

together  
we can break  
the cycle of  
**DOMESTIC  
ABUSE**

Safety Guide for Independent and Small Businesses

*Campaign materials produced by Philip Gowan and Emma Haselton – June 2025*

## Domestic Abuse - Safety Guide

### A simple safety guide for staff in hospitality and retail for advice or share with colleagues and customers

This online publication is produced by Willows 301 in partnership with Chorus CX - specifically for the benefit of millions of women employed in independent businesses, especially hospitality and retail sector.

- **1 in 4** women will in their lifetimes be a victim of domestic abuse.
- Every week **TWO** women are killed by an abusive partner

It is a powerful thought that their workplace could be their only place of safety!

And that means for every 10 staff - at least two have had, or will have, an experience of domestic abuse.

We hope this guide will help many women make that most important first step who are at risk.

Taking back control, creating pathways to protection, safety from their partner's abuse, Or for those still in an abusive relationship, seeking greater protection once they have separated – a safety plan and process to help protect themselves from further harm.



### Together We Can..

Domestic Abuse is everywhere. And it's everybody's business, within companies – large and small, customers, families, friends. Anyone can be affected.

Together we can all do our part - be aware of what we think isn't a 'healthy relationship' if we suspect a person isn't being treated well, with respect, with care or consideration, we can say so.

Challenge it. Ask the questions.

Ask your friend/colleague if they are ok within their relationship, do you feel safe? Does your partner hurt or harm you?

If you don't feel confident doing this, speak to a manager or HR. Display our poster in the staffroom, toilets etc. see the resources guide for agencies who can give support.

**Emma Haselton – CEO Willows 301**



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## Being Prepared

Getting yourself prepared – some simple but effective steps can help you to feel in control and have a plan of action.

### Documents

Put all your essential information and documentation together, court orders, injunctions, ID, important paperwork etc.

Create a list of any relevant phone numbers, your friends, family and those people involved in your case, police, case workers, solicitors, school staff etc.

Have a diary or journal to log any incidents with the date and time. Create a timeline of previous incidents. Keep this somewhere safe.

Voice messages may have a short life span so make copies before they expire and take screen shots stores in apps that automatically delete after a short period, if safe to do so.

### Emergency Bag

Get an emergency bag packed in a safe place or with a friend, family or neighbour. Include all IDs: passport, birth certificates, driving licence, keys.

Don't forget medication for you and any children, plus clothing and money, if possible. Plan an escape route from the home in an emergency.



### A Willows 301 Case Study

M was supported with interventions such as 1:1 meetings, phone calls, and emails, to help to build a legal case against ex-partner.

Helped to develop a safety plan, security of home, car, and devices.

Referrals made to relevant services and support to complete paperwork and interviews as required.

Encouraged to attend survivor group sessions, educational workshops around domestic abuse, and further support for mental health recovery.

Currently M is safe, court order obtained, and housing, educational, work settings all secure and risk aware. M states that support from Willows301 has been single most important step in feeling positive about identifying the risks, feeling safe, and hopeful in recovery from abuse



## Smart Phones

Your mobile phone is your most important communications device in seeking help from others and storing valuable information; texts, emails etc.

This data and information could also be used in criminal proceedings.

An abusive or controlling partner will know this and they will also want to use it to their advantage, which is why you should make all of your mobile devices and data storage as safe as possible as soon as possible. Create a new email address and send yourself emails with evidence, or information you may need. See technical and cyber security section for more details.

- Keep mobile phone charged and with you - with enough credit in case you have to lock yourself in a room.
- Emergency calls can still be made without credit and support agencies can accept reverse charges.
- Setup any speed dials that you can use in an emergency.
- Have Willows 301 or other agencies mobile phone setup on your phone.
- Use caller ID on your phones (if not, try using an answer phone to screen any unwanted calls).



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## 70% of Cases..

Domestic-violence charity Refuge says more than 70% of those it provides support to have reported tech-related abuse within a relationship

Your smart phone is at the centre of your digital world.

Smart speakers, tracking apps and key-logging software are among products that have made it easier for perpetrators to maintain control of victims and continue abuse.

**Ensure you are smarter than your phone**



## Home Security

If your abusive partner has left your home, you will need to act to both reduce risk of incidents and to help you feel less stressed and safer.

This list is daunting and may not be needed in all cases, the team at willows 301 will help advise you as will the approved and vetted providers we use.

It could be a costly exercise and you may need to seek independent financial advice, unfortunately grants are limited and subject to a detailed assessment.

- Change of locks for all points of access, doors, windows, garage etc.
- For doors a brace, a spy hole and door chains.
- Security lights for front and rear of property.
- Alarm system
- Cameras – but be careful of those using your Wi-Fi as these can be hacked
- Fire – know escape routes and have suitable fire extinguishers, blankets etc.



### Signals and Alerts...

Your family, friends and neighbours can be excellent support in keeping you safe.

If appropriate, set up signals or codes with neighbours and friends, for example:

Lights on or off in certain rooms or use of curtains etc.

Normal conversational sentences which flag to them a problem e.g. 'Sorry can't go out tonight need to be here for a friend coming over.'

If restriction orders in place – let neighbours know so that they can call the police if they see the person at your home.

**Emma Haselton**  
**CEO & Founder**



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## The Workplace

At Willows 301 we encourage companies to appoint a trained 'Confident', someone who employees can talk to in complete confidence.

If not such a role or HR person, and not comfortable in talking to your boss, there is probably someone you work with that you do feel comfortable with and is able to talk to them for you.

It is best that you do talk someone to get the support you need, for example;

- Sharing your partners image with colleagues so they know if they try to get access to you at work
- Keep copy of legal documents at work; court orders, injunctions etc.
- Have colleagues that can go to lunch with you, walk with you to your car or the bus/train stop/station.
- Use your journal/diary to log incidents at work – visits, calls on phone, work emails/texts

If your partner works for the same employer then the situation is much more complex, if no HR support, then do seek advice from a charity or agency that have professionals to advise on such matters.



### Duty of Care

Given the numbers of people impacted by domestic abuse it is not surprising laws were introduced.

In 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act came into force which does expect employers to show a duty of care for their employees.

The place of work maybe the only place someone could feel safe.

For a small business a policy template is the obvious solution – but ineffective.

What is important is that staff feel that they can talk and be listened to.

Literally their lives could be at risk, owners and staff being aware of the signs and being supportive is what matters most.

**Philip Gowan**

**HR & Director Induction Essentials**



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## Stalking and Travelling

### Stalking

This is one of the most common forms of harassment. Your partner maybe aware of the typical routes you would take on a day-to-day basis. So, have a personal alarm with you at all times – stick to routes that are residential and well-lit at night, avoiding alleyways and quiet walkways.

Let people know where you are going and when should be back and if visiting give a time of arrival.

If you know the area will be dark then take a powerful torch, check before you leave so you know the batteries are fresh.

### Car and Driving

Keep the doors and windows locked whilst driving and avoid have your windows down.

- Park near to street lighting or put outside lights at home before leaving to get into your car.
- When approaching your car try to see all around it visually, including looking in the back seat before getting in.
- Park so you can exit quickly without reversing.
- Have car breakdown service or have someone who will come to you in event of a breakdown.



### Stalking is a crime...!!

It is interrelated to harassment and intimidation.

Especially when the abuser is intensely jealous or following the ending of an abusive relationship.

Its purpose - a means of exerting power and control over you.

Now recognised as a form of domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, with charges being brought - more than doubling over a 5 year period in a recent CPS statistics.

We are now seeing better recognition among police and prosecutors of stalking as part of a wider pattern of domestic abuse.



## Cyber Security & Technology

It is best to assume your partner has already installed software and apps onto all your devices, both personal and home e.g. game consoles, computers etc. basically any device connected to the internet!!

Do **backups** of photos, music, contacts etc. that you do not want to delete. Then clean phone by resetting to factory settings.

Change password for phone and ensure the location finder is **OFF**. Set the device security PIN display timer for less a minute to restrict easy access.

For your **accounts** registered and accessible via your phone – change passwords and login security questions. Examples; bank, hosting services/cloud – Apple/Google, Shopping apps

**Social media**, check the location finder is off, don't post events or activities you will be attending in the future, remove connections that are unknown to you and could have been created without your knowledge.

**Equipment** and hardware that are linked to the internet: doorbells, cameras linked to Wi-Fi, laptops/computers, gaming consoles etc.

Check your **Car** for tracking devices – there are many places where they can be hidden.

### Martin McGrath

“For many years now, I have supported domestic abuse charities, victims and survivors.

It has been clear that abusers will use whatever tools are available to be in control.

Technology, social networks, devices. Apps/software, digital accounts via the internet offer them a gateway into your life and the ability to digital stalk you and possibly also your children.

Here a just a few bullet points, there is also lots of advice online – but I do recommend seeking the advice of experts

The team at Willows 301 can help you decide what is the best option for you.”

**Martin McGrath**

**Cyber Security Consultant**





## Useful Resources and Contacts



0800 970 2070

Email: [office@ncdv.org.uk](mailto:office@ncdv.org.uk)

Website: <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/>



0808 2000 247

Website: <https://refuge.org.uk/>



01383 739084

Email: [contact@safe-space.co.uk](mailto:contact@safe-space.co.uk)

Website: <https://safe-space.co.uk/>



A Charity for the Northwest of England

07392852922

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