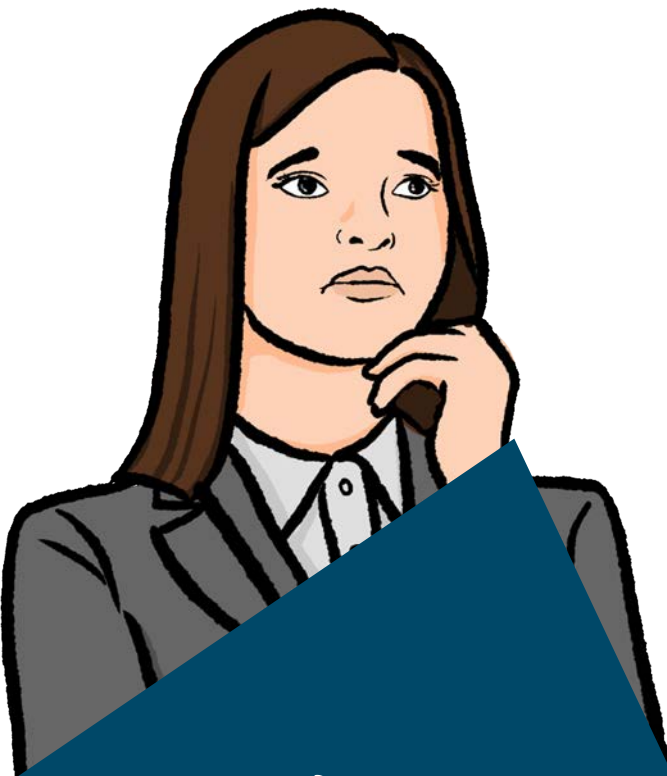


Domestic abuse report 2021

Listening to people's stories



easy
read

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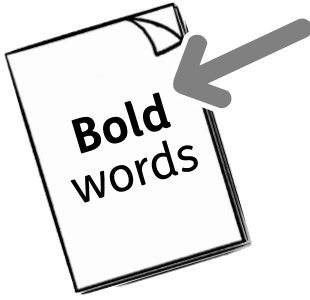
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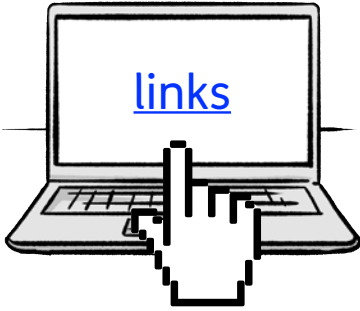
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In this easy read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



Healthwatch Camden helps to make local health and care services better by:



- finding out what local people want, and



- sharing this with the people who can improve services.



We listened to people who had suffered from **domestic abuse**.

Domestic abuse is when you are harmed by a partner, family member or someone you live with.



Listening to people who have suffered from domestic abuse will help make services better.



This report will tell you:

- what people said about how they suffered from domestic abuse, and
- how we can learn from what they said to improve our services.

Domestic abuse



Domestic abuse can happen once, or it can happen over and over again.

Domestic abuse is a crime, and it can involve someone:



- trying to control what you do.



- making you feel scared, sad or anxious every day.



- being violent or aggressive to you.



- trying to control your money - this is called financial abuse.



- following you around and not leaving you alone - this includes online messaging.



Anyone can be a **victim** of domestic abuse.

In this report a **victim** is someone who has had domestic abuse done to them.



The person who is doing the abuse is called an abuser.

Coronavirus and domestic abuse



Coronavirus is an illness that is spreading around the world. It can affect your lungs and breathing.



To keep everyone safe from Coronavirus we all had to stay at home and most places closed.



This meant a lot of victims had to stay at home with their abuser. Domestic abuse got worse because of this.

Learning and doing better



Many organisations do good work to help victims of domestic abuse.



But we want to do better work so we can help more victims of domestic abuse.



We can do this by listening to victims of domestic abuse and learning from them.

Listening to people's stories



We listened to the stories of 15 women. They had all been victims of domestic abuse.



We asked them some questions to help them tell their stories.

Here are some of the important things they said:

Domestic abuse can go on for a long time



Domestic abuse can go on for a long time. This can be because:

- some people do not realise they are a victim of domestic abuse.
- it is difficult to leave an abuser.





- leaving an abuser or moving house can take a long time.



- domestic abuse is sometimes hard to prove.

Getting better after domestic abuse



Victims of domestic abuse start to get better when they leave their abuser.

There can still be problems for victims after leaving their abuser. Like:



- problems with **mental health**.

Mental health is how someone is feeling in their mind. Problems with mental health might include feeling sad, anxious or stressed.



- not being able to trust other people.

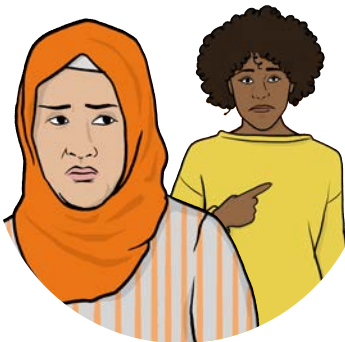


- not feeling confident.
- problems with taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol.

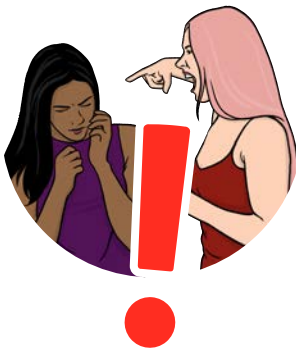


Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse involves trying to control the victim and making them feel:



- sad and anxious.
- scared.
- bad about themselves - like the way they look.



Emotional abuse is just as serious as violent abuse.

Children and domestic abuse



Children can also be victims of domestic abuse.



Children often do not tell anyone about domestic abuse because:



- they do not want anyone to get in trouble.
- they feel it is their own fault.
- they feel embarrassed.



Sometimes abusers will use children to hurt or scare a victim.

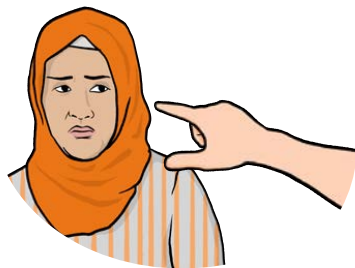
For example, an abuser might threaten to harm somebody's children.

Language and culture



Some of the women we spoke to said their **culture** was a reason they did not report domestic abuse.

Culture means the ideas, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people.



Some of the women we spoke to were scared their families and community would blame them for the domestic abuse, instead of their abuser.



Some women found it hard to get help because they could not speak English.

Domestic abuse services



We asked the women we spoke to about using domestic abuse services in Camden.



Domestic abuse services support victims of domestic abuse.

Here are some of the important things they said:



Good experiences

Domestic abuse services helped many of the women leave their abuser.



Staff at the services were understanding and listened to them.

Reporting domestic abuse



Victims of domestic abuse often do not tell anyone or get help from domestic abuse services straight away.

The women we spoke to said this could be because:

- they are scared or embarrassed.
- they do not know where to go or who to tell.
- they do not realise they are a victim of domestic abuse.



Health care services

Health care services are often the first place victims of domestic abuse go.

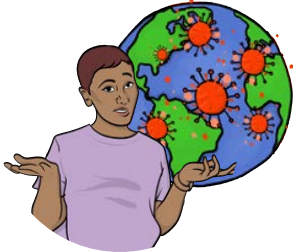




Health care services can help victims get the support they need.



The women we spoke to had both good and bad experiences with health care services in Camden.



Coronavirus made it difficult for victims of domestic abuse to get to health care services.



Housing

Leaving an abuser often means having to find a new home.



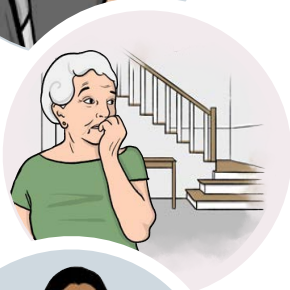
Camden Council helps victims of domestic abuse find housing.



Many of the women we spoke to had bad experiences with Camden Council.

Their bad experiences included:

- feeling like the council did not care.
- being put in unsafe housing.
- not getting enough help with finding a new home.



Police

Victims of domestic abuse should report it to the police.



Many of the women we spoke to did not have good experiences with the police.



Their bad experiences included:



- feeling like the police did not care or understand.
- not being able to speak to a female police officer.
- police not taking emotional abuse seriously.



Many of the women we spoke to did not know about the laws about domestic abuse.

Going to court



Victims of domestic abuse can take their abuser to court.



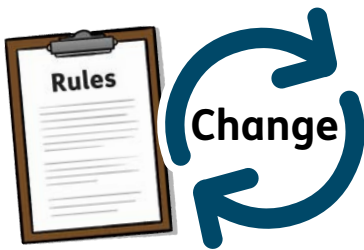
Women who went to court felt they were not supported.



People who go to court can get money to help them pay for it. This is called legal aid.



Many of the women who went to court found it hard to get legal aid.

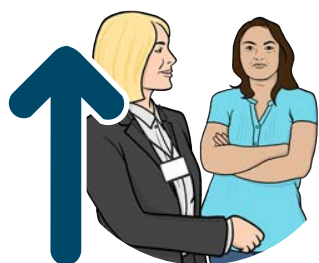


New changes to the legal aid rules will make it easier for victims to get this help.

What have we learnt from this report?



We heard both good and bad stories about using domestic abuse services in Camden.

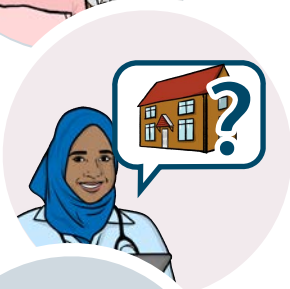


We have learnt that there is more we can do to support victims of domestic abuse.

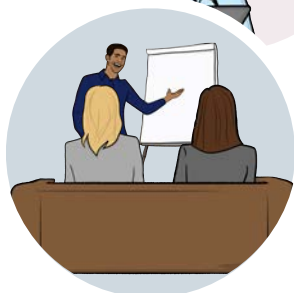
Here are some suggestions we think will help victims of domestic abuse:



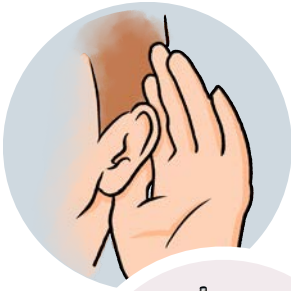
- Victims of domestic abuse should have private health care appointments.



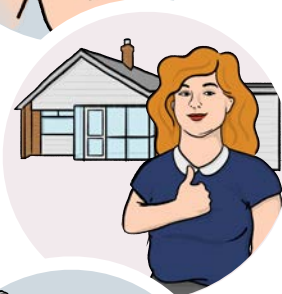
- Doctors should ask patients questions about feeling safe at home.



- All staff at Camden Council should be trained to deal with domestic abuse issues.



- Staff at Camden Council need to listen to victims of domestic abuse.



- Camden Council must make sure victims of domestic abuse get new housing.



- Victims of domestic abuse should be given information to help them prepare for speaking to the police.



- There should be services in court for victims of domestic abuse who do not speak English.



- All victims of domestic abuse should have legal aid if they go to court.



- All police should be trained to deal with domestic abuse issues.



- The police should make sure more people know about domestic abuse laws.

How to get help



To get help you can contact any of the following organisations.



All of these organisations give support and advice to victims of domestic abuse.



Call 999 in a serious emergency.

The National Domestic Violence Helpline



Telephone: 0808 2000 247



Website:

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/

Solace Women's Aid



Telephone: 0808 802 5565



Website: www.solacewomensaid.org



Email: advice@solacewomensaid.org

Camden Safety Net



Email:
camdensafetynet@camden.gov.uk



Telephone: 020 7974 2526



Women's Aid

This is support for victims of domestic abuse during Coronavirus.



Website: www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-safety-advice-for-survivors



Galop

This is support for victims of domestic abuse who are in a relationship with someone of the same gender.



Website: www.galop.org.uk