

Keeping Safe

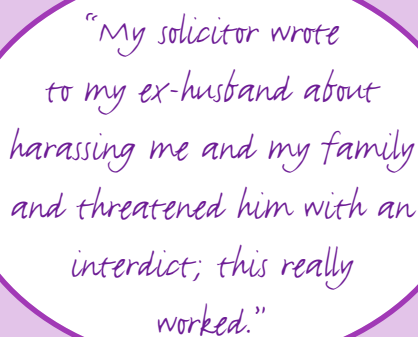
This leaflet gives some ideas about keeping yourself and your children as safe as possible. You are not responsible for the abuse and you cannot stop it. Only the person abusing you can do that. But there are things you can do to protect yourself and any children whether or not you and your partner are living together. You probably do some of these things already. This leaflet gives some ideas which other women have found helpful.

Legal protection

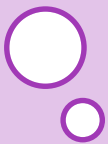
You can use the law to protect yourself from a violent partner, for example by having him removed from the home and prevented from coming near you. For more information see leaflet 7.

Staying with an abusive partner

Women stay with abusive partners for many reasons. Whatever your reasons, you do not deserve to be abused. But you do not have to cope with this on your own. At the very least, alert someone to the fact that you may be at risk so they can keep an eye out for you. Make sure that you tell someone you trust. You can also talk to a support service like East Lothian Women's Aid.



"My solicitor wrote to my ex-husband about harassing me and my family and threatened him with an interdict; this really worked."

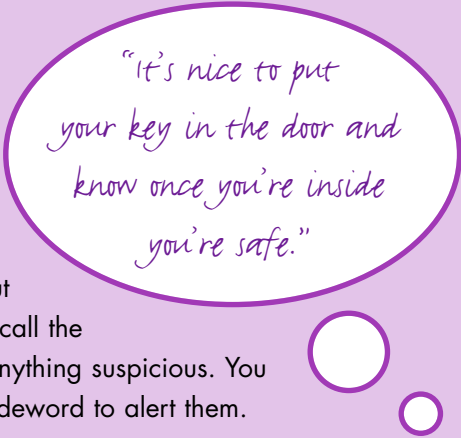


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Safety during a violent incident

It may be impossible, however hard you try, to avoid violence from your partner. Some ideas for increasing your safety are:

- Think about what triggers the violence – can you keep out of the way at these times?
- Use your judgement. If the situation is very serious, it may be better to give him what he wants so you can protect yourself from serious harm
- Tell someone close by about the abuse and ask them to call the police if they see or hear anything suspicious. You could agree a sign or a codeword to alert them. Make sure this is someone you can trust
- If you think an incident is about to occur, try to get yourself to a place in the house (not the kitchen as there are knives etc) where you can get to an outside door



"It's nice to put your key in the door and know once you're inside you're safe."

Keep your children as safe as possible

- Tell your children to stay out of the way if there is a fight; they should not get involved
- Tell them to go to a safe place in the house – not the kitchen
- Teach them how to dial 999 and ask for the police
- Plan with them who to call for help, for example a neighbour, and make sure they know the number or programme it into the phone

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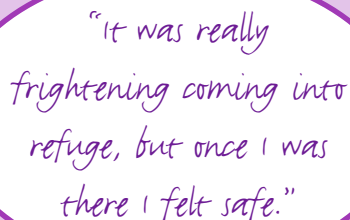
Phone and computer safety

- If you use a computer to go on the internet or for instant messaging or email, be aware that your partner may be able to find out what sites you have visited. It may be safer to use a computer in your local library (where internet access is free). But keep using your home computer for routine tasks so he is not suspicious
- Keep your phone charged and in credit
- If you move to another area, your mobile could be tracked. Check with your service provider that there is no tracking facility permitted. If you are in doubt, change your phone

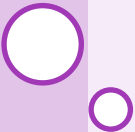
If you decide to leave

If you leave an abusive partner, it may put you at even more risk. That is one reason why it is so difficult for women to leave and why it can often seem as if the only choice is to stay. So, if you intend to leave or if you have to leave in a hurry, try to plan in advance to make this safer.

- Plan how you will get away. Be very careful who you tell and what information you give them. Only ask people you can trust for help
- If you can, trust yourself and your own judgement. Be aware that friends or family may have good intentions but may not give you good advice or understand your need for safety
- Think about where you could go – Women's Aid, the police and social work can help you find somewhere safe
- Women's Aid can help you with ideas of what to take



"It was really frightening coming into refuge, but once I was there I felt safe."



Keeping Safe

Safety after you have left your home or put an abusive partner out of it

If you no longer live with an abusive partner but are still at risk, some ideas are to:

- Ask trusted friends/neighbours to contact the police if they see him near your house
- Tell your employer or colleagues if you think he might contact you at work
- Tell the school, nursery and so on who has permission to pick up your children
- Change the locks on your doors and install window locks and outside lighting
- Change your phone number (landline and mobile) and make ex-directory
- Use a telephone answering service to screen calls
- Use the BT call barring service on your landline
- Carry a mobile phone and safety alarm
- Tell your children what to do if your ex-partner makes contact with them unexpectedly
- If child contact is arranged, ensure there is a safe handover arrangement

If you are in immediate danger phone 999 and ask for the police.

Phone the Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline

in confidence on 0800 027 1234 any time, day or night.

Domestic abuse: there's no excuse

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