Providing information and support services for everyone affected or concerned by Domestic Abuse in Hertfordshire.

**Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline**

08 088 088 088

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**Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)** – a specialist centre providing centralised 24-hour professional and sensitive care and support for any victim of sexual assault and rape, including those not wishing to report the assault to the police. An Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) is available to support all victims. Phone: **0808 178 4448** for self referrals Monday to Friday 9 – 5pm for adults only.

**Additional information**

**Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)** – these are held regularly across the county. MARACs provide a means for key partner agencies, including the police, social services, health and housing, to come together to determine how best they can increase the safety, health and wellbeing of victims and their children, reduce any risk posed and improve individual agency accountability.

**Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)** - there are two across the county. They are specially tailored to meet the needs of victims. Magistrates and prosecutors are specially trained and cases are fast-tracked to avoid lengthy delays.
What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse rarely involves a ‘one-off’ incident’. More usually it is a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour by one person (or group) over another, often escalating from something seemingly small such as name calling or threats, to incidents of physical or sexual abuse, and can begin at any stage of a relationship, sometimes continuing after a relationship has ended.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of gender, class, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or lifestyle.

Domestic abuse can include:

- verbal abuse
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- financial abuse
- sexual abuse

Did you know it affects 1 in 6 men and 1 in 4 women in their life time?

If you are affected by domestic abuse, you are not alone and you are not to blame.

If you are being abused, there are three important steps you can take:

1. Recognise that this is happening to you
2. Accept that you are not to blame
3. Get help and support

Your options

Whatever steps you decide to take in accessing information, advice and support, it will be your choice, your decision and in your control.

Hertfordshire has a large and varied number of services, to support victims. These services are collectively known as and represented by the overarching ‘Herts Sunflower’ and cover the county.

Services include:

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline - 08 088 088 088 - a charity providing a free, confidential and sensitive resource service to those affected by or concerned about domestic abuse. It is staffed by trained volunteers from 10am -10pm, Monday to Friday. A call to the helpline will not be identified on a landline telephone bill.

Herts Sunflower Website - www.hertssunflower.org - a ‘one stop’ shop of information about services and support available for victims, friends and families of victims, professionals and perpetrators of domestic abuse. The website has a directory of services and provides an online reporting facility, so that incidents can be reported either directly to the police or to an IDVA.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) - work, independently from other agencies, with ‘high’ risk victims of domestic abuse, to consider options and help access other support and legal services to ensure their safety.

To speak to an IDVA call the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline on 08 088 088 088 or visit www.hertssunflower.org

Herts Sunflower Drop-in Services - are currently being developed, the first being in Welwyn Hatfield. They provide advice, information and support for anyone affected by domestic abuse in the Welwyn Hatfield area.

Call the Domestic Abuse Helpline 08 088 088 088 for details.

Police 101
Specially trained officers in one of Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Harm Reduction Units are available by calling the non-emergency number 101.

Support around forced marriages and so called ‘honour based’ abuse
There are a specialist range of services to help victims of ‘honour based’ abuse and forced marriages.

Call the Domestic Abuse Helpline 08 088 088 088 for details or if you are in immediate danger, dial 999.