

Domestic Abuse Specialist Service (DASS)



What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is carried out by a current or ex-intimate partner or by family members, and it can take many forms. This does not have to always be physical. The most common forms of domestic abuse are psychological and emotional, and they also include sexual and financial/economic harm. All of these behaviours are designed to control and coerce another person, and can leave them feeling frightened, intimidated and unable to speak out.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any gender, background or circumstances. It usually (but not always) happens in private 'behind closed doors' and can be very difficult to recognise and talk about outside of the home. Some of the common signs that a person is experiencing domestic abuse can include:

- Fear of their partner/family
- Nervousness and anxiety
- Isolation
- Withdrawal
- Physical injury
- Low self-esteem
- Depression and tearfulness
- Restricted access to money
- Difficulty making their own choices
- Excessive contact from partner/family
- Being monitored.

You can find out more by visiting the Domestic Abuse section on the Victim Support website: **www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/domestic-abuse/**

Who are the DASS?

The Domestic Abuse Specialist Service (DASS) is provided by Victim Support, a national independent charity that offers advice and support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

Our service is staffed by trained Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), Caseworkers and Specialists, who can provide information and support to survivors of domestic abuse currently living in Brighton and Hove. We can also give advice to anyone who is concerned that someone they know may be experiencing abuse.

The DASS supports survivors of any gender and can help them to decide whether they would like ongoing help from our team or from gender-specific or LGBTQ+ specialist organisations.

Our specialist services currently include support for children and young people aged 13 and upwards, as well as for survivors who identify from black and ethnic minoritised communities. We can also support someone if they are due to attend criminal trial and give evidence as a survivor of domestic abuse-related crime, or if they attend the local hospital and wish to talk about their experiences. We also provide outreach options such as drop-in services.

The DASS provides training to professionals on Awareness, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning, including bespoke packages on request. To find out more please contact us on **brightonhoveDASS@victimsupport.org.uk**.

How can we help you?

We understand that domestic abuse is a difficult subject to talk about, and asking for help can be the hardest step to take. We are here to believe and support all survivors. We know that each person's situation is different and we can offer a safe, non-judgemental space to discuss your experiences. We can help you to decide your own safe way forward and think about what's best for you, whether you choose to have an ongoing relationship with the abusive person or not.

When we speak with you we will assess your circumstances and consider any risks to your safety, including any children you may have. We will explore your options, and ensure you understand your rights and entitlements. We will also help you to identify the support that is right for you, and put you in touch with services that can assist you.

We can speak with you over the phone, or meet with you in a safe location in the community.

How to contact us

Call us

Survivors, professionals, and friends or family of someone experiencing abuse can call the DASS Helpline on **0300 323 9985** (9am–5pm Monday to Friday). If we are unable to answer a call immediately then you can leave a voicemail message. We ask that the message includes a name, address, reason for the call and a safe way to contact you.

Email us

Survivors can self-refer to us by emailing: **brightonhoveDASS@victimsupport.org.uk**. Anyone who self-refers for support must provide their name, location, any details they feel comfortable sharing about their situation, and a safe method for us to contact them and the preferred language, if it is safe to call back with an interpreter.

Refer to us

Professionals can refer a client to DASS by visiting our website at **www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/brighton-and-hove-domestic-abuse-specialist-service/**

Please indicate if the referral is for a specific service, such as trial support or specialist support, and include any relevant information so that the referral can be triaged to the appropriate service at the earliest opportunity.

If you have assessed a client as being at high risk of harm then you must refer to the Brighton and Hove MARAC in the first instance. For further information on how to do this please visit the Safe in the City website

Out of hours support:

24/7 Supportline: 08 08 16 89 111

www.victimsupport.org.uk

We are an **independent** charity offering **free, confidential** support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using our 24/7 live chat service:
victimsupport.org.uk/live-chat
- using BSL: **victimsupport.org.uk/bsl**
- Online: **victimsupport.org.uk**

To find out how you can help us, visit
victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved



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