

# Children & Young People /Adult Services

## Working with Families/Adults where Domestic Violence is evident or suspected

### Policy and Procedure

**PURPOSE:**

The Purpose of the Policy is to ensure that families/adults that disclose or have factors of Domestic Violence that are evident are assessed and supported to ensure their safety and the safety and wellbeing of their child(ren).

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Wolverhampton Over-arching Domestic Violence Protocol and Guidance.

Approved by – Children & Young People Management Team (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015)/  
Service Directors – Older People/Mental Health & Disability

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<b>REVIEW LOG</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
January 2015	1.0	New Policy Produced.	Children and Young People Management Team (2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2015)
	1.1	Adults incorporated	Service Directors – Nov 2015 (via email)

<b>CONSULTATION</b>
<p>The following people have been consulted on this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0-5 Locality Manager</li> <li>- SCSW (Child in Need/Child Protection)</li> <li>- 5-18 Locality Manager</li> <li>- Head of Service (All Age Disability)</li> <li>- Head of Service Older People/Mental Health</li> <li>- Safeguarding Manager</li> <li>- Children &amp; Young People Management Team</li> </ul>

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Domestic abuse is a consistent feature of child/adult protection cases and serious case reviews. Practitioners must identify and assess the impact of domestic violence on children, young people and adults.

The Policy and Procedures have been produced to outline the expectations of Practitioners when working in situations where domestic abuse is suspected (either at an Early Help or Social Care level).

The Policy outlines the assessment tool that should be used to assist Practitioners to make decisions when a child or adult is 'in need' or is 'in need of protection' and is experiencing or suspected of experiencing domestic abuse.

The Policy applies to all staff regardless of the threshold the assessment is being undertaken at e.g. early help/social care. The Safe Lives Risk Assessment must be completed in all circumstances where a child/adult is suspected of being at risk from or a victim of domestic abuse. The Central Referral Hub will use the Barnardos Tool (as a screening mechanism) for 392 referrals.

## **2.0 WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/ABUSE?**

The Government defines domestic violence as:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and emotional”

This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities for example 'honour based violence', female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

Domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident; professional judgement must be used to identify patterns of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim. Typically domestic abuse can involve a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour, which can escalate over time. The abuse can begin at any time.

Domestic abuse occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, disability, race and sexuality, wealth and geography.

Research confirms a strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse.

## **3.0 IMPACT ON CHILDREN**

The impact of domestic violence on children/adults is similar to the effects of any other abuse or trauma. The impact on a victim can diminish their capacity to protect their child/ren. Victims can become so preoccupied with their own survival within the relationship that they are unaware of the effect on the adult/their child/ren. Professionals should always risk assess every incident of domestic violence in relation to severity,

frequency and duration as this will give an indication of the length of time children have been exposed to a traumatic and abusive event.

Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 extended the legal definition of 'significant harm' to children to include harm caused by witnessing or overhearing abuse of another, especially in a context of domestic violence. This added to the legal framework for child protection set out in the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the key principle of which was that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. It states that children should usually be cared for within their own home, but that children should also be safe and protected if they are at risk of significant harm. Section 17 makes provision for local authorities to provide support, care and services to safeguard and promote the welfare and development of the child and can be used, even if the mother has no recourse to public funds to support mothers and their children.

#### **4.0 HOW DO I ASSESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITHIN THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S/ADULT SERVICES?**

Within Children/Disability/Adult Services the method of assessment in Domestic Violence Is the Safe Lives Risk Assessment. For Police 392 referrals (a police report) this screening will be via the Barnardos Screening Tool.

The tool has been developed for agencies to use to identify domestic violence risks. The primary purpose of the tool is to identify risk to the adult victim and the impact on any child(ren) to be able to offer appropriate resources/support. Where the risk assessment highlights serious concerns (14+ points) or professional judgement indicates concerns the case should progress to a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). (see section 6.0)

Furthermore the information from the checklist will enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and 'near misses', which forms the basis of the most recognised models of risk assessment.

#### **4.1 How do I use the Safe Lives RA TOOL?**

All practitioners working with families where Domestic Violence is evident or suspected must complete the Safe Lives RA Tool. The risk assessment should then feed into the overall assessment being undertaken by the Lead Professional/allocated worker.

The document will give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with families of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a MARAC meeting in order to manage their risk. If you are concerned about risk, you should make a referral to ensure that a full assessment of their safety and welfare is made.

These are the key areas to assist Professionals reach decisions about where an family is at risk are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Coercial, threats & isolation
- Economic abuse
- Emotional abuse & isolation
- Children & pregnancy

## 4.2 How do I access the Safe Lives RA Tool?

The Safe Lives RA Tool can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Dash%20with%20guidance%20FINAL.pdf>

## 5.0 **RECORDING**

The completed **Safe Lives RA TOOL** form should be recorded and saved on the relevant recording system.

The outcome of the risk assessment and actions must also be integrated into the overall assessment being undertaken by the lead professional/allocated worker.

## 6.0 **MULTI AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)**

For information on MARAC (see MARAC Policy & Procedure).

### 6.1 **Making a referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference**

The following represent Children's Services on MARAC

- 0 – 5 Early Help – Locality 8 Locality Operational Manager
- 5 – 18 Early Help –Parent Support Advisor– Locality 2
- Child in Need/Child Protection – CSW Central Referral Hub
- Older People/Mental Health/Disability Service – representative per rota

1. Complete MARAC Referral Form and send to your representative
2. MARAC representative may contact you for further information. In some cases they may ask you to attend.
3. MARAC representative will feedback MARAC discussion within 48 hours of the meeting. Where new cases need action, these, will also be sent over.

## 7.0 **TRAINING**

**Staff outlined below are expected to undertake the training below as a minimum:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Minimum Training Expectation</b>
Family Support Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li><li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li></ul>
Social Worker (both Adults & Children's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li><li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li></ul>
Consultant Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li><li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li></ul>
Senior Consultant Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li><li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li></ul>
Service Information Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li><li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li></ul>
Community Care Assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li><li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li></ul>
Advanced Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li> </ul>
Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Learning DV (Children)</li> <li>• E-Learning DV (Adults)</li> </ul>

## Appendix A

### The Haven Wolverhampton – Single Point of Contact

**Service description:** Provides safe, emergency temporary accommodation and floating support services to men and women with, or without, children affected by domestic violence and homelessness.

**How to get support:** Telephone the 24 hour referral line. Your call will be dealt with promptly and sympathetically day or night. Self referral or referral through other organisations.

**Address:** PO Box 105 Wolverhampton, WV1 4LP

**Phone:** 24hr referral line: 08000 194 400

**Training on domestic violence:** 01902 572128

**Fax:** 01902 572144

**E-mail:** [info@havenrefuge.org.uk](mailto:info@havenrefuge.org.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.havenrefuge.org.uk>

### Jericho Society

**Service description:** Supported accommodation for women (age 16+) and their dependant children affected by domestic violence and homelessness

**How to get support:** Telephone the 24 hour referral line. Your call will be dealt with promptly and sympathetically day or night. Self referral or referral through other organisations.

**Address:** Jericho House

**Phone:** 24 hour referral line: 01902 421732

**Fax:** 01902 428778

**E-mail:** [jerichowolv@btconnect.com](mailto:jerichowolv@btconnect.com)

**Website:**

### Wolverhampton City Council – Housing Outreach Team

**Service description:** The Housing Outreach Team provides floating support for women who are or have been experiencing domestic violence in order to help people to maintain their tenancies.

**How to get support:** Referral can be made by an organisation or agency or by self referral. Telephone the below number for a referral form.

**Contact:** Young Persons and Tenancy Sustainment Co-ordinator

**Address:** Ground Floor, Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RB

**Phone:** 01902 551023

**Fax:** 01902 554905

**E-mail:** [housing.outreach@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:housing.outreach@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

**Website:** <http://www2.wolverhampton.gov.uk>

### **Man Kind Initiative**

Mankind provide both emotional and practical support as well as providing information.

#### **Emotional support, includes:**

- Simply someone to talk to
- Giving you confidence
- Helping you to realise you are not blame

#### **Information and support includes:**

- Housing and refuge support
- Reporting incidents
- Police procedures
- Legal Services (including solicitors who can help)
- Referring victims to local councils, refuges and other support services
- Local services and support groups

Calls are also welcomed from mothers, sisters and friends of victims, seeking information.

**Phone:** 01823 334244

**Website:** [www.mankind.org.uk/howwecanhelp.html](http://www.mankind.org.uk/howwecanhelp.html)

### **Advocacy – One Voice**

One voice is an organisation run by disabled people offering help, advice and support to other disabled people as well as offering information, training, consultation and partnership working to other organisations on issues to do with disabled citizens' lives.

We provide a free advocacy service for health complaints (all Wolverhampton citizens) and our general advocacy service is also now available to family carers, older people, people with drug or alcohol misuse issues as well as people with any kind of impairment.

**Phone:** (01902) 810016

**Website:** [www.wolvesnet.info/kb5/wolverhampton/asch/organisation.page?id=N15oabO5EzA](http://www.wolvesnet.info/kb5/wolverhampton/asch/organisation.page?id=N15oabO5EzA)



## **Appendix B - Tools that can assist in circumstances where DV is evident/being assessed**

**The empowerment star should be used in the first instance to identify steps to be taken e.g. provide the Freedom Programme etc.**

### **Freedom Programme**

This programme empowers women who have experience of Domestic violence within a relationship. It looks at how control can be used in a negative way. A key aspect is considering the effects of DV on children. Part of the empowerment process is showing attendees what to look out for if they leave a relationship and start another i.e. possible traits of abusers and early warning signs.

This programme shows most benefits for women who recognise they want to make a change in their lives.

### **Outcomes STAR**

The Empowerment Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a family of tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people. It is also a key working tool that can support service users to make changes by providing them with a clear picture of their progress towards empowerment, breaking it down into manageable steps and enabling them to plot their progress along the way.

The Empowerment Star focuses on the following core areas:

1. Safety
2. Accommodation
3. Support networks
4. Legal issues
5. Health and well being
6. Money
7. Children
8. Work and learning
9. Empowerment and self-esteem

Data will be used to measure how effective support is for women experiencing Domestic Violence especially those attending the Freedom Programme.