might be able to get legal aid if you have evidence that you or your children have been victims of domestic abuse or violence and cannot afford to pay legal costs.

What counts as domestic abuse for legal aid? You or your children must have been victims of either:

- domestic abuse or violence.
- financial control, for example being stopped from accessing a joint bank account.

You'll usually need to show that:

- your case is eligible for legal aid.
- the problem is serious.
- you cannot afford to pay for legal costs.

When you have the evidence, show it to your legal aid solicitor.

You can ask for evidence from:

- the Courts.
- the Police.
- a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC).
- social services.
- a health professional, for example a doctor, nurse, midwife, psychologist or health visitor.
- a refuge manager.
- a domestic violence support service.
- your bank: for example credit card accounts, loan documents and statements.
- your employer, or education or training provider
- the provider of any benefits you've received.

If your case goes to a Criminal Court, you won't need legal aid as victims are represented by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

When you first arrive at court you will need to tell the court usher you have arrived and they will tell you where you can wait in safety. They may wear a black gown; other people in court will be in ordinary smart clothes. Court proceedings can take a long time and may be delayed or adjourned for all sorts of reasons.



WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF MY CASE GOES TO A CRIMINAL COURT?





Victim Personal Statement
You have the right to make a Victim Personal Statement in your own words. You can explain the effects of the offence on you and your children, as well as the harm caused, whether it is emotional or physical. You can get support when writing it. You can read it out in court yourself, but more often the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) reads it out on your behalf before sentence is passed. You can change it at any time before it is read out.

CPS Crown Prosecution Service

Will I have to go to Court?
It is very unlikely that you will have to go to court, but you can choose to go and sit in the public seats. The only time you will have to go is if the defendant pleads not guilty and you are called as a witness. If this happens you will be taken to a separate waiting room when you arrive and looked after by 'witness support' who will explain everything in detail and stay with you. They can take you into the court while it's empty and the lawyer for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will tell you what you will be asked and answer your questions.

Which Court will I go to?
All criminal cases start in the Magistrates' Court, and they deal





completely with about 95% of all cases. Domestic Abuse cases will nearly always be heard in a special Domestic Abuse Court in Swindon or Salisbury. These are public courts so you can take family or friends with you. Magistrates will hear the evidence and pass sentence.

Will I be protected before the case goes to Court?
Yes, if the Police believe you need protection, they can issue a Domestic Abuse Protection Notice (DAPN) and then go to the courts for a Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO). These are currently being piloted in several forces across the country.

The DAPN is being introduced as a new form of immediate protection and the DAPO will provide longer-term, more flexible protection for domestic abuse victims.

They are designed to protect you and your children and break the cycle of abuse with robust conditions, which if broken can lead to arrest.
However, many police forces are still applying for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO). which prevent whoever you're frightened of from contacting you. A DVPO lasts for 14 – 28 days which gives you time to consider other ways to protect yourself, e.g. going to the Family Court. If successful, DAPOs will replace DVPOs everywhere.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE DEFENDANT* GETS TO COURT? (*person who is accused)



The defendant will have been charged with an offence. Although there is no actual Domestic Abuse offence, the following are common offences seen in a Domestic Abuse Court:

Assaults - This can range from:
- Common assault – lowest level of force
- Actual bodily harm (ABH) – serious injury.
- Grievous bodily harm (GBH) – very serious injury or wounding.
- Grievous bodily harm with intent – extremely serious and must be sent to the Crown Court.

Harassment - Ranges from minor harassment to causing fear of violence. Increasingly this involves use of social media, such as Facebook.
It could include:
- Stalking.
- Controlling and coercive behaviour. This has a serious effect on the day- to-day activities of the complainant, such as controlling their finances, isolating them from family and friends or gas-lighting - the act of persuading someone that what they are seeing or experiencing is not real.

The defendant may also be charged with Criminal Damage or Public Order offences.

The Magistrates make several decisions

- First, the defendant is asked by the Legal Clerk if they are guilty (admit the crime) or not guilty (deny it).
- If they plead not guilty the case will be adjourned for preparation for trial and bail will be considered.
- If they plead guilty the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) outlines the case. They work for the state and are independent of the police and the Courts. Their role is to prosecute in the public interest.
- The defendant will usually have a lawyer who represents them in Court and puts their case.

Next, the Magistrates decide whether the case should be heard in the **Crown Court** and this depends on the offence. Crimes of a Domestic Abuse nature fit within the 3 categories of offences. These are:

1. Indictable offences:
e.g. Rape, GBH with intent.
These must be sent to the Crown Court as they are the most serious.

2. Summary offences:
e.g. common assault, minor harassment. These can only be heard in a Magistrates' Court and are the most common.

3. Either way offences: e.g. ABH, GBH, fear of violence, controlling/coercive behaviour, criminal damage, non-fatal strangulation.

These can stay in the Magistrates' Court or go to the Crown Court. Magistrates have limited sentencing powers (currently 12 months in custody, likely to be increased to 18 months) and so need to decide if their sentencing powers are enough. If not, they will send them to the Crown Court.

If the Magistrates decide to keep the case and the defendant pleads guilty, they hear the case and sentence.

There are two main reasons why the case may have to be adjourned:
- If the offence is likely to lead to a community sentence or custody, a pre- sentence report will have to be prepared by the Probation Service.
- If the defendant pleads not guilty, they will set a trial date

When there is an adjournment for any reason the Magistrates will need to decide on Bail. This can be Unconditional or Conditional. If bail is refused the defendant is held in custody.



FROM CRIME TO COURT

DOMESTIC ABUSE CRIME COMMITTED

POLICE ARRIVE

ARREST MADE

Questioned at Police Station

- Not Charged Released
- CPS decide to take to court
- **Out of court disposal eg: Conditional Caution (unlikely for a DA crime)**

CPS decide to take to court:

- **More likely** → Released on Police Bail
- **Less likely** → Kept in custody

Released on Police Bail / Kept in custody → **Sent to Magistrates' Court for pleas to be taken**

- **Guilty Plea**
  - **Less Serious Offence** Sentenced same day
  - **More Serious Offence** Adjourned for Pre-sentence report
- **Not Guilty Plea**
  - **Adjourned** for preparation for trial
    - **More likely** → Released on Bail
    - **Less likely** → Kept in custody

What happens if my abuser breaks their bail conditions?

They will be arrested and usually stay in police custody until they're given another court hearing. The court may put different conditions in place for their bail or keep them in custody until their next court appearance. Bail conditions are there to protect victims and prevent further offences.

BAIL DECISIONS



UNCONDITIONAL BAIL is a fundamental right.

Is there a risk that the defendant:

- Will not turn up?
- Will commit another offence?
- Will interfere with witnesses?

NO → Unconditional bail

YES → Can conditions on bail satisfy the risk?

YES → Give bail but with conditions.

CONDITIONS IMPOSED
For example:

- Curfew or a bail hostel
- No contact with.....
- Don't go to or enter.....
- Must live and sleep at.....

NO → If convicted, is a custodial sentence of more than 12 months likely?

YES → Remand in custody

NO → Give bail but with conditions.

When Magistrates are considering bail the test now is whether there a real prospect of a custodial sentence rather than a suspended sentence. As short sentences (12 months or less) are likely to be suspended, the defendant will probably be released on bail.

SENTENCING



In addition to the sentence the Court will usually order:

- Surcharge for victim services
- Court costs which are higher for not guilty pleas as a trial is involved
- Compensation which is paid directly to the complainant

MOST SERIOUS

CUSTODY

(Immediate or suspended) (Max 12 months in Magistrates' Court)

Immediate (Straight to prison)

Suspended for up to 3 years activated if the defendant breaks the conditions set by the Court

COMMUNITY SENTENCE

(Up to 12 months) Usually with conditions (for punishment and rehabilitation)

Punishment e.g.
Unpaid work
A curfew and/or a tag

Rehabilitation e.g.
Anger management
Drug or alcohol rehabilitation

FINE

(Depends on the offence and defendant)

Amount depends on the seriousness of the offence.

It also depends on the defendant's ability to pay

DISCHARGE

Could be **absolute** although this is very rare. Means guilty but not being punished.

Conditional Discharge is often used. This means that the defendant is not receiving punishment this time **BUT,** if any new offence is committed during the period of the discharge, they will be sentenced for the original too.

LEAST SERIOUS

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT TO THE DEFENDANT?

They will be sentenced by the court.

There are national sentencing guidelines for each offence. However, the CPS will highlight 'aggravating features' which make the crime worse, and the defence will bring 'mitigation' to explain why the offence occurred.

If the defendant pleads guilty early on, the sentence will be lower (see above).



HOW WILL THE COURT'S DECISION PROTECT ME?

As well as the defendant being sentenced the CPS may ask for a Restraining Order to be made. This includes but is not restricted to:

- Preventing the defendant going to where the complainant lives.
- Preventing any or certain types of contact with the complainant which includes all forms of social media.
- Warning the defendant that if they break these rules they will be arrested and could face custody.



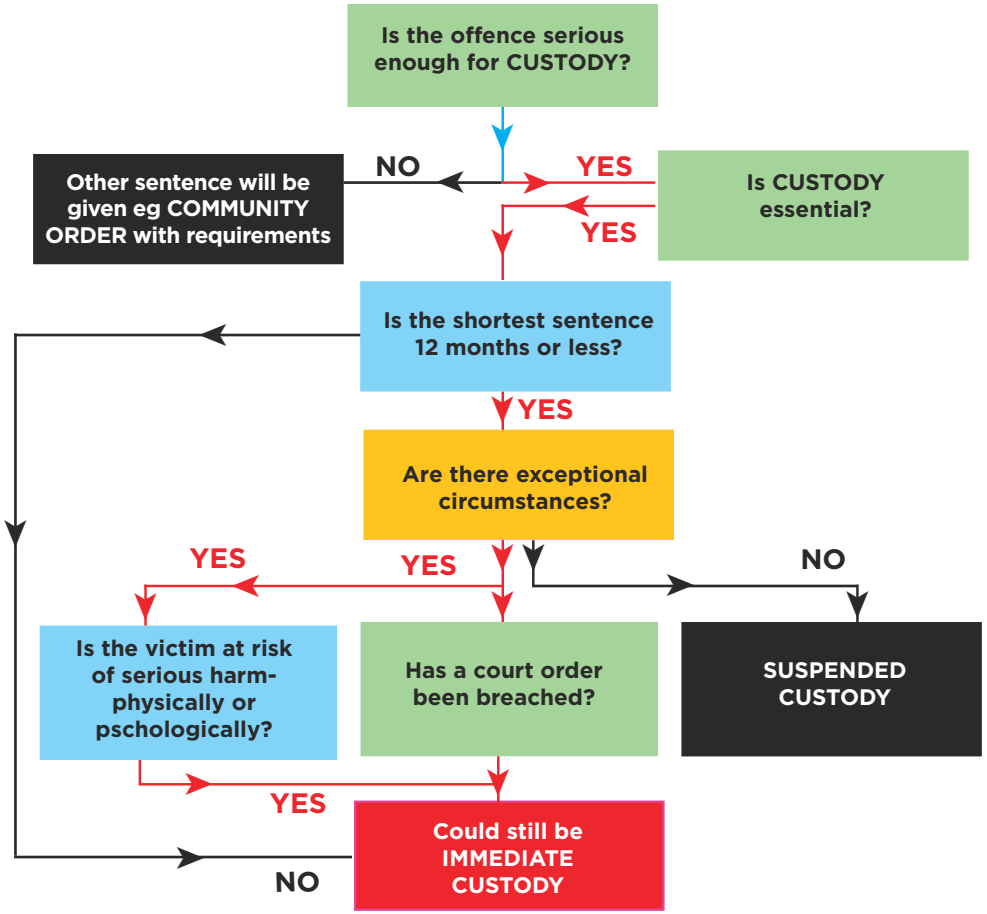
SUSPENDED SENTENCES

(new legislation from March 2026)

If anyone is convicted to a **custodial sentence of 12 months or less**, there is now a legal presumption that it should **be suspended which can be for up to three years.**

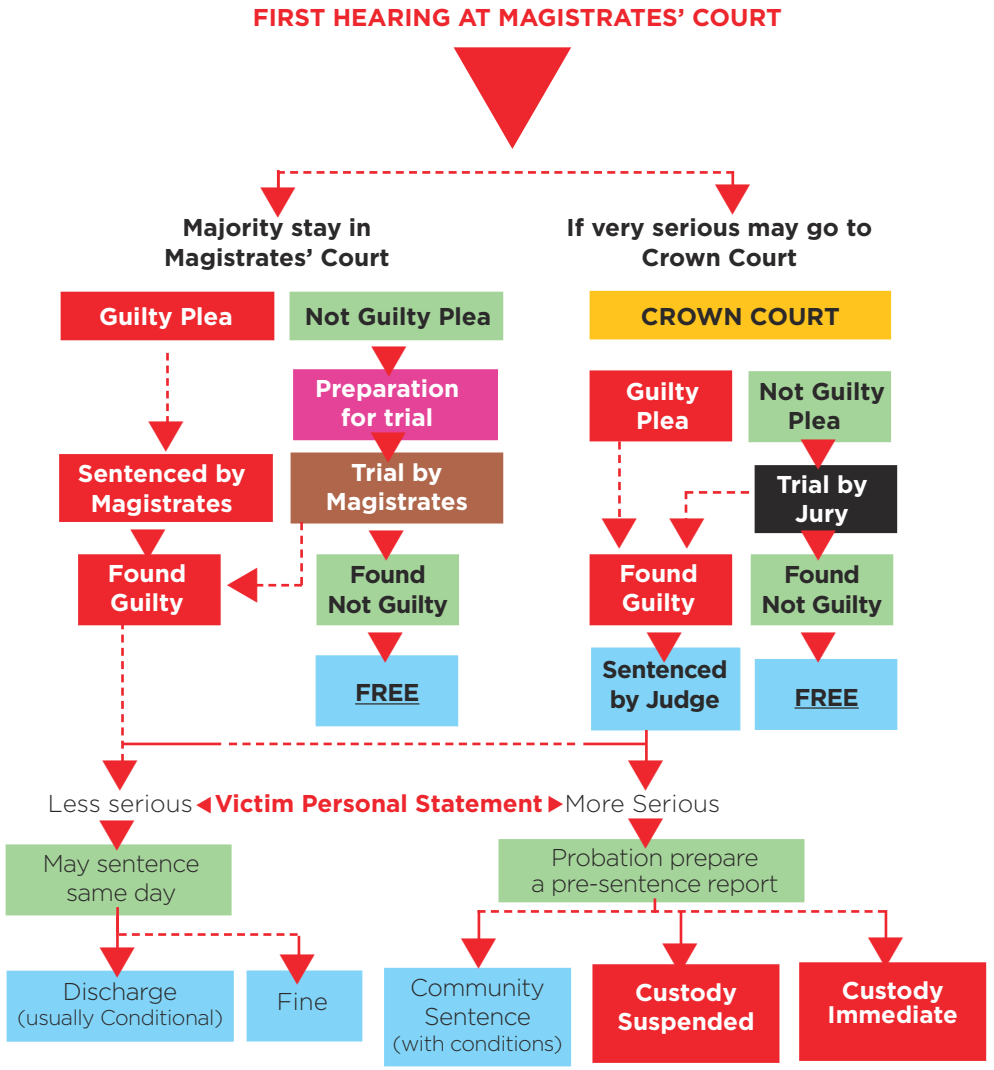
Courts can still impose **immediate prison time in 'exceptional' circumstances, such as:**

- Breach of a court order
- Significant risk of harm to a particular individual (eg DA)
- Exceptional circumstances relating to the offence or the offender



Domestic abuse heavily influences whether exception applies to trigger immediate custody. It is known as Aggravating Factor. The Sentencing Council's treats offences as **more serious if committed within a domestic context.** This is because there is a profound abuse of trust and domestic abuse often involves a pattern of behaviour that becomes more serious over time.

COURT PROCESS SUMMARY



INCOME



Employment

Share your situation with your employer as soon as possible so that they can support you. They have a duty of care towards you.

How can I get some money if I'm not working or can't work now?

Emergency funding

Crisis Resilience Fund

In England, if you need to leave your home in an emergency you may be able to get a crisis payment from your local authority through its Crisis Resilience Fund or from its local welfare assistance scheme. Not all English local authorities run a local welfare assistance scheme. Check with your local authority.

Flexible Fund – Source: Home Office - Access through an organisation that provides services to victims of domestic abuse.

Flee Fund

Since October 2024, survivors of domestic abuse who do not have the financial means to leave their abusers, will be able to apply for a one-off payment of up to £500 (The Flee Fund). To be eligible you have to be over the age of 16, gender and sexual orientation are not relevant, and those with no recourse to public funds (NPRF) are included. The Flee Fund is accessed through one of the 470 support services, and is for essenJal items such as groceries, nappies or support with new accommodation to help survivors and their children flee to safety.

Future Fund

Survivors can also apply for a further one-off payment (the 'Future Fund') of up to £2,500 to help secure a stable, independent future, such as putting down a deposit for rental accommodation.



Ongoing benefits to replace or supplement income from employment

Jobseekers' Allowance/Employment Support Allowance

If you have paid national insurance through work in the last two to three years and you are now either looking for work or are too unwell to work, you may be entitled to New Style Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or New Style Employment Support Allowance (ESA). It does not matter how much money you have in savings, as these are not means-tested benefits.

If you've been a victim of domestic abuse and are claiming **Jobseekers' Allowance**, you are entitled to a break from job-seeking and work preparation requirements for up to 13 weeks.
This period can be extended at the discretion of your Jobcentre Work Coach, so contact them and tell them about the domestic abuse you have been experiencing.

Employment Support Allowance If you are too unwell to look for work you will need a Fit Note from your GP to start this claim.

Both JSA and ESA can be backdated for up to 3 months – but seek advice from Citizens Advice before you apply to check exact amounts.

Contact the Jobcentre Plus new claims helpline if you feel you that you may be entitled to either of these benefits: telephone 0800 055 6688



Universal Credit: means-tested



Universal Credit (UC) is a working-age benefit paid whether you are in or out of work. It is made up of different parts and includes amounts to help cover costs for children, childcare and housing.

The full award is available to those with less than £6000 in savings. If you have over £16,000 in savings you are not eligible. If you have between £6000 and £16000 in savings your award will be tapered.

If you have fled an abusive relationship you can claim Universal Credit as a single person in the following circumstances:

- If you have children
- If you have stopped working, or become unable to work due to illness
- If your income is low
- If you have become liable for rent for the first time or you move to a different area.



Pension Credit: means-tested

If you are over state pension age you may be entitled to pension credit to supplement your state pension. Contact Citizens Advice for support with this.

Tips around Universal Credit for women fleeing abusive relationships

Tell your 'work coach' at the Job Centre Plus about your circumstances as early as you can.
If you've left an abusive relationship and were already claiming Universal Credit (UC) as a couple, your work coach or case manager can help you to open a new claim as a single claimant. This is a 'change of circumstance' in your journal. From this moment your expartner will not have access to any information about your new claim.

If UC was being paid into your former partner's account, you must tell the DWP your bank details straight away so that payments for which you are eligible come to you. Setting up a bank account is something your domestic abuse support worker can help with.
If you are still living with your partner, you can ask for the UC payments to be split. However, bear in mind that your partner will know this has happened.
Staff at the Jobcentre Plus have been trained to help women fleeing abuse relationships, and should support you.



Most UC claimants are required to look for, or prepare to look for work. These are called 'work- related requirements' or 'claimant commitments'. Work-related requirements should be lifted for 13 weeks if you have experienced domestic abuse in the last six months. If you have children, this should be extended for another 13 weeks. If your children have been affected by experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse, you can have a further break on your work-related requirements of up to one month every six months for a period of two years following the abuse or violence.





UC usually starts being paid after the first five weeks. You can ask for an advance if you are struggling financially. However, you will have to pay back any advance payments through deductions from your UC payments when they come through.

UC is usually paid in one monthly payment into your account. You can ask for your payment to be made more frequently such as twice a month, or for the amount for rent to go direct to your landlord.

If you were previously getting UC as a couple and have left your former partner, you must tell the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about your 'change in circumstance' as soon as possible through your journal. If UC was being paid into your former partner's account you must tell the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) your bank details straight away so that any payments come to you.



If you do not already have your own bank account, set one up as soon as possible so that you can receive benefits in your own name. Your domestic abuse support worker can help you to set up a bank account. If you've had a joint bank account with your partner, remember that actions, like withdrawing cash, buying food, clothes or coffee will show up on those joint account statements.

How to claim Universal Credit

Most claims for UC are started online via the government's website or you can start a claim by phone. Call: Universal Credit helpline on 0800 3285644 (Welsh language: 0800 328 1744)

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 328 5644.

You can get advice from "Help to Claim" at Citizens Advice. They can help you to claim, help you to understand your entitlement and can make sure your claim is correct.

England: 0800 144 8444 Wales: 0800 241 220

Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm

HOUSING INFORMATION

Where can I live?
What are my rights?

It is important to seek advice from a solicitor about your rights in relation to any home you share with your abuser. You can use the 'Find a solicitor' section of the Law Society website to find a solicitor specialising in family law in your area.

Since 2021 you have a priority need if you are homeless because of domestic abuse. You can make a homeless application to a local council who will investigate your situation. They must not approach your abuser but with your permission the council can speak to your friends or family, social services, health professionals, domestic abuse support services or the police to confirm your situation. You are eligible for assistance if you have refugee status or indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

If you have refugee status or indefinite leave to remain, you are **also** eligible for housing support from your local council.

If you have no recourse to public funds, you can contact the local children's social care department as they have a duty of care to protect children who are at risk of domestic abuse.

The Housing Solutions Service at Wiltshire Council.
Website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-housing-solutions-contact-details
Email: homeless@wiltshire.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 456 0106
In an emergency call 0300 456 0100

Swindon Housing Team:
Email:housing@swindon.gov.uk or hoptions@swindon.gov.uk
Tel: 01793 445503
Out Of Hours: 01793 445500

They will tell you your next steps. It is always a good idea to have your National Insurance number to hand.

You may not find it easy to talk to a housing officer about your situation.

Domestic abuse charities have trained advisers to help you to talk to the Council.



USEFUL CONTACTS

ASSAULT/ABUSE

Wiltshire Police
Website: www.wiltshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/support-organisations/

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Fear Free
Providing services for victims of Domestic Abuse and their families in Wiltshire.
Website: FearFree.org.uk/refer/wiltshire
Email: spa@fearfree.org.uk
Tel: 01225 775276 M-F 9-5
Tel: 01225 712880 out of hours

Paragon Swindon
Commissioned by Swindon Borough Council to provide support services to anyone affected by domestic abuse.
Website: paragonteam.org.uk/teams/swindon/
Email: ParagonSwindon@theyoutrust.org.uk
Tel: 0800 917 8565
24/7 Helpline 01793 610610

First Light (in Swindon)
Sexual Assault Referral Centre for Wiltshire. A safe place with confidential practical and emotional support from a team of specialist staff, with or without police involvement.
Website: www.firstlight.org.uk/our-services/sarc-swindon/
Tel: 01793 781917

Spurgeons
Supporting families in Wiltshire at hubs in County Hall, Trowbridge, Monkton Park, Chippenham and Five Rivers Leisure Centre, Salisbury
Tel: 0800 970 4669
Website: wiltshirefamilyhubs.org.uk

SWA (Society Without Abuse) Swindon
Working with anyone affected by abuse. Raising awareness, improving education. Engaging with perpetrators who wish to change in Swindon and surrounding area.
Website: societywithoutabuse.org.uk/
Tel: 01793 698001

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

NSPCC
The Uk's national children's charity
Tel: **0808 800 5000**

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
Tel: 0808 2000 247

Women's Aid
Working to make all women and children safe from domestic abuse.
Website: www.womensaidinformation-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/

Home Office
Comprehensive information about domestic abuse and where to get help.
Website: www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help

LEGAL

Crown Prosecution Service
Information about the legal process.
Website: www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/domestic-abuse

FLOWS
Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors
Free legal advice for any woman who is experiencing, has previously experienced or is fleeing Domestic Abuse.
Information about Legal Aid providers
Website: flows.org.uk
Website: www.supportline.org.uk/problems/legal-advice/
Tel: 0203 745 7707

Law Works
Connects volunteer lawyers with people in need of legal advice, not eligible for legal aid and cannot afford to pay.
Website: www.lawworks.org.uk/

McKenzie Friends
Free 30 minute consultation. Can provide someone to accompany to court
Website: www.mckenziefriendlawsupport.co.uk/wiltshire
Tel: 07878 896044

OTHER

Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust
Free service for home security solutions and online safety advice for people experiencing domestic abuse throughout Wiltshire and Swindon.
Website: www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk/
Email: BobbyVan@wbvt.org
Tel: 01225 256867

CONTACT US

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Soroptimist International
Salisbury and Swindon

STANDING UP
for Women and Girls