

Economic abuse screening tool

Economic abuse is a form of domestic abuse recognised in the Domestic Abuse Act. It often occurs in the context of intimate partner violence and involves the control of a partner or ex-partner's money and finances as well as access to resources.

This is the longer version of the screening tool, designed to support more detailed conversations and deeper understanding of a person's experience.

If you need a quicker option, you can use the short screening tool, which highlights key indicators in a more time-limited setting.

Purpose of this tool

This tool helps you identify whether someone may be experiencing economic abuse, so you can respond appropriately and offer the right support.

Why it matters

Economic abuse can trap people in unsafe situations and increase risk of harm. Without access to money or essential resources, it can be harder to leave or recover safely.

It is also strongly linked to other forms of abuse, including physical violence, and can be present in high-risk and escalating situations.

Briefing your client

Please introduce the questions in a way that feels appropriate to the conversation.

Why these questions are being asked

You may wish to explain that:

- These questions help us understand whether you may be experiencing economic abuse
- Economic abuse is when a partner, ex-partner or family member interferes with your money or resources to limit your independence or choices
- Understanding this helps us support you to regain control and access to your money and resources
- These questions could relate to a partner, ex-partner, or family member

How you can take part

You may wish to explain that:

- It's up to you how you choose to answer these questions
- I can ask the questions and write down your answers, or you can complete them yourself with support

Answering the questions

You may wish to explain that:

- It would be most useful if you can answer all the questions
- You can have as much time as you need, and it's fine to stop at any point and come back to the questions later
- If you remember something and want to change or add to an earlier answer, you can do so
- Please answer based on when things have been at their worst
- If you're not sure what a question means, you can ask for clarification

Screening tool on pages 3 – 6.

Screening questions: In relation to your partner or family member...

		0 Never	1 Hardly ever	2 Some- times	3 Often	4 Very often
Economic restriction						
1	Have they ever prevented you from having enough money to buy food, clothes, or other essentials? This may include controlling your money so you cannot afford these items, or expecting you to prioritise bills while going without essentials.					
2	Have they ever prevented you from having enough money to pay the bills? This may include giving you an allowance that is not enough to cover bills or withholding money needed to pay them.					
3	Have they ever controlled how you spend money, rather than letting you make your own decisions? This may include making you justify spending, talking you out of it, or making you feel guilty, intimidated, or afraid to spend money.					
4	Have they ever made you give them receipts or change to monitor your spending? This may include checking what you have spent, questioning purchases, or requiring proof of how money was used.					
5	Have they ever hidden money from you? This may include keeping money out of your reach, moving money without telling you.					
6	Have they ever deliberately kept important financial information from you? This may include not sharing details about income, bank accounts, credit card statements, debts, mortgage, or household finances.					

7	Have they ever made you ask them for money you needed? This may include having to request money for everyday expenses or essentials.					
8	Have they ever prevented you from having or accessing a joint or personal bank account? This may include withholding PINs, passwords, or access to cards or online banking.					
9	Have they ever pressured you to sign papers without telling you what they were for? This may include asking you to sign financial or legal documents without giving you full information or time to understand them.					

Economic exploitation

1	Have they ever made or pressured you get a credit card or loan, or buy something on credit, against your wishes? This may include insisting, manipulating, or making you feel you had no choice but to agree.					
2	Have they ever taken out a loan, credit card, or purchase in your name without your agreement? This may include using your details without permission or in situations where you felt unable to refuse.					
3	Have they ever made or pressured you use your money to buy them things or pay their bills against your wishes? This may include making you feel guilty, intimidated, or responsible for their expenses.					
4	Have they ever used their money on whatever they want for themselves, while requiring you to cover the essentials costs? This may include you paying for rent, bills, or food while they spend their money on non-essential items.					

5	Have they ever taken or used your belongings without your permission? This may include using your car, phone, or other items in ways that caused you loss or difficulty.					
6	Have they ever put bills in your name without your agreement, or left you with no real choice? This may include accounts being set up in your name or you being made responsible for payments you did not agree to.					
7	Have they ever built up debt in your name without your agreement? This may include using your credit card, phone contract, or other accounts to create debt.					
8	Have they ever forced or pressure you to give them your savings, wages or other assets? This may include in situations in which you felt unable to say no.					
Economic sabotage						
1	Have they ever prevented you from working or made it too difficult for you to keep a job? This may include making you have (more) children, interfering with your work, making you late, or creating barriers such as childcare, moving home, transport difficulties, or telling you that your place is at home.					
2	Have they ever broken or destroyed your things, or things in the house? This may include damaging things you rely on so you have to go without or replace them.					
3	Have they ever stopped or made it difficult for you to study or train? This may include not supporting childcare, withholding money, or making it hard for you to attend.					

4	Have they ever stopped or try to stop you accessing benefit payments that you or you children are entitled to receive? This may include withholding information, intercepting payments, or blocking applications.					
5	Have they ever forced you to fraudulently access benefit payment or money you knew you were not legally entitled to? This may include making you apply fraudulently or putting you at risk of legal or financial consequences.					
6	Have they ever refused to pay child maintenance, or paid it unreliably or not in full when they could afford to? This may include withholding payments or using them to control or punish you.					
7	Have they ever interfered with your housing or living situation in a way that caused you financial harm or instability? This may include preventing a house sale or tenancy change, not paying rent or mortgage to create arrears, forcing you to leave, or causing you to lose your home.					

One final question

This is a chance for you to tell us a bit more, if you are happy to do so. Continue on the next page if you need more space.

Has anything else happened to you, to do with money, work or your possessions, which isn't covered in the questions above?

Thank you very much for answering these questions. We will use the responses to identify how we can best support you.