

Civil Law options that you may wish to consider applying for

Civil law options are available if you do not feel comfortable reporting to the police and going through the criminal justice process, or if you have reported to the police but they're limited in the actions they are able to take. Within the Family Law Act, family courts can issue orders to protect vulnerable groups, including victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

Non-Molestation Orders

- Are civil injunctions available to victim/survivors of domestic abuse under the Family Law Act – [Matrimonial Home Rights](#)
- If granted, will order your abuser(s) (family members, partners and ex-partners) to stop using or threatening violence, intimidating, harassing or pestering you or instructing or encouraging others to do so. See [non-molestation order](#)
- Can include no direct or indirect contact. The terms and conditions of the order will vary from case to case, depending on the circumstances and steps required to keep you safe. It is a criminal offence to break the terms of a non-molestation order, and perpetrators can be sent to prison for breaches. Any breach of the order must be reported to the police.
- The length of the order will vary depending on the risks. These can go from a short-term interim order lasting weeks, commonly six months, longer-term can include one year and on rare occasions, indefinitely.
- Can be funded with Legal Aid for those who are eligible for legal aid assistance [Find a Legal Aid Adviser or Family Mediator](#). Legal Aid eligibility rules are also available here [Legal aid: What you can get legal aid for – GOV.UK](#)
- If you are not eligible for legal aid you can apply for a non-molestation order without legal representation (solicitors can be expensive).

You may be able to get help filling out the forms from Law Centre [Home](#) | LCN, Citizens Advice, Home – [Support Through Court](#) and [Get an injunction if you've been the victim of domestic abuse: Overview](#) – [GOV.UK](#) as this is a complicated process.

- If there has been a recent incident and you need immediate protection, support to obtain a non-molestation is available through [Domestic Violence & Abuse · Emergency Injunction Service](#) and [Domestic Violence Assist | DV ASSIST](#)

Occupation Orders

- Are civil injunctions available to victim/survivors of domestic abuse under the Family Law Act.
- Can evict abusers from the home and prevent them from returning home.
- Can sometimes be used to regulate the occupation of a home e.g. by creating zones for each party to stick within.
- Can be used to give cohabiting partners (boyfriends and girlfriends of sole tenants and owners) the right to remain in the home for up to six months.

Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs)

- Are being introduced under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. See [Domestic Abuse Protection Notices \(DAPNs\) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders \(DAPOs\) – GOV.UK](#)
- Are currently being piloted in a few areas in the country and will be rolled out across England and Wales during 2026
- Are going to replace Family Law Act injunctions
- Can be used to stop abusive behaviour by perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Can be used to remove the occupation rights of perpetrators
- Can be used to allow victim/survivors temporary rights to live in a home they have shared with a cohabiting partner who has been abusive, who owns or rents the property
- Can be used to order perpetrators of domestic abuse to attend accredited perpetrator programmes.

If you and your abuser both live in a pilot project area (Greater Manchester & Stockport, Wigan, Croydon & Bromley, Sutton, Teesside, Caernarfon, Prestatyn & Wrexham) contact the Royal Courts of Justice for advice on applying for a DAPO.

Email: courtnav@rcjadvice.org.uk

Transfer of Tenancy Applications

- Available under the Family Law Act
- Can be used to apply for the transfer of social tenancies (council or housing association tenants) from joint names into one party's name or from one tenant's name into a husband, wife, civil partner or cohabiting partner's name.
- Seek legal advice if you want to apply for one of these. Support is available from:
 - [Home | LCN](#) – Law Centre Network
 - [Citizen's Advice](#)
- Legal aid is available in domestic abuse cases providing you are eligible for legal aid, see [Find a Legal Aid Adviser or Family Mediator](#) and [Legal aid: What you can get legal aid for – GOV.UK](#)
- Many factors are considered by the courts when deciding on these applications. These include:
 1. the needs of any dependent children,
 2. the financial resources of both parties,
 3. whether the home has been adapted for the needs of a disabled person
 4. and domestic abuse.

Family law and occupation rights are complex. You must always obtain advice from a qualified expert before making any decisions regarding applying for court orders in relation to your home.

If you are a man experiencing domestic abuse, contact [Men's Advice Line Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK](#).

Shelter Housing and Homelessness Advice pages

Use our online advice pages linked below if you want to find out your housing rights:

- [Housing advice from Shelter – Shelter England](#)
- [Get help from Shelter – Shelter England](#)

Respect
Men's advice line

