

Beyond The Game Preventing Domestic Abuse in Sport & Activity

Conference November 2025

Chris Harris
Partnership Manager
chris@broxtowewp.org



Key Takeaways / Outcomes

- Understand how Domestic Abuse intersects with sport environments
- Reflect on the culture of silence, gender norms & power in sport
- Learn how to identify early warning signs of abuse
- Explore proactive strategies to create safer sport spaces
- Practice “changing the conversation” from reaction to prevention

*trigger warning – visit information stand for follow up



Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility

- [Gareth and Rhian](#)

[Welcome to the Gwent Safeguarding website - Gwent Safeguarding](#)



What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse is an **incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse** between those **aged 16 or over** who are or have been intimate partners or family members.

It can happen to anyone, regardless of their gender, sexuality, skin colour, ethnicity, social status or any other characteristic or circumstances.



What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse can include:

- **Emotional / Coercive control**
 - **Financial/Economic**
 - **Physical**
 - **Sexual**
 - **Online or Digital**
 - **Harassment & Stalking**
 - **Post Separation Abuse**
-



Domestic Abuse in numbers

Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2024

- An estimated 1.6 million women and 712,000 men aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year; a prevalence rate of approximately 6.6% of women and 3.0% of men.
- A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year compared with those aged 55 years and over.
- A higher proportion of people aged 16 years and over with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without.



Domestic Abuse in numbers

Why is our work needed?

Because domestic abuse affects millions of adults

An estimated

10.4m 

adults in England and Wales have experienced domestic abuse since they were 16. This includes 7.1 million women and 3.3 million men¹.

In the year ending March 2024, police recorded

1.35m

domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales.²

In Scotland,

16.5%

of adults say they've experienced at least one incident of partner abuse since the age of 16.³

And yet,

**fewer than
1 in 5** 

victims report to the police, so the real scale is likely far greater.⁴

“

I had to tell my story so many times to different agencies. It made me want to give up.

Survivor

Our Strategy 2025 – 2028

Find what works. Help it happen.

Safe Lives



Domestic Abuse in numbers

Why is our work needed?

Because many people face life-threatening risk

More than

75,000

people each year in the UK are assessed as at risk of being murdered or seriously harmed by domestic abuse.⁵

Every month, an estimated

8 women

in England and Wales are killed by a current or former partner.⁶

And the risk of serious assault and death is highest for a woman after she leaves an abusive relationship.

Between 2014 and 2023,

41%

of women killed in England and Wales were murdered by a partner or ex, compared to 4% of male victims.⁶

Of the women killed by partners or former partners, 43% of women were separated or attempting to separate from their partner.⁷

It is estimated that

1 in 8

women who take their own lives do so as a result of domestic abuse. Every week, three women die by suicide, and nearly 30 women attempt it each day as a result of abuse.⁸



It made me realise I had been through coercive control. I didn't realise it had a name or that it was abuse."

Survivor, public health approach survey.

Our Strategy 2025 – 2028

Find what works. Help it happen.

Safe Lives



Links to Sport & Activity

Domestic Abuse can and does happen everywhere – your club will not be immune to:

- Club members in abusive relationships
- Coaches or Teammates who are survivors – or perpetrators
- Family members in abusive relationships
- Supporters who are perpetrators

Individuals who have not recognised it is happening to them



Links to Sport & Activity

(Unique) barriers to disclosure:

- Fear of losing place in Team
- Fear of losing role in club
- Fear it will affect performance
- Fear of reaction from coaches
- Fear of stigma / labelling / stereotyping
- Fear of not being believed

Is it a safe space to talk?



Links to Sport & Activity

Sports Culture?

- Toughen Up
- Keep it out of the game
- Reputation
- Power imbalance
- Gender Norms

What people have seen / heard in the press?



Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility

Prevention act before abuse

Safeguarding Adults Week 2025

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING ADULTS WEEK?

Safeguarding Adults Week is a time for organisations to come together to raise awareness of important safeguarding issues.

A FOCUS ON PREVENTION

For the 2025 week, we're focusing on prevention, and on how we can act to stop abuse from taking place.

WHY PREVENTION MATTERS

It's important to learn the right lessons when things go wrong. But it is much better to prevent abuse from occurring in the first place than it is to respond to instances of harm, neglect, and isolation.

KINDLING COURAGE

We need the courage and the confidence to act on our instincts, and to speak up when something feels wrong.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

In a resilient community, people know their rights and responsibilities and understand what to do the moment they have concerns.

GET UPDATES & FREE RESOURCES

Visit tinyurl.com/ACTSAW25 or scan here →

SCAN ME

#SafeguardingAdultsWeek

ann craft trust
acting against abuse

University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

“Look forward not back

Change isn't

How it's always been done”



Domestic Abuse Scenario

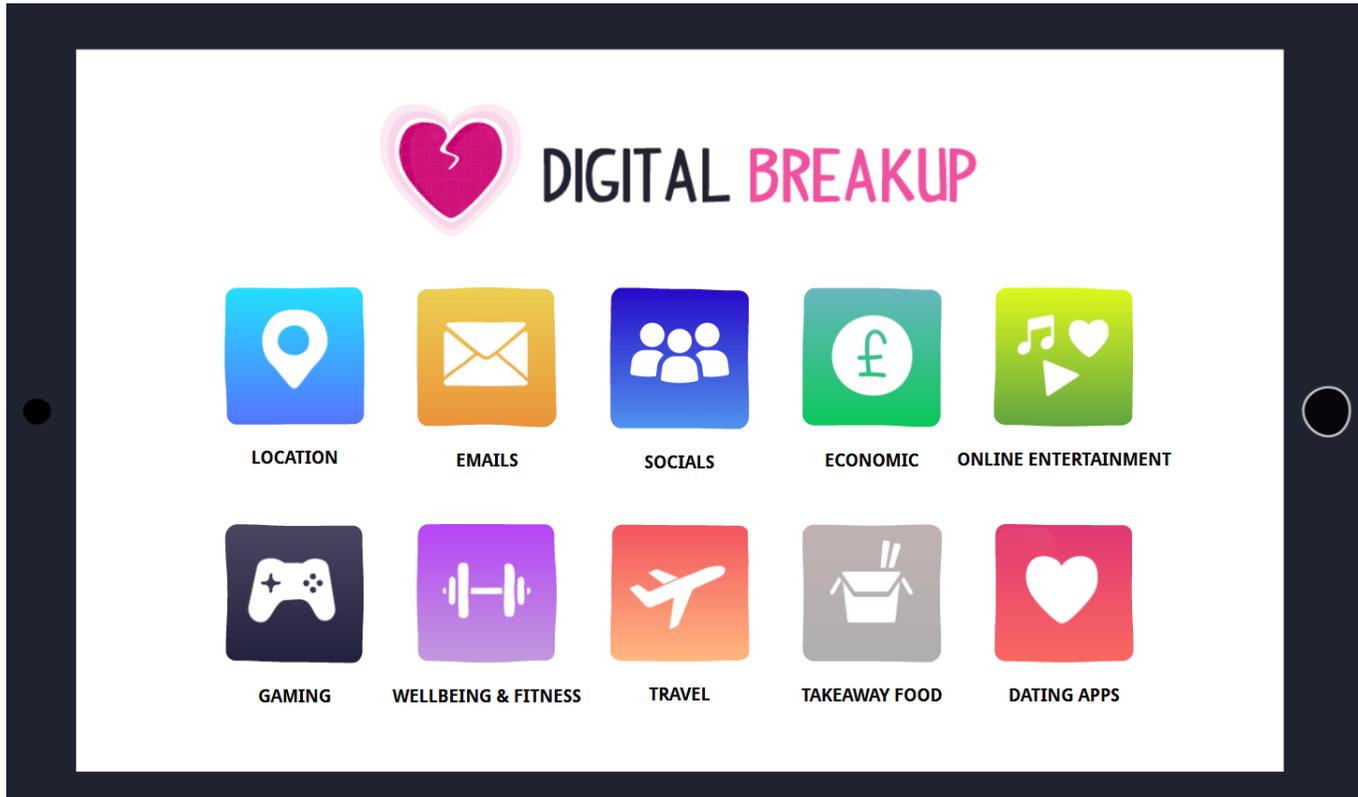
Group Activity

Think about your responses

Are you being proactive or reactive?



Domestic Abuse & Technology



<https://refugetechsafety.org/digitalbreakup/menu>



Proactive Approaches

- For many people, home isn't a safe place.
- But we know it isn't always easy for people to recognise domestic abuse in their relationships, and it can be hard to reach out for help.
- If you're worried that someone you care about is experiencing domestic abuse, you might not know what to say or do.
- You might be concerned about making the situation worse.
- Or you might find it difficult to understand why someone doesn't leave.



Proactive Approaches

- **What to say – and what not to say**
- Reassure them that your chat will be confidential
- Listen and help break the silence
- Try not to use labels
- Start conversations gently
- Be supportive and open
- Tell them you're there for them
- Don't put any pressure on them

- Don't confront or provoke the perpetrator



Proactive Approaches in sport

- Domestic abuse such as coercive control might not look the same at a sports club as it does at home or in other settings.
- In some cases, an abusive family member might see the club as a 'safe' place and allow their family to attend, while being controlling over other settings.
- Taking steps to let everyone know that they have a role in keeping an eye out for each other, and what they should do if they do have a concern.
- Stickers in car parks, posters and notices in the loos are all ways you can ensure people have access to the information they need.



Proactive Approaches for You?

Think beyond the policy & procedure

- Look at the Clubs current practice
- What do you include in a club induction?
- Is the club a welcome, safe space?
- Do your safeguarding team feel confident when dealing with Domestic Abuse – or do you need to provide training?
- Think Family
- Do you have a list of support agencies readily available?

Reflect on what you are going to do after this session



Positive Action in sport

Sally is a fitness instructor with Leisure, who led classes for women as part of the Work It Out Together project.

"After a number of weeks I visibly saw the confidence in the exercise and movement improve..."

The scheduled sessions reinforced social behaviour and a sense of belonging, i.e. showing up for me and the group...

The movement improved their well-being, self-esteem, feeling in control, as well as their strength physically and mentally."

HOW TO MAKE SERVICES SAFER FOR WOMEN
A GUIDE FOR THE LEISURE INDUSTRY

CONTACT US
Broxtowe Women's Project
enquiries@broxtowewomensproject.org
www.broxtowewomensproject.org.uk
Visit our website for links to further reading.



<https://broxtowewomensproject.org.uk/workitout/>

<https://broxtowewomensproject.org.uk/charities-and-notts-fa-team-up-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls/>



National Support Services – Domestic Abuse

women's aid
until women & children are safe



National Support Services – specialist



National Support Services – specialist

childline

ONLINE,
ON THE PHONE,
ANYTIME

childline.org.uk
0800 1111



National Support Services – specialist

Respect
Phoneline

Freephone 0808 8024040

Help for perpetrators ↓

Help for victims

Friends & family

Frontline workers ↓

Contact us



Choose to stop: We provide help for domestic violence perpetrators

Choose to stop.



National Support Services – mental health

SAMARITANS
Call free day or night on
116 123
A registered charity

Feeling low?
Anxious?
Struggling to cope?

Text **SHOUT** to **85258** for free, confidential support, 24/7

Stay Alive App
Essential suicide prevention for everyday life.
Thinking about suicide?
Worried about someone?
Download to smartphone or tablet
Google play | Download on the App Store

#MyWholeSelf
My Whole Self MOT
There are simple steps you can take to look after your whole self. Use this MOT to check in on your own, and others', mental health and wellbeing.

- How's my mental health today?**
How do I feel today?
How do I feel today?
How do I feel today?
- My Stress Container**
How full is my container?
Am I using helpful coping strategies?
Am I staying well?
Learn about your Stress Container here.
- My mental health journey**
Our mental health is part of our overall picture of our lives. Learn more.
- Looking after my wellbeing**
How do I take care of myself?
Am I taking a break of 10-15 minutes every hour?
Do I get an hour of sleep every night?
How do I feel about my health, especially when I'm at work?
How do I feel about my health?
- How's my thinking today?**
How are my thoughts making me feel?
Am I having helpful thoughts?
Could my Mind Plan with Every Mind Matters to get help to help deal with stress and anxiety and boost my mood?
- What can I do to look after my whole self?**
What steps can I take today to look after my wellbeing?
Check in on your wellbeing today.

Join the campaign for workplace culture change. Check out our resources at mhwellbeing.org © 2018 England



National Support Services

**UK SAYS
NO MORE**
TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT



Bright Sky

Download the **Bright Sky** app for free information and support about domestic abuse, sexual consent, harassment and stalking

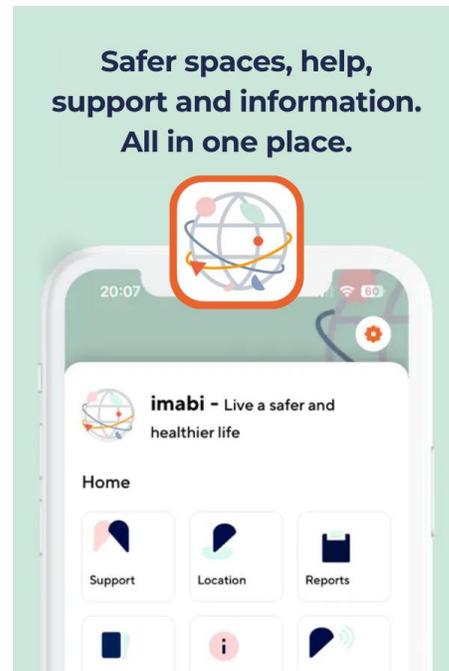
Download on the **App Store**

GET IT ON **Google Play**

The advertisement features a smartphone displaying the app's interface with various service options like 'GET ADVICE FOR SERVICES FREE', 'FIND A SAFE SPACE', and 'FIND A SHELTER'. The background is a light blue gradient with a sun icon.



National Support Services



Contact BWP

www.broxtowewomensproject.org.uk

We're on:

Instagram @broxtowewomensproject

X (twitter) @broxtowewomen

Facebook.com/broxtowewomensproject

LinkedIn broxtowewomensproject

