

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Domestic abuse can be described as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence. Usually, the abuse is from a partner or ex-partner, but it can also be from a family member or carer.

[The legal definition can be found here.](#)

The Domestic Abuse Act became law in 2021. [Women's Aid have highlighted some of the new measures it sets out including:](#)

- A legal definition of domestic abuse which recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right.
- A Domestic Abuse Commissioner
- A legal duty on councils to fund support for survivors in safe accommodation.
- New protections in the family and civil courts for survivors – including a ban on abusers from cross-examining their victims, and a guarantee that survivors can access special measures (including separate waiting rooms, entrances and exits and screens)
- New criminal offences – including post-separation coercive control, non-fatal strangulation, threats to disclose private sexual images.
- A guarantee that all survivors will be in priority need for housing and will keep a secure tenancy in social housing if they need to escape an abuser.
- A ban on GPs for charging for medical evidence of domestic abuse, including for legal aid.
- A duty on the government to issue a code of practice on how data is shared between the public services survivors report to (such as the police) and immigration enforcement.

