**Safety Planning – If you are preparing to leave your abuser**

Separation can be a dangerous time where the risk of harm is increased due to the lack of control the abuser has over the situation. There are many considerations when you are planning to exit an abusive relationship. You need to ensure that your safety and the safety of your children is not compromised by the abuser becoming aware of your plans to leave.

* Contact the [**helpline**](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/contact-us/) or our [**live chat service**](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/)we can support you by ensuring you have somewhere safe to go to, discussing your support and legal options with you and helping you to make a safe exit plan.
* If it is safe for you to do so, try and save some money and keep it hidden away for when you leave.
* Try to make a record of your abuser’s routines to try and choose a safe time to leave, such as when they are at work or out shopping.
* Have a bag packed ready and if you can, leave this at a trusted friend/family/neighbour’s home: This should contain medical essentials, important documents including passports/driving license.
* If you have a car, make a habit of backing the car into the driveway (so you can quickly pull out) and always having enough fuel in the tank.
* Keep your car keys in the same place so you can easily grab them or get a copy of the car keys made and keep those in a place hidden from the abuser.
* If you have children who need a car seat, make sure the car seats are always kept in the car, along with any essentials they may need such as nappies, medication, a spare change of clothes and a toy or comforter.
* Have a code word/sign to signal you are in danger – set this up for family and friends to let them know by text/FaceTime/Skype. The code will need to alert them to contact the police if you are in danger.

Read through our other [**safety plans**](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/contact-us/) and our [**online safety guide**](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/help-support/online-safety/) or [**call the helpline**](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/contact-us/) to ensure you have all the relevant information. **In an emergency always call 999 - if you cannot speak press 55 to alert the call handler that you need help.**