**Domestic Abuse Definition 2021**

Domestic abuse is any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other as a result of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse.

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; or psychological, emotional or other abuse.  This includes incidences where the abusive party directs their behaviour at another person (e.g. a child).  Economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on someone’s ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

This incorporates harmful traditional practices for example but not limited to ‘honour’ killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

For the full legal definition of domestic abuse, see [Part 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted)

**Personally connected means two people who:**

* Are, or have been, married to each other
* Are, or have been, civil partners of each other
* Have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been ended)
* Have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been ended)
* Are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
* Have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
* Are relatives

**Children as victims of domestic abuse:**

* Sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse and is related to either person
* The person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child
* The child and person are related
* Child means person under the age of 18 years