



# Domestic Violence and Abuse

Information for schools,  
pre-schools and toddler groups



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## Disclaimer

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# Introduction

This guide has been produced to increase awareness among those working with children and young people about domestic violence and abuse issues.

Domestic violence and abuse affects one in four women and one in six men during their lifetime<sup>1</sup>. More than 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence. Domestic abuse is a factor in 60% of serious case reviews<sup>2</sup>.

In 90% of cases, the children were in the same or the next room when the incident occurred<sup>3</sup>. It is also estimated that 62% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others<sup>4</sup>.

Nearly 75% of girls and 50% of boys have reported some sort of emotional partner abuse<sup>5</sup>.

In Rushmoor and Hart, more than 2,000 calls are made to the police each year as a result of domestic violence and abuse.

Monthly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are held to discuss the highest risk cases and enable the professionals involved with the families to share information and take action to reduce the risk of further harm to the victim and their children.

Domestic abuse has a major impact on children's ability to develop and function effectively, affecting their capacity to learn.

***"Reality is black and white because it's harsh, sharp angles, blunt cuts. My life has been disrupted by violence"***

***"I get angry when people can't understand me. I have to learn to talk not shout, whisper not scream"***

***"How many masks do you wear? How many would you choose to stop wearing?"***

<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from the CSEW, 2014/15

<sup>2</sup> Brandon, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, 1992

<sup>4</sup> CAADA, 2009

<sup>5</sup> NSPCC and University of Bristol, 2009

# ***Why domestic violence/abuse is an issue for schools, pre-schools and toddler groups***

- Domestic abuse can affect children's ability to reach their full potential - emotionally, physically or academically
- Children experiencing domestic abuse may have a disruptive effect on other children through violent outbursts or bullying
- Schools and other settings can provide a safe environment where positive relationships with adults and peers can be modelled. They are also places where families may seek advice and support
- Children spend a significant proportion of their lives in schools
- Schools have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of the child including a legal obligation to promote the social, moral and other aspects of a pupils development
- Domestic abuse amounts to significant harm to children and young people and will involve child protection and safeguarding procedures

## ***Definition***

The government define domestic violence and abuse as: "any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 years old or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

**The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:**

- **psychological**
- **physical**
- **sexual**
- **financial**
- **emotional**

### **Controlling behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

### **Coercive behaviour**

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.



# ***Signs that a child or young person may be affected by domestic abuse issues***

Each child or young person who experiences domestic violence will respond differently. Some children may be resilient and not exhibit any negative effects and others will display many signs of distress both internally and externally through their behaviour. The effects may be short and/or long term.

**The following is a list of some of the signs to be aware of:**

## **They may:**

- have physical injuries, including bruising and broken bones
- be overly protective of the non-abusing parent and/or siblings by physically intervening or withholding information
- become anxious or depressed
- have difficulty sleeping
- have nightmares or flashbacks
- be easily startled
- complain of physical symptoms such as tummy-ache
- show signs of neglect
- start to wet the bed
- have temper tantrums
- behave as though they are much younger
- have problems at school
- become aggressive or they may internalise their distress and withdraw from others
- have a low sense of self-worth
- begin to play truant or start to smoke, use drugs and/or alcohol
- begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves
- have an eating disorder
- be secretive or silent
- have development delays
- have poor social skills
- show antisocial or disturbed behaviour
- bully or be bullied
- show personality changes, for example, becoming withdrawn or introverted
- display a lack of concentration
- run away from home
- show a reluctance to form or develop friendships with school mates

Children and young people may also feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused. They may have ambivalent feelings towards the abuser and the non-abusing parent and may also feel that the abuse is their fault.

Domestic violence maybe one of many other issues that are happening within the family home and the abuse itself can create other issues for a family.

# ***Responses to suspicions or disclosure by a young person - when a child wants to talk***

## **DO**

- **Be accessible and receptive**
- **Listen carefully**
- **Take it seriously**
- **Reassure children they are right to tell**
- **Negotiate getting help**
- **Find help quickly**
- **Make and keep careful records of what was said straight away**
- **Comply with Child Protection procedures**

## **DON'T**

- **Jump to conclusions**
- **Try to get the child to say more than they are comfortable with**
- **Speculate or accuse anybody yourself**
- **Make promises you can't keep**
- **Pre-empt or prejudice any criminal investigation or the giving of evidence to in court proceedings**
- **Try to hurry them. Let them take the time they need to talk to you**

If a referral is made to Children's Services and a child is believed to be at risk of serious harm a Child Protection Conference may be held. This is an independently chaired meeting involving parents, other family members and relevant professionals. Information is shared and a plan agreed to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.



# ***What is the child or young person likely to have seen and heard?***

- Heard the victim being verbally abused, humiliated and threatened
- Seen bruises and injuries on the victims
- Heard the victim scream and plead for help
- Seen the abuser removed and taken to the police station
- Seen the victim being taken to hospital by ambulance
- Seen physical injuries of their own or their siblings

## **They may also have:**

- Been used as a pawn or spy by the abuser to try and control the victim
- Been forced to participate in the incidents
- Experienced unexpected and/or frequent house moves as the victim tries to protect themselves and the children

# ***Why doesn't a victim leave in these circumstances?***

Although the risk of staying may be very high, simply leaving the relationship doesn't guarantee that the violence will stop. In fact, the period during which a victim is planning to leave, or actually leaving is often the most dangerous time for them and the children.

## **Some of the reasons victims of abuse have given for staying are:**

- They are frightened of the abuser and what they might do if they leave
- They still care for/love their partner and just want the behaviour to change
- They feel ashamed about what has happened and believe it is their fault
- They are scared about the future in terms of money, housing, what will happen to the children and if they will have to hide forever
- They are worried about being isolated from their family or friends
- They have no confidence in their ability to manage on their own
- They believe it is better to stay for the sake of their children

Victims need to be supported in their decisions and will often make several attempts to leave before they leave permanently and safely.

# ***Disclosure from a child or young person of domestic violence / abuse***

## **Listen to the child or young person**

- Stay calm and take what they are saying seriously
- Do not ask leading questions but listen to their story and try to make sense of what you are being told:
  - Are they currently being harmed?
  - Are they likely to be harmed in the future?
  - Is anyone else at risk of being harmed?
  - Do they need medical attention?
  - What are their overall needs?
  - What is important to them?
- Try not to look shocked or disbelieving
- Advise them you may need to inform others if you are concerned for their safety

## **Issues for the child or young person to consider**

- Their immediate worries and concerns
- How they hope the situation will be resolved
- Adults who know about the situation or who they can talk to
- Their main fears about the situation
- Have they been involved in the violence?
- Do they feel safe?

## **Reassure the child or young person**

- Assure them that you believe them and they are not alone
- Domestic abuse is unacceptable and taken seriously
- It is not their fault - they are not responsible for another person's actions
- As a child/young person they have a right to protection and support
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for them to tell you about what has happened and reassure them teachers, support staff and other agencies working with them are here to **HELP** and **NOT JUDGE**
- Explain what will happen next

## **Make a written record of the discussion**

**(Be aware that the child's file could be seen by their parent)**

- Record what you did next and who you shared the information with and why
- Follow the school/nursery/youth group's Child Protection procedures



# ***Response to notification by an external source concerning a child***

Sometimes the first time that a school, pre-school, nursery or youth group is made aware of domestic abuse issues in the home of one of the children or young people may be from an external source such as the police, children's services, friend, relative or class-mate. Where possible, try to encourage an atmosphere in which the child or young person can confide in you if they want to do so but do not try to get a child to say more than they are comfortable with saying.

**Refer the matter to your child protection officer for advice.**

## ***Receipt or notification of a child or young person form (CYP) from the police or children's welfare services***

**If you receive, or are notified of, a CYP form, please consider the following:**

- 1** As a result of the information in the CYP, do you need to have a discussion with the child/young person or their parent?
- 2** Assess the needs of the child/young person
- 3** Consider which other members of staff need to be made aware of the information
- 4** Record the information on the child's file
- 5** Offer support to the child/young person
- 6** Provide information on local and national services available to them. Early Help Hubs operate across Hampshire
- 7** Consider practical safety measures if needed e.g. safety planning, safe routes to school, varying arrival/leaving times, ensuring staff are aware and can identify abuser
- 8** Continue to monitor the situation and if matters change and/or there are concerns for safety review any actions needed
- 9** If at any point, there are additional needs, please contact Children's Services on 0300 555 1384 or complete an Early Help Assessment.

# ***Safety planning for the child or young person***

## **Domestic Violence/Abuse**

It is very important for the child or young person to stay safe when there is a fight. They may feel they have to stop the fight and protect the parent who is being hurt but this can be very dangerous and put them at risk of being hurt.

Research has indicated that more than 300,000 children and young people are injured each year as a result of trying to stop arguments at home<sup>1</sup>.

**It is not the child's responsibility to protect their parent from abuse and instead of trying to stop the fight they could:**

- Call 999
- Find a place in their house where they can be safe, preferably where there is a phone. If they have a mobile phone make sure there is always credit on it (*although 999 calls are free*) and the battery is charged
- Think about who they could confide in about what is happening so they can phone them in an emergency. They can also agree a code word so that they only have to say the word and the person they have phoned will know what to do
- Think about where they could go (*such as a friend, neighbour or relatives house*) and maybe leave a change of clothing there
- Think about making a safety plan and try to keep this with them. Make sure that the abuser can't find this information.

Domestic abuse hurts children and young people. Some children and young people are also abused by other members of their family.

Whatever the cause, domestic abuse is not OK and it is not the fault of the child or young person who deserves to live a life free from abuse.

On the next page is an example of a safety plan which can be completed by the child/young person (*reproduced with the kind permission of Women's Aid*)

<sup>1</sup> NSPCC research, January 2009



# ***'My emergency safety plan' for children or young people***

**If I don't feel safe in my house, I will go to a safe place and talk to the professional I am working with. If I need to, I will go somewhere else in my house, and make the call.**

My safe place in my house is

The person I can ring is called

Their number is

**Or if I need to I will go somewhere outside of my house.**

My safe place outside the house is

**I will phone the police if I am afraid that I may get hurt or if I am hurt.**

Their number is

**I will talk to someone I trust about what is happening to me, so that I have a friend that I can turn to.**

That person is

I can contact them at

If they are not available I can contact

**I know the details of two support services I could access who understand about young people experiencing relationship violence and abuse.**

Name

Number

Name

Number

**These are the two things that I know will help to keep me safe.**

# What children and young people want

Key messages from research by Kidscape - The Hideout online survey June/July 2007

- 1 Children and young people are almost always aware of the abuse - even if their parents try to keep it from them:**

"I was really scared when I first heard my Mum and Dad shouting. I was afraid to go downstairs... I tried to forget all about it and go to sleep, but I couldn't because of all the things in my head... when I woke up the next morning it was all back to normal again. I didn't know what to do..." *Silas, 11yrs*

- 2 They would like to find someone they could talk to about their experiences, and that they could trust:**

"I'm feeling safe now because I have people around me and I'm talking to them now, so if you get lonely ... talk to someone you feel safe with". *Ethan*

- 3 They wanted to be listened to, to be taken seriously, and to be believed:**

"My friend is being subjected to domestic violence .. he has been trying to find help but he doesn't know where to go.... He can't talk to anyone, no-one believes him.... I just wish that I could do something to stop it." *Sara, 12yrs*

- 4 Children and young people who had experienced domestic violence and other abuse were very supportive of each other:**

"I read your message and I would like to say that it made me feel sad for you, but you are not alone. Loads of people are in the same situation... I hope that someone can help you!" *Milly*

- 5 Children and young people wanted their views to be taken into account, whenever decisions were made that would affect their lives:**

"... I just hope the court will listen to me and my mummy. I think we shouldn't have to see him. We can think for ourselves, I think the court should let us have our say..." *Suzey, 14 yrs*

- 6 In particular, they did not always want to see the abusive parent or not until they were ready to do so:**

"My dad used to hit me and my sisters ... every week ... he hurts my mum and us and I feel sad. I hate him and I don't want to see him again". *Jay*

- 7 Children and young people wanted clear information and an appropriate response from any agency they approached for help and support - but sometimes found that was not forthcoming:**

"I found by talking to the authorities the abuse worsened, my friends were not in a position to help, so I ended up carrying the burden alone...."

Marcus, 17 yrs

- 8 They appreciated the help provided by refuge organisations and other specialist domestic violence services - though they also found it hard if they had to leave home:**

"... the hardest thing for me has been leaving my friends behind and knowing I have to make new ones where I live now. I also miss my belongings ... it has been a different time in my life but it is alot better now and we are starting a new life and it will all be worth it in the end."

Sophia, 16 yrs

- 9 Those children and young people who had ongoing support were appreciative of the help provided - for example through a special Women's Aid support group set up for children and young people who had experienced domestic violence:**

"... I really enjoy the girls' group. I would miss this support, it makes me less worried". Cara, 11 yrs

*These messages from children and young people should not be ignored. It is clear that children are profoundly affected by hearing and witnessing domestic violence. They want to be able to talk about their experiences, and get help and support - but often such support is not readily available.*



# ***Disclosure from a parent/carer of abuse***

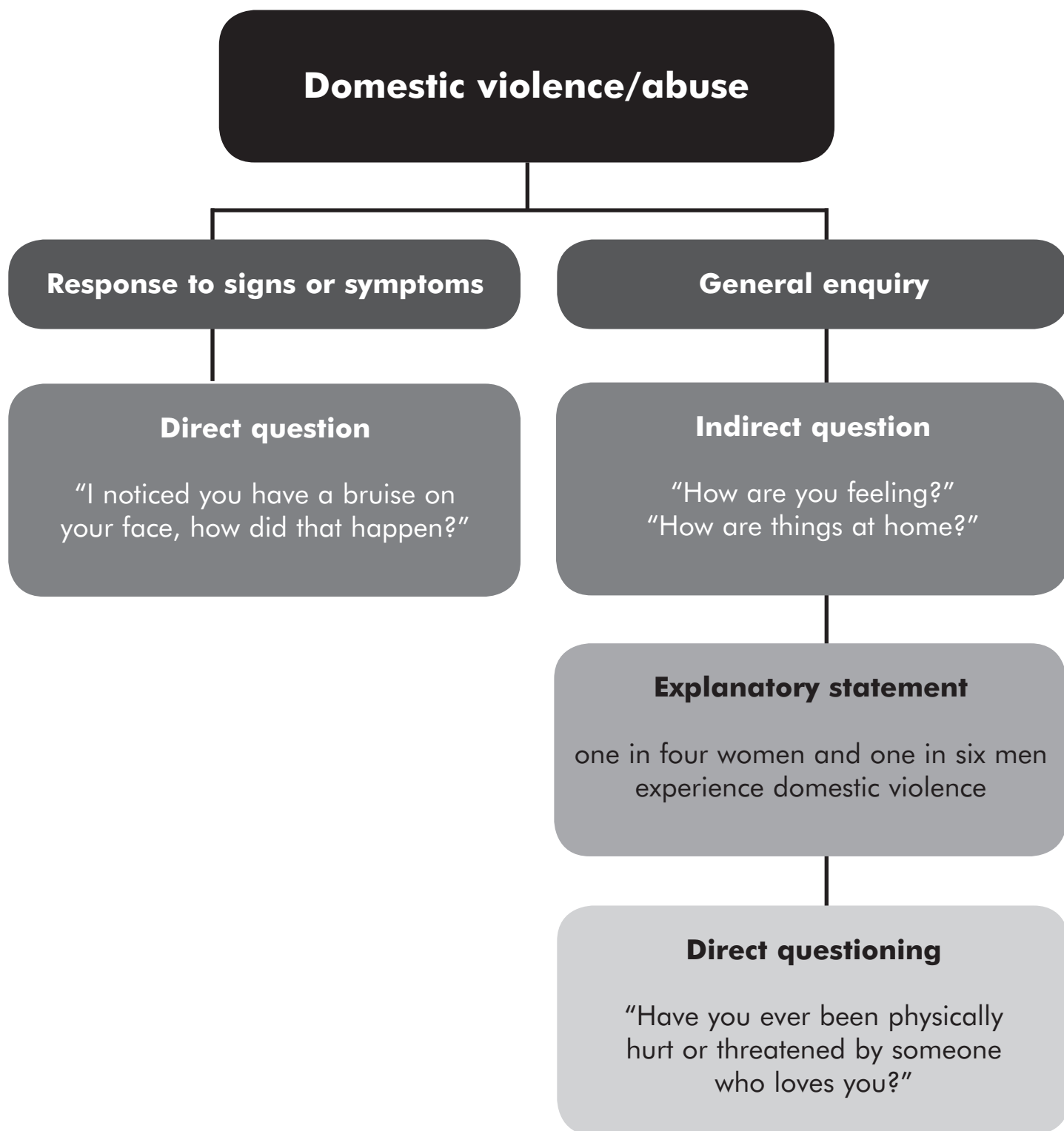
## **Listen to the parent/carer in private**

- Reassure and make time for them
- Explain the situation about confidentiality and that you will need to pass on the disclosure if there are concerns for their safety or that of the children in the family
- Listen, but don't try to tell someone what to do - focus on safety and making the person feel supported and valued
- Let them know that you believe them and make it clear that the abuse is not their fault
- Let them know they are not alone and many others are suffering
- Discuss the history and circumstances, if appropriate, of the abuse
- Find out what support they need and what they would like you to do
- Discuss the effects on the child and any safety issues
- Be supportive with requests for variations in the child's arrival and departure time from school, where there are concerns for safety
- Clarify the reasons at this point, why you may have to disclose the information to other agencies and who these agencies will be
- Make a written record of discussion on the child's file
- Check for concerns about the perpetrators tracking down their former partner through the school
- Be aware of local and national specialist advice and support services and signpost as appropriate
- Remember the perpetrator is likely to be very plausible and manipulative - don't be fooled!
- Be aware that the victim is likely to play down the extent of the abuse or even deny that it is happening - they may well blame themselves

## **Some options for the abused to consider include:**

- Seeking help from a helpline
- Contacting the police
- Obtaining legal advice from a solicitor about injunctions or restraining orders
- Taking additional security measures
- Seeking emergency refuge accommodation
- Making a safety plan

**REMEMBER - confidentiality does not mean keeping information to yourself if you think a parent or child might be at risk**



**Safety of the person experiencing the abuse and of any children is paramount.**

**NEVER arrange joint interviews with the perpetrator or suggest reconciliation.**

# ***After disclosure the following action is recommended:***

## **Respect and validation**

- Listen carefully, take the disclosure seriously and accept their perception of the abuse
- Let them know that this is not unusual and they not the only one experiencing this.

**Domestic abuse is serious**

## **Response and risk assessment**

- Consider the need for physical and/or mental health assessment
- Consider imminent and long term danger to the wo/man and her/his children
- Discuss safety planning

## **Record keeping**

- Record information accurately so it can be used as evidence
- Do not record domestic abuse in records to which the perpetrator could have access

## **Providing information**

- Check it is safe for them to take information (e.g. card/leaflet) with them
- If only one contact number is given it should be Women's Aid National Helpline or Male Advice line

## **Information sharing and confidentiality**

- Be honest about limits of confidentiality
- Where it is believed that children are at risk of significant harm, child protection procedures must take precedence

## **Support and follow up**

- Provide support and follow up where appropriate
- Maintain continuity of staff where possible

## **Useful contact numbers**

**Woman's Aid National Helpline**  
0808 2000 247

**Male Advice Line** 0808 801 0327

**Mankind** 01823 334 244

**National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline** 0300 999 5428

**National Stalking Helpline**  
0808 802 0300

**Police** emergency 999  
non-emergency 101

# Keeping safe

## In an emergency, if you are being attacked or abused:

- Call 999 immediately to alert police
- Stay away from the kitchen
- Get to a room with a door or window so that you can escape
- Call for help
- Get out of the house

## Have a safety plan

A personal safety plan in a way of helping you to protect yourself and your children. It helps you think about how you can increase your safety either within the relationship or if you decide to leave.

## If you still live with your partner or family member who is abusing you:

- Tell someone about your situation - a friend, relative, colleague or neighbour; someone who can give you help and support
- Try to seek professional advice
- Talk to **specially trained police** (call 101 and ask for the Safeguarding team) or **Victim Support** (call 0808 1689 111)
- Teach your children to call 999 in an emergency and what they need to say (their full name, address and telephone number)
- Identify a safe exit and use it if you feel an abusive situation is about to arise
- If you cannot leave home, try to avoid risk areas such as the kitchen or garage where there may be knives or weapons
- Teach your children that it is not safe for them to intervene directly
- Keep with you any important and emergency contact numbers
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself and your children and keep it somewhere safe
- Keep your mobile phone fully charged and with you at all times
- Keep a diary of all events, assaults, harassment, threats etc and any contact by phone or texts
- Plan in advance how you might respond to different situations, including crisis situations
- Use your own instincts and judgement about the situation

*(Information from Hampshire Constabulary Domestic Abuse Safety Plan leaflet)*



## If you are thinking about leaving

If you do decide to leave, it is best if you can plan this carefully as sometimes the risk of violence increases if your abuser thinks you are able to leave. Plan to leave at a time when you know that your partner will not be around and if you are concerned, you can ask for a police officer to be present while you leave.

Take your children with you when you leave and try to make sure you have a safe place to go. The National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (or 0808 801 0327 for male victims) can offer advice and guidance as to how to safely leave. If possible try to set aside a small amount of money each week in a separate bank or post office account and pack an emergency bag containing:

- Clothing and toiletries for you and your children
- Your children's favourite small toys
- Some form of identification for you and your children, for example passports and birth certificates
- Any documentation relating to the abuse - diaries, police records, court orders and copies of medical records
- Money, bank or post office books, child benefit or welfare books/cards
- Prescribed medication for you and your children
- Car and house keys

## If you live alone or not with the person who is abusing you

- Change the locks and install window locks
- Get advice from your local police
- Use an answering machine to screen your calls
- Have an ex-directory number and if you need to phone your abuser make sure your call can't be traced by dialing 141 before ringing
- Inform neighbours of the situation so that they can contact the police if they see or hear anything unusual

## Other steps you can take

- Inform someone you trust at work about your situation
- Plan differing routes home from work and avoid routines
- Try to avoid places such as shops, banks or cafes that you used to use when you were together
- Make sure no one passes on your new details if you have had to move or change phone number
- If the abuser comes to your door, don't open it and call 999 immediately
- Do not make contact with your abuser or reply to any messages or texts

## Children

It is very important to ensure that safe contact arrangements are in place before child contact takes place as this can be a dangerous time for your and/or your children. If possible consult a solicitor as soon as possible after leaving to ensure that you have the necessary legal protection in place.

If you are in any way concerned about 'handover' of the children, consider using a Child Contact Centre, either supported or supervised (*depending on whether it the non-resident parent needs to be observed during contact or if the centre is just needed to enable a safe handover*).

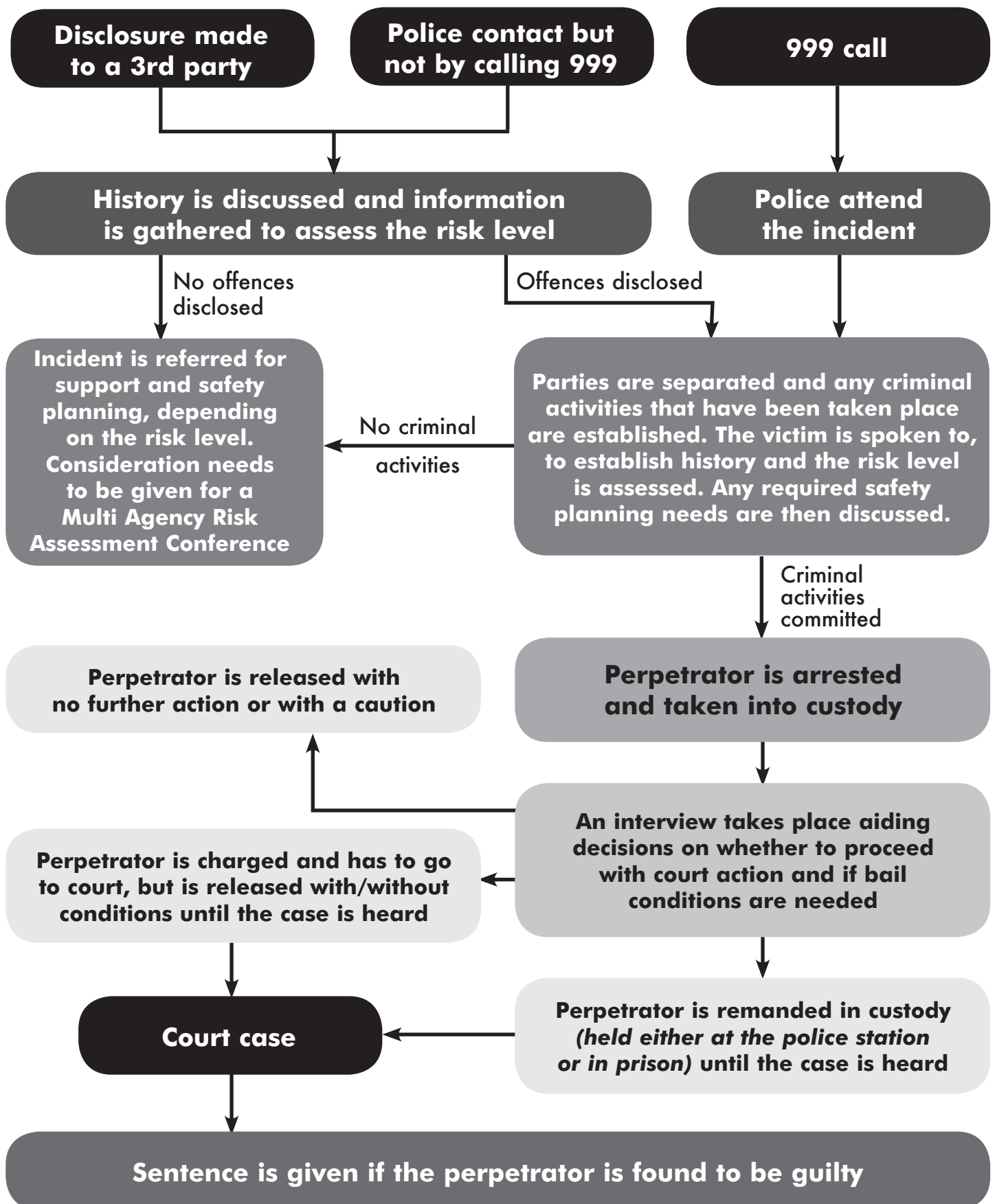
## Talk about it

It is your decision about whether you tell people or not that you have experienced domestic abuse. However, if you still feel unsafe it might increase your safety if you tell your family and friends, your children's school/nursery and your employer or college what is happening.

Children do not have to see violence to be affected by it. They hear it and sense it, and can be frightened and saddened by it. Talk to your children and tell them it's not their fault. If you have left the relationship talk to your children about what they should do if the abuser contacts them unexpectedly and discuss rules about checking before answering the door, who is allowed in the house, how to deal with phone calls and about the need to keep their new address confidential. There are organisations that can specifically help children who need to talk about things that are upsetting them and it is important to enable your children to access this support.

Talk to your friends, relatives, doctor or nurse about how you are feeling and/or access a local support group so that you can be with others who understand what you are going through.

# ***When the police are involved in a domestic abuse incident***



# Legal Remedies for Domestic Abuse Victims

The following flowcharts explain the different legal pathways available

## Criminal Law

### Victim

Anyone who is a victim or witness of violence (domestic or otherwise) can make a complaint to the police. If there is enough evidence, proceedings can be brought in the criminal courts. The matter can also be reported to the police by the perpetrator.

### Offences

Types of offences committed include:

- Assault
- Sexual assault
- Grievous bodily harm
- Rape
- Actual bodily harm
- Coercive and/or controlling behaviour
- Threatening behaviour

### Court

The case is brought either in the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court, depending on the nature and severity of the offence or, if the defendant elects, trial by Crown Court where such option is available.

In the Crown Court the case will be decided by a jury. In the Magistrates' Court the case is decided by the Justice of the Peace (JP)

### Penalties

If the perpetrator is found guilty, then a variety of penalties are available. The sentence will depend on the type of court, the nature of the case, previous convictions etc.

#### Penalties include:

- Prison
- Curfew suspension
- Community Order
- Unpaid work
- Programmes for perpetrators
- Fine
- Suspended sentences
- Restraining orders
- A compensation order to the victim

## Criminal and Civil Law

### Victim

This act applies to anyone who is a victim of unpleasant and anti-social behaviour including 'stalking' and harassment. If there is enough evidence, proceedings can be brought in either the criminal or the civil courts.

### Stalking & harassment behaviour

Examples of stalking and harassment include:

- Frequent unwanted contact
- Driving past the victim's home or work
- Following, sending texts, letters and unwanted gifts
- Threats to harm the victim and/or others associated with them

Generally the harassment should have occurred on at least two occasions so that it can be classed as a 'Course of conduct'

**The test for harassment is:** a) whether a reasonable person would consider the conduct in question to be harassment and b) the individual's own perception of the conduct

### Court

Proceedings can be brought in either the Magistrates' Court or the County Court but they look at different issues. The Magistrates' Court considers whether the conduct amounts to a criminal offence. The County Court looks to see if an injunction and damages can be awarded to the victim.

### Penalties

If the perpetrator is found guilty, the Magistrates' Court can impose a prison sentence, fine or a Restraining Order. The County Court can impose an injunction and award damages for anxiety. They can also imprison the defendant for breach of the injunction or other contempt of court.



## Civil Law

### Victim

The act applies to people who come within the definition of "an associated person" which includes:

- Married/co-habiting couples
- Former married/cohabiting couples
- Relatives
- People who live at the same household (*other than as a tenant, lodger or boarder*)
- Fiancés (*as long as their engagement has not ended more than 3 years ago*)
- In relation to children - parents of children or people with parental responsibility
- Parties to family court proceedings

The victim can apply for a Non-molestation order to forbid the perpetrator using violence or threatening violence. They can also apply for an Occupation Order to eject the perpetrator from the home. (*May be hard to obtain*)

### Examples of injury the court will consider

- Physical injury such as cuts, abrasions, wounds, bruising, broken bones, lost teeth, black eyes etc.
- Psychological injury caused by the perpetrators behaviour e.g. depression.

**Medical evidence will help the victim's case**

### Court

Proceedings are brought in the County Court in front of a district judge. In an emergency the judge can hear the case without the perpetrator being present. This is called a 'without notice' hearing.

### Order

- An injunction
- An Occupation Order

In certain cases where there are physical signs of injury at the time the Injunction is made, the judge or district judge can place a power of arrest on the injunction order which will allow the immediate arrest of the defendant in the event of a breach in the Injunction. This injunction should be filed with the police. A breach of a Non-molestation order is a criminal offence.

### Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders (DVPN/DVPOs)

The police are now able to issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice to prevent further violence or an escalating threat of violence in certain domestic situation. The Notice in effect bans the offender from the home and from contacting the victim and any children for up to 48 hours.

Within this 48 hours an application has to be made to the court for a Domestic Violence Protection Order which puts in place a ban of between 14 and 28 days so that all the parties are able to have a 'cooling off' period during which time everyone involved can seek help.

### Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDs)

Commonly known as Clare's Law, this scheme gives members of the public a 'right to ask' Police where they have a concern that their partner may pose a risk to them or where they are concerned that the partner of a member of their family or a friend may pose a risk to that individual. Details of how to make a request for information can be found at [www.hampshire.police.uk](http://www.hampshire.police.uk)

# ***Children who need to move school as a result of domestic violence/abuse***

A family may need to move geographical area in order to escape violence and this may be to temporary or permanent accommodation. Changing schools can be difficult for the child or young person concerned, particularly because of the circumstances of the change. This may result in a delay in placing the child into a new school. Frequent moves and changes of address can lead to social isolation and loss of family and friends. There could also be associated financial issues such as the costs of travel to the school or new school uniforms.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that the child is not placed in danger by allowing the violent partner access to the child or information, which may help the perpetrator to locate the family. *(This includes the need to be aware of people asking about the new family as they could have links to the perpetrator).*

**Please be aware that when a family leaves an abusive situation, this can be an extremely dangerous time for the victim and children. Do not - under any circumstances, disclose any information about the child or their address which may place the family in danger.**

**It may be necessary for families in this situation to vary the arrival and departure time at school if they are in danger.**

**IF YOU ARE ADVISED THAT A CHILD NEEDS TO BE REMOVED IMMEDIATELY FROM SCHOOL BY THE POLICE TO GO TO A REFUGE, DO NOT DISCLOSE THIS INFORMATION TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THOSE AS ADVISED BY THE POLICE.**

**THIS COULD BE A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH**

**REMEMBER - confidentiality does not mean keeping information to yourself if you think a parent or child might be at risk**

# Teenage relationship abuse (dating abuse)

Teenagers experience as much relationship abuse as adults, with several independent studies showing that 40% of teenagers are in abusive dating relationships. Dating abuse is a pattern of controlling behaviour that someone uses against a girlfriend or boyfriend. It can take many forms, including mental/emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse and can occur in both casual dating situations and serious, long-term relationships.

Teenage romantic relationships can often be short-lived, but they are experienced as intensely as adult relationships. A lack of experience in constructing respectful relationships and their peer pressure group norms, can make it difficult for teenagers to judge their partner's behaviour as being abusive, with research showing that some teenagers have worryingly high levels of acceptance of abuse within a relationship and often justify the abuse with the actions of the victim (*for example they were unfaithful or disrespectful*). In teenage relationship abuse it has also been noted that the young person will often become isolated from their peers as a result of the controlling behaviour of their abusive partner.

The Government definition of domestic abuse was widened in March 2013 to include 16 and 17-year-olds. Whilst Children's Services referrals should be made for the victim and perpetrator where either or both of the parties are under 18 years-old, a domestic abuse risk assessment should be undertaken. Those victims identified as being at high risk of serious harm should be referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process, via the Police safeguarding team.

## **Some warning signs that relationship abuse may be occurring:**

- Physical signs of injury/illness
- Truancy, falling grades
- Withdrawal, passivity, becoming unusually compliant
- Changes in mood and personality
- Isolation from family and friends
- Frequent texts and calls from boy/girlfriend
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour/language
- Depression
- Pregnancy
- Use of drugs or alcohol (*where there was no prior use*)
- Self-harming, eating disorders or problems sleeping
- Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Bullying/being bullied

## **If you suspect teenage relationship abuse, encourage the victim to:**

- Make a safety plan
- When out on a date - speak up if there is anything they are unhappy about, match their body language to their words and keep calm, using eye contact to show strength and courage
- Think about who they could confide in or seek help from
- If they feel in danger, call 999

## Specific issues of concern and risk factors for young people

- May have only a limited knowledge and understanding around choice and consent
- Increased risk of isolation
- May be at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation
- Vulnerable to online abuse
- Normalisation of abuse and controlling behaviour
- May not recognise the abuse and minimise the harm being experienced
- May have complex needs (eg *substance misuse, alcohol misuse, mental health issues*)

## Risk assessment and suggestions for supporting teenagers affected by Domestic abuse

A flexible and inventive working approach may need to be adopted in terms of communication methods in order to achieve and maintain meaningful contact. Young people may have specific preferences for communicating (eg *texting, Facebook, instant messaging, FaceTime, Youth Offending Team appointments, college etc*), as well as different priorities to adults. A proactive approach should be used when working with young people.

In order to assess the risk posed to the young person of further harm, a Young Person's risk assessment can be undertaken with those aged 13-17years-old. The assessment form can be found at **[www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)**, together with guidance notes.

Children's Services should be notified of concerns and, additionally, if a case is identified as 'high' risk this should be referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) telephone **101** and ask for the safeguarding team. It is likely that you will be invited to attend the MARAC to help identify safeguarding options.



# Internet and social networking site dangers

The use of the Internet and mobile technology has increased significantly over the past few years and although there are many positive aspects to this technology, the way in which children and young people communicate has been greatly affected. Often users become less inhibited in their use of language and expressions of emotion and may view their use of the Internet as more anonymous than when communicating face-to-face. In particular, young people approaching and in the transitional stages of puberty are more likely to engage in risky behaviours in which they inadvertently might put themselves in danger and open to the attention of those who wish to harm them<sup>1</sup>.

## Some of the ways in which children become the subjects of abuse online are:

- Children made the subjects of abusive images
- Children groomed online for sexual abuse offline
- Children groomed online for sexual abuse online via, for example, webcams<sup>2</sup>
- Bullying by peers

## Some of the reasons that young people may not speak up about online abuse:

- They feel they are 'in love' and therefore have a loyalty to the perpetrator
- The care concerned and even scared about family and friends finding out about their uninhibited use of language online
- They feel responsibility for the events that may have taken place between themselves and the perpetrators
- They feel guilty, ashamed or to blame for being taken in by the perpetrator

If you feel someone is in immediate danger then please call **999** or contact your local police. For age appropriate information for children, young people, parents and teachers go to **[www.thinkuknow.com](http://www.thinkuknow.com)**, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) website.

## For information about...

### Cyberbullying

[www.cybermentors.org.uk](http://www.cybermentors.org.uk)

### Inappropriate web contact

[www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

### Online abuse

Contact Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

### NSPCC Childline

0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Revenge Porn Helpline

[www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk](http://www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk)

<sup>1</sup> ISPCAN newsletter  
'The Link', Summer/Winter 2010

<sup>2</sup> Palmer, T. 2004

# ***Cultural issues***

Every person being abused is a victim of crime and culture should not be accepted as an excuse or justification for abuse. Minority ethnic victims face additional barriers to seeking help, such as language difficulties, insecure immigration status and not being aware of the law. There are some specialised services for minority ethnic victims and a range of translated information available.

## ***Forced marriage***

Forced marriage is where one or both parties do not consent to the marriage or consent is extracted under duress. Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic violence and a serious abuse of human rights. Young people at risk of a forced marriage are usually experiencing emotional and/or physical abuse at home. Schools should consider forced marriage to be abuse and deal with this under their child protection procedures.

**The Forced Marriage Unit is available for advice  
on 020 7008 0151**

## ***'Honour' Based Violence (HBV)***

The term 'Honour Based Violence' is the internationally recognised term describing cultural justifications for violence and abuse and is defined as 'a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.

HBV is normally associated with cultures and communities from Asia, the Middle East and Africa, as well as Gypsies and Travellers. In reality HBV cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities and transcends national and international boundaries. It is essential to take HBV threats seriously and advice should be sought from the Police Public Protection Department (*tel: 101*) and/or Children's Services if the individual is under 18-years-old.

**The Honour Network Helpline is 0800 5999 247**

# Children hurting parents

Incidents of physical or verbal aggression are part of normal child development. However, a growing minority of families are finding that their child's behaviour is beyond that normally expected and that they are being subjected to extreme violence and aggression.

Parentline Plus have reported that over a two year period, 27% of calls received by their helplines related to parental abuse with the abuse coming in forms of intimidation, aggression and physical violence.

Many parents are hesitant to speak out about what is happening and seek help as they feel that the abuse may be seen as a reflection on their parenting or the child suffering or witnessing abuse themselves but often this is not the case and there is no obvious reason for why the abuse may be occurring. It has also been noted that many parents, even if they have the courage to confide in someone, find it very difficult to accept help and support with these issues and your support as a professional could be crucial in helping them to access the support available through organisations such as Parentline Plus.

## Signs of parent abuse

- Threats of and/or physical violence including hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, slapping, biting, hair pulling, with or without weapons or objects used as weapons
- Swearing and name calling
- Intimidation
- A constant refusal to do as they are asked (*going to bed, coming home, asking friends to leave, not attending school etc*) or to contribute to the household or participate in normal family activities
- Bullying by text or phone
- Stealing money or property or misuse of parent's credit cards/phones/computers
- Deliberate damaging of property
- Threats of, or actual, violence to pets or other children of the household as a way of intimidation
- Emotional blackmail
- Drug/alcohol abuse in the home
- Belittling parents in front of friends/other family members/public

## What can parents do about this form of abuse

In case of severe abuse it may be necessary for the parent to contact the police, especially if they are in immediate danger, but for those reluctant to take this step the following advice is offered:

- Do not suffer in silence
- Take back control of the situation and make it clear that you will not accept their behaviour

- Suggest that you both talk to someone who may be able to help
- Work out what may be causing the behaviour and learn to recognise the warning signs, discussing the causes when everyone is calm
- Try to find out if they are drinking alcohol, taking drugs or feel under pressure to act in the same way as their friends. There may be other problems going on that you are not aware of and that need to be addressed
- Remove all privileges such as their rights to mobiles, computers, video games and money and refuse to act as a taxi service
- If they refuse to come home, report them missing to the police (*sometimes this intervention is enough of a wake-up call for them*)
- Spend time with the child as often as possible
- Tell the child that he/she is loved, cared for and respected. Point out their accomplishments
- Keep a journal of events with dates, times and consider filming your child when they are abusing you as often when faced with media of their own behaviour they can be shocked into accepting help from professionals.
- Try not to retaliate by hitting back unless in absolute self defence, and disarm them if they come at you with a weapon
- Walk away from the situation before it escalates whenever possible
- If a child sees violence at home, they may grow up believing this is normal. Your child needs to learn that no form of abuse is acceptable
- Seek help from extended family and friends and see if they can offer to give you respite by taking the child from you for a few days
- Seek professional help such as from local domestic abuse support services and groups or from the police
- Get in touch with an agency such as **Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)** who are dedicated to helping parents with their issues and offer accessible, non-judgemental support. You can call them on **0808 800 2222** or visit their website which contains lots of helpful information
- If necessary, approach your GP and your child's school and have your child referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or refer them yourself, informing them that you are suffering parent abuse

## ***Child Protection Issues***

**The school's child protection procedures should be followed in domestic violence/abuse situations.**

# Contacts and sources of support

Please check the complete local Domestic Violence Service Directory at  
[www.safernh.co.uk](http://www.safernh.co.uk) or [www.nehantsdvf.co.uk](http://www.nehantsdvf.co.uk)

## NATIONAL CONTACTS

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 24-HOUR HELPLINE

This is a 24-hour-a-day, free national helpline run by Women's Aid and Refuge which offers women and children access to emergency refuge accommodation, information and safety planning. They have access to a minicom and language-line facility.

**0808 2000 247**

### MALE ADVICE LINE

Information and advice for male victims of domestic violence. This non-judgmental helpline gives men a chance to talk about their experiences and offers emotional and practical support together with signposting to other agencies who may be able to help.

**0808 801 0327**

**[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)**

### MANKIND

A confidential helpline for men suffering domestic violence or abuse. The line is staffed from Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm and 7-9pm.

**01823 334 244**

### NATIONAL LGBT DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

A 24 hour helpline service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who are experiencing domestic violence.

**0300 999 5428**

### RESPECT PHONELINE

A national phoneline for domestic violence perpetrators, specialising in providing services to male perpetrators but also available to female perpetrators and those in same sex relationships. The phoneline welcomes calls from (ex) partners, friends and relatives who are concerned about a perpetrator and will also give information and advice to frontline workers who come into contact with perpetrators in their work.

**0808 802 40 40**

### CHILDLINE

Free helpline for children where they can talk to someone about any problems they have.

**0800 1111**

### STALKING HELPLINE

Confidential helpline for those who are being stalked or harassed.

**0808 802 0300**



# LOCAL CONTACTS

## **ADAPT (Self referral programme)**

This programme seeks to achieve long-term behavioural change for perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. The course consists of an individual assessment followed by a 30-week group work programme.

**02380 00 98 98**

## **ARMY WELFARE SERVICE**

Counselling and advice to Service men and women and their dependants.

**01252 349 900**

## **CAB (Citizens' Advice Bureau)**

The CAB gives free, confidential and impartial advice on a wide range of subjects including; family and personal legal matters, debt, benefits, housing, employment, immigration and consumer issues.

**Rushmoor: 03444 111 306**

**Yateley: 01252 878 410**

**Fleet: 01252 617 922**

**[www.farnboroughcab.org.uk](http://www.farnboroughcab.org.uk)**

## **CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service)**

Multi-disciplinary mental health services to all children and young people with complex, enduring mental health difficulty.

**01252 335 600**

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Children's Services gives advice, guidance and undergoes assessments with children. If you have concerns that a child might be being abused and you want to talk to someone about your concerns, please ask to speak to the duty social worker.

**0300 555 1384**

**Out-of-hours 0300 555 1373**

**Professionals' line  
01329 225 379**

## **COMMUNITY ACCESS PROJECT (CAP - mental health issues)**

Friendly, impartial advice and support for 18-65-year-olds who are struggling to cope with daily activities as a result of mental distress (for example depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness, schizophrenia etc).

**07894 606 244**

**[broadhurstcap@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:broadhurstcap@hotmail.co.uk)**

## **HAMPSHIRE INTEGRATED DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE**

Support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse across Hampshire. Support includes crisis accommodation (refuge), Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), outreach support, services for children and young people and group work. The line is open 24 hours a day for self and agency referrals.

**0330 0165112**

## **POLICE**

**In emergencies call 999.**

For **non-emergencies** in Hampshire call **101**

Ministry of Defence Police  
**02392 722 407**

Royal Air Force Police  
**01256 702 134**

Royal Military Police  
**01252 347 323**

## **ROYAL/ROYAL MARINES WELFARE**

Advice, counselling, support and advocacy for Royal Navy personnel and their families.

**02392 728 777**

## **SSAFA (*Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association*)**

Offers an all-embracing service to the whole of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Community, dealing with a broad range of social support issues.

**01256 70 2134 ext 7217**

## **STALKING**

If you need help and want to speak to someone directly about stalking and harassment contact the National Stalking Helpline:

**0300 636 0300**

## **[advice@stalkinghelpline.org](mailto:advice@stalkinghelpline.org) SUPPORT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP - TAKING STEPS**

Taking steps is open to men and women who have experienced domestic abuse and provides an unconditional, positive and non-judgmental environment where the important issues to you can be explored.

**07810 430 689 or**

**01256 760 800**

## **VICTIM SUPPORT**

Victim Support is an independent national charity for people affected by crime. The service is independent, confidential and free.

**0808 1689 1111**

# Acknowledgements

This booklet has been researched and produced by the North East Hampshire Domestic Violence Forum members with specialist input from:

**Children's Services**  
**Women's Aid**  
**Hampshire Constabulary**  
**Rushmoor Borough Council**  
**Hart District Council**  
**NSPCC**

The North East Hampshire Domestic Violence Forum was formed in the mid-1990s and its membership is made up of representatives from the many local agencies that work with those affected by domestic violence in Rushmoor and Hart. The Forum meets bi-monthly to share good practice, increase awareness of domestic violence and identify gaps in services.



**For further information about the forum  
please contact Karen Evans on 02380 478 547  
or email [karen.evans.44335@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:karen.evans.44335@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)**

*We would like to thank the young people who attended the Summer Daze programme facilitated by Clear Stone Trust for the cover design. They used outlines of their bodies to visualise how domestic violence had impacted on them emotionally.*



