

GUIDE TO

# DOMESTIC ABUSE

**The vision of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board is that all adults in Surrey live a life free from fear, abuse and neglect.**

## **WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?**

Domestic abuse can take many different forms, and doesn't always involve physical violence. Verbal and emotional abuse, bullying and intimidation, financial abuse, and coercive or controlling behaviour are all types of domestic abuse.

Image: freepik.com

Adults with care and support needs – for example, older people and people with disabilities including mental illness – are particularly at risk of domestic abuse because they may not understand that they are being abused or be able to tell anyone. They may be reliant on the person abusing them for their care and day-to-day support.

## EXAMPLES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Physical aggression (such as slapping, hitting, pushing or beating) is just one type of domestic abuse.

### Other examples include:

- » Constant criticism
- » Name-calling
- » Intimidation or threats
- » Withholding food or medicine
- » Controlling access to money
- » Isolating the victim from friends and family

## SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Abuse can be hard to detect, and abusers are typically very good at hiding what they do.

### However, there are certain warning signs you can look out for:

- » Unexplained injuries, such as bruises and other marks on the body
- » Low self-esteem
- » Tearfulness or other signs of distress
- » Isolation
- » Being withdrawn
- » Behaving differently when a particular person is around
- » An uncomfortable or unpleasant atmosphere when a particular person is around
- » Weight loss or signs of malnutrition
- » Unexplained lack of money or inability to pay bills

## GETTING HELP

It's important to remember that domestic abuse is rarely a one-off; it can continue for years and very often gets worse over time. So if you're worried that a person with care and support needs is being abused or at risk of harm, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

- » Call on **0300 470 9100**
- » Text on **07527 182861**
- » Email **[ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk)**
- » Out of hours, call **01483 517898**

When you contact MASH, rest assured that we'll take your concerns seriously. We'll reach out to the person in question to discuss their wishes and work with them to find a way forward.

**In an emergency**, or if you believe someone is in immediate danger, always dial 999 for the police.