

Why victims don't leave

Why might a victim remain in an abusive relationship?

Children and pets

Leaving an abusive relationship could mean being separated from children and leaving those loved ones with the perpetrator. Victims fear for their children's safety as abuse often intensifies during [separation](#). Statistics show that during pregnancy abuse by the perpetrator can worsen. Victims might fear they would be unable to support children on their own due to lack of finances and/or housing should they leave. Perpetrators also abuse pets and use this as a hold over the victim.

Love

Some victims can't imagine being without their partner and believe they will change. Victims become accepting of the abuse because the relationship can be good at times. A victim may stay because they believe they are the only one that can change the perpetrator's behaviour.

Isolation

Perpetrators over time can isolate the victims from family, friends and the outside world. Family and friends also may feel like they can no longer help a victim if they are not ready to leave, therefore distancing themselves even further. Isolation occurs gradually and the victim may not even realise it's happening. Victims stay because they have no one to turn to and nowhere to go.

Low confidence

Perpetrators constantly [gaslighting](#) their victims can make them feel worthless and question their own feelings and sanity. This can cause victims to lose trust in their own instincts and give the perpetrator more power and control. Victims stay because they have been manipulated into thinking the problem is with them.

*On average
2 women per week
and 30 men every
year are murdered
by their partner.*

(ONS, 2016)

*On average a woman
will leave 7 times
before she leaves
for good.*

(National Domestic
Violence Hotline, 2013)

*On average there are
35 assaults before
victims call the police.*

(Refuge, 2017)

Support available

Women's Aid

Tel: **0808 2000 247** (24/7 helpline)
Email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk
Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Northumbria Police

Tel: **999** emergency/**101** non-emergency
Website: www.northumbria.police.uk

Victims First Northumbria

Tel: **0800 011 3116**
Website: victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk

National Stalking Helpline

Tel: **0808 802 0300**

Halo Project (Honour based violence/ forced marriage)

Tel: **01642 683045**
Email: info@haloproject.org.uk
Website: www.haloproject.org.uk

The Angelou Centre (North East BME service)

Tel: **0191 266 0394**
Email: admin@angelou-centre.org.uk
Website: www.angelou-centre.org.uk

NSPCC

Tel: **0808 8005000**
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Barnardo's

Website: www.barnardos.org.uk

Advice for Schools

1

Domestic abuse disclosures should be reported – it is the first step towards help being given

2

Non emergency – 101

3

Threat to life – 999

4

Child disclosure – follow your school safeguarding procedure

Lack of finances

Perpetrators can take full control of the victim's [finances](#), allowing them little or no money. Alternatively they might coerce the victim into giving up their job so they become dependent on the perpetrator. Victims stay because they may have no way of supporting themselves and could risk becoming homeless should they leave.

Shame, embarrassment & denial

Some victims feel admitting to being in an abusive relationship is humiliating and demeaning. Victims may feel like they are giving up on their partner, citing “they will change” or “marriage is for life” as a reason to stay. If a victim has been in multiple abusive relationships they can become convinced the problem is with them. They stay to avoid embarrassment and judgement from others.

Lack of support

Victims may feel like they don't know where to turn and what is available in their area. Victims stay because asking for support could be used against them by the perpetrator. Also the victim may have a lack of confidence in the support networks. Please click [here](#) for police advice.

Fear

There is a huge fear of being killed, the perpetrator killing themselves, children or pets. Abuse often worsens once the victim leaves and victims stay because they fear the consequences of leaving may be worse than their current situation.

Case Study - Operation Lighthouse

“The reality is, you can't stay and you can't leave. You have no options. And it shouldn't be that the burden is on the victim to run away to survive.” **Luke Hart**

Brothers Ryan and Luke Hart supported their mother Claire and sister Charlotte to leave their abusive and controlling father Lance. Shortly after Lance murdered their mother and Charlotte before committing suicide himself.

Over a period of several decades Lance isolated Claire and the family, subjecting them to emotional and financial abuse alongside controlling and intimidating behaviour. They didn't view their father's behaviour as domestic abuse because there had been no physical violence.

There were a number of barriers that made it difficult for Claire to end the abusive relationship, including not having access to her own money and having her phone and social media access controlled by her husband. Lance hid her passport and prevented her from visiting her sons abroad.

You can read Ryan and Luke's story [here](#).

