

FACT SHEET

Financial abuse

What you need to know about financial abuse in LGBTQIA+ relationships

Financial abuse is a form of family violence where one partner controls, restricts or exploits another person's access to money, employment, or financial independence. It can occur in any relationship, but LGBTQIA+ individuals often face additional barriers to safety, financial security and support.

Under the *Family Law Amendment Act (2024)*, economic abuse is now explicitly recognised as a form of family violence and must be considered in property settlements and spousal maintenance.

Forms of financial abuse

Financial abuse can be **overt or subtle**.

Examples include:

- Restricting access to bank accounts
- Monitoring, controlling or restriction of necessary spending
- Taking out debt or loans in the other person's name
- Preventing a partner from working or studying
- Withholding financial support during or after separation
- Coercing financial decisions
- Creating or hiding debt
- Exploiting joint assets
- Threatening to out someone unless they comply financially.

LGBTQIA+ communities and financial abuse: key statistics

While national data is limited, emerging research shows:

- Over **60% of LGBTQIA+ people** will experience domestic, family or intimate partner violence or abuse in their lifetime.¹
- Transgender and gender-diverse people face significantly higher risk of coercive control and economic dependence.
- LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors may delay seeking help due to:
 - fear of discrimination
 - fear of being outed by a partner
 - limited LGBTQIA+-affirming crisis services
 - isolation from supportive networks.
- Economic abuse is estimated to cost victim-survivors **\$5.7 billion per year** nationally.
- More than **1 in 6 women**, and many LGBTQIA+ individuals, will experience economic abuse in their lifetime.

1. [dvafoundation.org](https://dva.foundation.org)

New family law legislation (effective June 2025) – what victim-survivors need to know

1. Economic abuse now explicitly included in the family violence definition

The Family Law Act now contains a dedicated section recognising financial abuse, including:

- restricting financial independence
- sabotaging employment or career pathways
- dowry abuse
- coercive financial or economic control.

2. Family violence must be considered in property settlements

Courts now must consider how family violence impacted a party's contributions, including:

- lost wages
- interrupted career progression
- reduced superannuation
- psychological harm or trauma impacting work capacity.

3. Spousal maintenance updated

Courts must assess the financial impact of violence, including economic abuse, when determining whether one partner should financially support the other.

4. Improved disclosure & transparency

Separating couples must now provide full, early financial disclosure (bank statements, debts, assets, loans, taxes) including if they are not involved in Court proceedings.

5. LGBTQIA+ Relationships are protected

Reforms apply equally to **all marriages, de facto relationships, same-sex couples and gender-diverse relationships**. This means the law acknowledges financial abuse in all relationship types, including those where identities, structures or dynamics differ from heteronormative models.

Signs of financial abuse

Look out for:

- A partner insisting all accounts are in their name or secrecy about sharing information about their finances
- Sudden loss of financial independence
- Constant “checking up” on spending or access to money
- Fear or uncertainty around financial decisions
- Limited access to money for essentials
- Unexplained debts or poor credit history
- Being pressured to quit work or study
- Fear of being outed or being isolated from support.

How Parker Coles Curtis can help

Our trauma-informed, inclusive family law services include:

- Legal advice on **property settlements, spousal maintenance, and child support**
- Assistance accessing legal finance when cost is a barrier
- Support for urgent safety planning, including obtaining **protection orders** and **family violence orders**
- Referrals to LGBTQIA+-affirming counselling and crisis services
- Representation backed by specialist family violence expertise
- Safe, confidential support for all identities, all relationship structures, all lived experiences.



Where to get help

Websites & toolkits

- Centre for Women's Economic Safety – Economic Abuse Awareness Day: Resources, toolkits, and awareness-campaign materials. [Economic Abuse Awareness+2Economic Abuse Awareness+2](#)
- LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Foundation – Awareness day, educational resources and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. [dvafoundation.org](#)
- Economic Abuse Reference Group (EARG) – National network and resource list addressing economic/financial abuse. [EARG+1](#)
- LGBTIQ Health Australia – Dedicated resources and information on domestic, family and sexual violence in LGBTIQ+ communities. [LGBTIQ+ Health Australia](#)
- Safe & Equal – Inclusive practice guidance and support tools for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing family violence. [Safe and Equal](#)
- 1800RESPECT – National support service with a Financial Abuse Toolkit that explains economic/financial abuse and offers help options. [1800RESPECT+1](#)
- Full Stop Australia – Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline for LGBTIQ+ communities. [Full Stop Australia](#)
- Rainbow Door – Peer support for LGBTIQ+ individuals facing partner violence, relationship issues or social isolation. [Rainbow Door](#)

National helplines & support services

For urgent help: Call **000** if in immediate danger

DVCS (ACT): 02 8000 9000

1800RESPECT: (Australia-wide): 1800 737 732 or visit [1800respect.org.au](#)

Rainbow Sexual, Domestic & Family Violence Helpline: 1800 497 212

QLife (LGBTQIA+ support): 1800 184 527

Contact Parker Coles Curtis

Our team is here to support you in navigating separation, financial abuse, and the legal changes. Please call us on **02 5114 2660** or email hello@parkercolescurtis.com.au.