

Barriers faced by the Ghanaian community affected by domestic abuse

1. Introduction

With greater economic prosperity there is a growing influence of western culture within Ghana. A strong economy coupled with an established democratic political system has ensured Ghana is a regional power in West Africa. Ghana's population is ethnically mixed; most of the population being Christian with just under 20% Muslim. Ghanaians are clearly represented within the Foreign and Commonwealth community of the Armed Forces.

2. Background information and cultural barriers

Although Ghanaians are generally comfortable with western culture, differences do exist and are outlined below.

Family and religion. Although domestic abuse is not tolerated within Ghana, the importance of maintaining privacy must also be recognised. Families are close knit and problems are not widely discussed. If support is needed it will usually come from within the family or from the religious leader. Religion is an important element of the Ghanaian culture, with Christianity being the dominant religion. Although personal problems are often managed within a family, there is no stigma associated with divorce if it is felt the marriage is not working. Ghanaians will often access local churches in the UK, the main denominations being Roman Catholic and Methodist. They also integrate within the Armed Forces community and do not tend to establish separate specific Ghanaian groups due to limited numbers.

Financial commitments. The majority of families also support family members in Ghana where access to support such as health and education is not as readily accessible as the UK. As well as providing for their parents, they may also be responsible for supporting younger siblings and it needs to be understood that if a family member is ill, they can only access medical support if it can be paid for. The UK immigration process is also expensive, and it is important to recognise that Ghanaian families within the Armed Forces community may be facing financial hardship. Separation for periods due to immigration/visa restrictions can also be an added stress.



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Timekeeping. The Ghanaian culture is very relaxed and laid back, and because of this by UK standards timekeeping can be poor, with appointments and stated times not adhered to. This mindset and approach are changing gradually with the influence of western culture within Ghana, although it must be understood and managed. Support providers need to understand this and explain to victims the importance of timekeeping when accessing scheduled support for example.

A reluctance to ask for help. Victims of domestic abuse are often reluctant to ask for support and are primarily concerned about their immigration status and the impact of disclosure on their wider family, particularly parents. In addition, they often lack an understanding of the wider welfare support that is available to them and are likely to be concerned about the confidentiality of unit level support. It is important to understand that welfare support is very limited within Ghana, and there will therefore be limited expectation regarding wider support within the UK.

3. Other sources of support and information

- [Domestic Abuse: Guidance and Support for the Armed Forces Community](#)
- Email support through Citizens Advice:
fandc@citizensadvicerrushmoor.org.uk
- [Ghana Union](#)



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