

Our team of specially trained workers understand the devastating impact domestic or sexual violence can have on your life. We realise it can be hard to phone, text or email for the first time.

Our Helpline workers are experienced in supporting you to talk when you are ready. We understand you may not know what to say or how to start. Our workers will put you at ease.

The Helpline can refer women and their children directly to the safe network of refuges and outreach support services provided by local Women's Aid groups.

Our refuges have rooms specially adapted for disabled access, and provide support for women with a wide variety of needs.

We can also arrange safe temporary accommodation for men and their children and refer women and men to a range of other agencies for support.



If you have been sexually assaulted the Helpline can arrange immediate practical help, including direct referral to The Rowan, the sexual assault referral centre.

For further information on domestic and sexual violence visit [www.womensaidni.org](http://www.womensaidni.org)

24 HOUR

## Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

Open to *all women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence

☎ **0808 802 1414**

📱 text support to **07797 805 839**

✉ **24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org**

Freephone from all landlines and mobiles

Translation service available

Confidential, caring service  
24/7, 365 days a year

The Helpline also welcome calls from concerned family members, friends and colleagues, youth workers, teachers, professionals, community groups and clergy.

MANAGED BY WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION NORTHERN IRELAND

## Help for People with Disabilities



24 HOUR

## Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

FREEPHONE

**0808 802 1414**

Open to *all women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence

📱 text support to **07797 805 839** ✉ **24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org**



If you have a disability and have any concerns about domestic or sexual violence, now or in the past, contact the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.

The Helpline provides information, emotional support, and the opportunity to talk over all your concerns, including housing and legal options. You are guaranteed a confidential and caring response.

*People with disabilities are more likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and to suffer more severe injuries.*

## Who is abused?

Any person with a disability can be abused regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, nationality or background. The Helpline welcomes calls from everyone.

Recognising what is happening to you, or has happened in the past, is the first step in escaping the pain and misery of domestic and sexual violence.



## Domestic violence

Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, financial, or psychological. Sexual abuse is often a part of domestic violence. You are being abused if your partner/ex-partner/carer/boyfriend/girlfriend/family member does any of the following:

- › Constantly criticises your appearance, undermines your decisions and opinions
- › Neglects you, leaves you alone for long periods of time or locks you in
- › Withholds medication, over-medicates, or 'forgets' or refuses to pick up your medication
- › Threatens to take custody of your children or prevent you from seeing them
- › Tries to isolate you from your friends and family and makes you justify any absence
- › Physically hurts you in any way
- › Demands sex, coerces or forces you into unwanted sexual activities
- › Injures or hurts your service pet e.g. guide dog, or deliberately breaks your disability aids
- › Never lets you be alone with a helping professional so you cannot disclose the abuse

## Sexual violence

Sexual violence/abuse refers to any sexual acts that a person does not consent to take part in. It may not always be physically violent.

Sexual violence/abuse can include:

- › Rape
- › Using your disability during sex to undermine or physically hurt you
- › Unwanted touching or kissing
- › Withholding basic care if you do not have sex with them
- › Coerced or forced sexual activities, including activities that may involve violence and pain
- › Saying that no one else would want you because you have a disability
- › Posting sexual images of you on the internet without your consent
- › Using medication or alcohol to make you vulnerable in order to have sex with them
- › 'Grooming' a child or vulnerable person to engage in sexual activities of any kind

## Who sexually abuses?

Most people are abused by someone they know and trust, a partner or ex-partner, carers, relatives, babysitters, 'friends of the family', people in positions of authority, neighbours, and sometimes strangers.

Abusers are often good at convincing those they have abused that it was their fault and they agreed to it.

