

Safety within the home

If you anticipate violence move to another room, avoiding the kitchen or bathroom where there may be items that can be used as weapons and hard surfaces.

Plan an escape route from every room in the house.

Always put important items such as keys, money or phone in a safe accessible place so that they can be grabbed in a hurry.

Let someone you trust, know about your situation and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises.

Teach your children, if and when appropriate to call for help. They should NEVER use a phone in front of the abuser as this may endanger them further.

Talk to children about what is happening and encourage them to call for help and NOT to intervene.

Create "code words" for friends and children so that they know when to call for help and/or leave danger areas.

Plan where to go in an emergency and have an alternative route.

Use your judgement of the abuser to protect you and your children. You are in no way colluding with the abuser if you give him what he wants in order to protect yourself.

Keep or learn a list of important phone numbers e.g. Outreach Worker, Solicitor, Doctor etc. In an emergency dial 999.

Safety planning for leaving

You may not feel able to leave immediately, but you can plan for leaving so that you are prepared if an emergency does arise. Leaving is often the most dangerous time.

To increase your safety you can:

- Ensure that all important documents are kept together, including items of sentimental value, so they can be grabbed in a hurry.
- Put aside money for travel and other expenses
- Only tell people you trust where you are or will be. Lie if you have to - this will protect them and you.

Suggested items to be included in an emergency bag:

- ID - Passport, birth/marriage certificate, NI number, driving licence, insurance documents etc
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- Money - cheque book, bank cards, credit cards, benefit books etc.
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- Medical - prescribed medicines, prescriptions, medical cards, vaccination certificates
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- Legal - injunction/divorce papers, mortgage documents
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- Special Items - child's favourite toy, photos, jewellery etc.
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- Basic/essential clothing

Safety once a relationship has ended

Unfortunately abuse may not end when your partner has left the shared home. In order to increase your safety you can:

Let trusted friends and neighbours know that you are no longer together and that they should call the police if they see your partner trying to get into the house

Change the locks on your doors, ensure that doors and windows are as secure as possible and use the chain when answering the door. Call us for security help.

Tell people who look after your children such as teachers, which people have permission to collect them and that your ex-partner is not permitted to do so.

Change your phone number and at work ask people to screen your calls.

Change your shopping/travel/social habits like shop elsewhere at different times, take a different route home.

Whether you are planning to leave or not there are some things that you can consider doing that may help in the future:

Keep a record of the perpetrator's violence and controlling behaviour to support any future action, civil or criminal. Log incidents with the police even if you do not wish to press charges at present.

Increase your financial independence by opening a separate bank account and transferring your money (including benefits) into your name.

Seek legal advice (some solicitors offer an initial free appointment).

Keep important documents in a safe place, either hidden in the home or at a friends or relatives house (e.g. birth/marriage certificates, national insurance card, passport, driving licence etc. You may also want to hide items that have a sentimental value to you or your children.