



"Because nobody should have to choose between safety and their horse."

DELEGATE RESOURCE PACK · MEATH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Support Beyond the Gate

Domestic abuse does not stop where the road ends.

A resource for professionals on domestic abuse and sexual violence in rural, farming and equestrian communities, where animals, land, housing, livelihood, distance and community visibility can all become part of the safety picture.



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Information current September 2026



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About this pack

Prepared by Kirsty Judd, founder of The Bridle Path Initiative, for participants attending Meath Community Safety Partnership events. It sets out how domestic abuse and sexual violence present in rural, farming and equestrian communities, including abuse in later life and within families, what professionals can notice and ask, and what The Bridle Path offers.

The prompts on pages 4 and 5 are written to be used: in a home visit, a yard, a clinic or a case discussion. Contact details for The Bridle Path are on page 6.

Kirsty Judd

Kirsty is the founder of The Bridle Path Initiative CIC. A qualified IDVA, ISVA and OPVA with a BA (Hons) in Social Work, she works as a Frontline Lead at Hourglass, the UK charity working to end the abuse of older people, and has a background in residential and secure care and frontline advocacy. She grew up on a multi-generational family farm and has spent her life in the equestrian community, including sole charge of a film and television horse yard. She speaks and writes on justice and safeguarding.

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The Bridle Path Initiative CIC

The UK's first specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence initiative for rural, farming and equestrian communities. Safe enquiries, information, specialist signposting, training, research and partnership work.

Kirsty Judd, Founder
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Support Beyond the Gate

The Bridle Path's advocacy model: built around the whole rural life of a survivor, not the incident alone. Animals, land, tied housing, livelihood, reputation and distance are part of the risk and part of the plan.

Training, briefings and partnership work available now
Specialist advocacy and casework in development

Why rural abuse can stay hidden



Leaving an abusive relationship is already dangerous and complicated. In rural, farming and equestrian lives, leaving may also mean risking animals, land, tied housing, income, transport, work, and an entire community noticing that something has changed.

Distance and transport

No car, no keys, limited public transport, long distances to services or poor phone signal can make help harder to reach.

Home, work and land

The farm, yard, family business or tied accommodation may be home, income and identity all at once.

Animals and coercive control

Horses, pets and livestock can be threatened, withheld, sold, harmed or used to stop somebody leaving.

Economic control

Vehicles, wages, farm income, accounts, equipment, debt and business records can all be used to restrict independence.

Close-knit communities

Fear of gossip, reputation, family ties and everyone knowing everyone can silence disclosure.

Technology and monitoring

Trackers, cameras, smart devices, shared accounts and location data add surveillance and risk.

Later life and family

The person causing harm may be a partner or ex-partner, or another family member, including an adult child. Abuse does not stop at retirement, and it is often relabelled as family conflict or carer stress.

Fragmented information

A vet, a farrier, a GP, a neighbour and a police officer may each see one piece. Nobody sees the pattern until serious harm has been done.

A rural life is not a background detail. It can be part of the risk.

Safety planning has to fit the life somebody is actually living, not the life a standard pathway assumes.

What professionals should notice, and ask



Do not reduce a rural case to “just leave”. Ask what leaving would actually mean for this person. The answers may explain why the risk has stayed hidden for so long.

- 1 Does the person have safe access to a vehicle, keys, fuel and a phone?
- 2 Is their housing tied to the farm, the yard, the family business or the person causing harm?
- 3 Are horses, pets or livestock being threatened, controlled, withheld or used as leverage?
- 4 Who controls money, wages, bank accounts, farm income, equipment or business information?
- 5 Could the person causing harm reach the yard, the fields, the property or the workplace?
- 6 Are trackers, CCTV, smart devices, shared accounts or vehicle data being used to monitor them?
- 7 Are isolation, weapons, machinery, outbuildings or remote locations increasing the risk?
- 8 Who locally can be trusted, and who might unintentionally pass information back to the person causing harm?

Respond safely

Give options, not ultimatums. Record animal, transport, housing, economic and technology-related risks alongside everything else. Use established local domestic-abuse and safeguarding pathways. Do not promise animal fostering, rehoming, ownership or legal outcomes unless you are authorised and able to deliver them.

Abuse behind the farm gate does not retire



On farms and yards, businesses and homes pass down through families, and so can control. In later life the person causing harm is far more often a family member, and the abuse is far more often explained away as family conflict, carer stress or the way things have always been.

44%

of victims over 60 in the SafeLives Safe Later Lives dataset were abused by a family member

6%

of younger victims. Source: SafeLives, *Safe Later Lives: Older people and domestic abuse* (2016)

Who

An adult son or daughter, another relative, a carer, or a partner of many decades. Abuse can be financial, psychological, physical or sexual, or neglect.

What gets in the way

Care needs, dependency, shame, loyalty, fear of losing the home or independence, and labels like “family conflict” or “carer stress” where coercive control fits better.

What to do

Ask to see the person alone. Record patterns, not single incidents. Use local adult safeguarding pathways, and ask what the farm, the animals and the home mean for their choices.

- 1 Who is the person causing harm, and what does the older person depend on them for?
- 2 Who controls money, benefits, property, medication, transport or appointments?
- 3 Has the person become harder to see alone? Does someone always answer for them?
- 4 What would reporting, or leaving, cost this person: home, care, contact with grandchildren, reputation?
- 5 Who else holds a piece of the picture: GP, pharmacist, bank, neighbour, faith community, home carer?

Reclaiming My Path

The Bridle Path is developing Reclaiming My Path, a specialist psychoeducational recovery programme for older survivors, alongside training for professionals on later-life and familial abuse in rural communities. Enquiries: enquiries@thebridlepath.co.uk



A specialist UK domestic abuse and sexual violence initiative for rural, farming and equestrian communities.

Built by people who know these communities from the inside, The Bridle Path exists for the survivors whose lives do not fit standard pathways: where the horse, the farm, the tied cottage and the family name are all part of what keeps someone where they are.

AVAILABLE NOW

- Safe enquiries, information and specialist signposting
- Professional training and briefings
- Research and evidence-building
- Partnership and referral-pathway development
- Consultancy and professional engagement



Kirsty Judd, founder of The Bridle Path Initiative.

Being built carefully

Support Beyond the Gate specialist advocacy and casework, and the Reclaiming My Path recovery programme, are in development. Direct casework, crisis response, counselling and accommodation are not yet open.

Kirsty Judd, Founder

Domestic abuse specialist · Speaker · Qualified IDVA, ISVA and OPVA

"I wanted to build something that understood the whole rural life around a survivor."



Support our work

Scan the code, or tap it in this PDF, to give online. Every gift helps us reach the survivors that standard services miss, because support should not stop at the farm gate.

Get in touch

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enquiries@thebridlepath.co.uk
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Not an emergency service. In immediate danger, call 999 (or 112 in Ireland).