



Domestic Abuse Act 2021

2021 CHAPTER 17

PART 1

DEFINITION OF “DOMESTIC ABUSE”

1 Definition of “domestic abuse”

- (1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—
 - (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
 - (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—
 - (a) physical or sexual abuse;
 - (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
 - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
 - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
- (4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to—
 - (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
 - (b) obtain goods or services.
- (5) For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).
- (6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
for the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, PART 1. (See end of Document for details)*

(7) For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 1 in force at 5.7.2021 for specified purposes by [S.I. 2021/797, reg. 2\(1\)](#)
I2 S. 1 in force at 1.10.2021 in so far as not already in force by [S.I. 2021/1038, reg. 2\(a\)](#)

2 Definition of “personally connected”

(1) For the purposes of this Act, two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies—

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- (g) they are relatives.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if—

- (a) the person is a parent of the child, or
- (b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

(3) In this section—

- “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
- “civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
- “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

Commencement Information

- I3** S. 2 in force at 5.7.2021 for specified purposes by [S.I. 2021/797, reg. 2\(1\)](#)
I4 S. 2 in force at 1.10.2021 in so far as not already in force by [S.I. 2021/1038, reg. 2\(b\)](#)

3 Children as victims of domestic abuse

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who—

- (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and

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- (b) is related to A or B.
- (3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if—
- (a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
 - (b) the child and the person are relatives.
- (4) In this section—
- “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
 - “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
 - “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

Commencement Information

- I5** S. 3 in force at 1.10.2021 for specified purposes by [S.I. 2021/1038, reg. 2\(c\)](#)
- I6** S. 3 in force at 1.11.2021 for specified purposes by [S.I. 2021/1038, reg. 3\(a\)](#)
- I7** S. 3 in force at 31.1.2022 in so far as not already in force by [S.I. 2022/73, reg. 2](#)

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, PART 1.