

## **Things you can do**

Making a safety plan is a way of helping to protect yourself and if you have children – your children. It helps to think of things in advance, to consider how you can increase your safety either within the relationship, or if you decide to leave.

You may already be doing some things to protect yourself and your children, listed below are some things you may also wish to consider.

Whatever coping strategies you have used – there may come a time when you feel the only option is to leave. It is important to remember that ending the relationship will not necessarily end the abuse – so prioritise safety.

- Think about the different options that may be available, one of them is to contact the support organisations that are available, in confidence, to talk things through and to explore those options.
- Keep with you any important and emergency telephone numbers, such as friends, relatives, local police, schools and the National Helpline for example – its surprising how well known numbers are forgotten - when in a panic
- Teach your children to call 999 in an emergency and also what they would need to say
- Are there any trusted neighbours/friends and/or places you could go in an emergency? If so, tell them what is going on, and ask them to call the police if they hear sounds of anything suspicious, or if they haven't heard from you as expected.
- Rehearse an escape plan so in an emergency you and the children can get away safely
- Try to keep a small amount of money on you at all times – including change for the phone and for bus fares.
- If you suspect that your partner is about to attack you, avoid areas of the house where the risk could be even greater such as the kitchen (potential weapons) or bathrooms (no exit). Try to go to a lower risk area of the house – for example where there is a way out and access to a telephone
- Have a small bag already packed with an extra set of keys for the house and car should you need to leave in an emergency. You may prefer leaving this with a trusted friend.
- Take important documents such as your marriage and birth certificate, any court orders, passport, benefit and bank books, and health records.

- If you choose to leave, try to take your children with you.
- Take essential medicines that you and your children may need.
- Leave when it is safe to do so. If you later discover that you have left something essential behind, you can always arrange for a police escort so that you can return for it.
- In an emergency – always call the Police on 999

Some suggestions - useful details to keep at hand or in a pre-packed bag left in a safe place:

- Some form of identification – such as birth certificates for you and your children, passports, visas, work permits
- Copies of documents relating to your housing, insurance, etc
- Cards for payment for child benefit or any other welfare benefits
- Prescribed medication
- Money, bankbooks, cheque book , credit and debit cards
- Important keys
- GP's contact details
- Clothing and toiletries for you and your children
- Your children's favourite small toys, small items of sentimental value
- Any documentation relating to the abuse