

About us

We are here to support anyone affected by domestic abuse or forced marriage, whether it's happening now or it happened in the past. We also support people who are concerned about someone else, such as family, friends, colleagues, and professionals.

We are a team of trained specialists managed by Scottish Women's Aid, dedicated to providing meaningful support for domestic abuse and forced marriage. We are members of the Helplines Partnership and our service has been recognised for our best practice work with the Helpline Standard award.

Our service is confidential and we will always listen to you and believe you. Depending on what you are looking for, we may also:

- Give you information about domestic abuse or forced marriage
- Provide you with emotional support
- Offer practical support with options like housing or safety planning
- Tell you about or refer you to other services that may be able to help

What to expect if you contact us

We know you might be nervous about getting in touch, and that this may be the first time you've talked to anyone about this. If you reach out to us:

- We will always listen to you and believe you
- You will be answered by a trained specialist
- We will not judge you or push you into any decision e.g reporting to police
- We will provide you with relevant information and support
- We will treat you fairly and respectfully
- We will treat your call confidentially*

The lady I spoke to put me at ease immediately, I was worried about being judged or what I said might be dismissed but it was the complete opposite. I feel a bit better since phoning and now I have a plan I feel like there's a way out of this situation.

Past caller

*See our confidentiality statement at sdafmh.org.uk for more details



**SCOTLAND'S
DOMESTIC ABUSE &
FORCED MARRIAGE
HELPLINE**

We're a free, safe, confidential service for anyone – of any age, gender or sexual orientation – who is affected by domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as those concerned about someone else.

**We will listen to you
and believe you.
We're here for you.**

Available **24/7** on phone,
SMS/Whatsapp, email and web chat



Phone: 0800 027 1234
SMS/Whatsapp: 07401 288595
Web chat: www.sdafmh.org.uk
Email: helpline@sdafmh.org.uk
Website: www.sdafmh.org.uk

Who can use the Helpline?

Anyone can reach out to us and we support people of all ages, genders, abilities, sexual orientations, nationalities and backgrounds.

We work in partnership with the Men's Advice Line to ensure quality support on our helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse. We have also been awarded the LGBT Foundations Charter Award by LGBT Youth Scotland: recognising us as champions of LGBT inclusion and equality and diversity.

If English is not your first language, we can provide a confidential interpreter when you call. We can also accept calls in British Sign Language using Contact Scotland **BSL: www.contactscotland-bsl.org** or using a text relay service such as **Relay UK: www.relayuk.bt.com**.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour that is used to gain power and control over an intimate partner or ex-partner. Abuse can include controlling what you do or who you speak to, making threats, putting you down, stalking you, controlling finances, using technology to monitor you or using violence – including sexual violence.

Domestic abuse is a crime in Scotland. Domestic abuse can begin at any stage during a relationship or after a relationship has ended. It can happen to people of all different genders, sexual orientations, ages and backgrounds. Nobody deserves to experience domestic abuse and if you have gone through this it is never your fault.

What is forced marriage?

Forced marriage is when one or both people don't freely agree to the marriage. This could be if:

- You don't want to get married
- You can't legally say yes – for example, people under 16 years old or people who do not have the capacity to consent
- You feel pressured to say yes. This might be because of force, threats or emotional pressure such as being told you will bring shame on the family

Abusive behaviour such as isolating you, keeping you away from school or work, restricting access to money, abduction or physical violence may be used to try and force you to go through with the marriage.

The decision to marry can never be made on behalf of another person. Everyone has the right to choose who they marry, when they marry and if they marry at all.

Forcing someone to marry is illegal in Scotland.

