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**Responding to Domestic Abuse**

**Guidance for Schools/Educational settings across Warrington**

**October 2021**

A guide to support Primary, Secondary, Special Schools and other Education Settings in providing awareness about Domestic Abuse and addressing the impact on children and young people in Warrington

**Document: Responding to Domestic Abuse**

**Guidance for Schools/Educational settings across Warrington -**

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**Objective**

The key purpose of this protocol is to support educational settings to embed a consistent approach in responding to domestic abuse. It provides additional insight into the tools to support and understand the needs of children and young people and parents affected by domestic abuse.

The guidance provides pathways to respond to Domestic Abuse in various settings this includes:

* Responding to notifications received via operation Encompass and VPA’s
* Disclosure from a child
* Disclosure from a parent
* Disclosure from a young person from the age 13-17 years

The secondary objective is to ensure that educational settings are aware of the support available to adults and children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse and of the processes in place to safeguard victims at the earliest opportunity.

**This document is an additional tool to embed good practice across educational setting to respond to domestic abuse, and to be used alongside existing safeguarding frameworks.**

**Definition**

**What is Domestic Abuse?**

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:

(a) A and B are each aged **16 or over** and are personally **connected** to each other, and

(b) The behaviour is abusive (DA Act 21).

Behaviour is “**abusive”** if it consists of any of the following:

(a) Physical or sexual abuse;

(b) Violent or threatening behaviour;

(c) Controlling or coercive behaviour;

(d) Economic abuse

(e) Psychological, emotional or other abuse;

And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

**Children** aged under 18 who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse and are related to the victim or perpetrator are classed as victims in their own right (DA Act 2021).

**Key Highlights:**

**National Picture**

* 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experience domestic abuse
* Domestic abuse accounts for 35% of all homicides in England and Wales
* Domestic abuse has high repeat victimisation compared to other crimes
* 1 woman is killed every 3 days by a partner or ex-partner
* 54% of female victims of serious sexual assault were assaulted by their partner or ex-partner
* Every minute, police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call
* 200,000 children in England live in households where there is domestic abuse
* One in seven (14.2%) children and young people under the age of 18, will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood
* 62% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator
* The UK Forced Marriage Unit receive 1,600 reports of forced marriage a year
* 500 cases of honour based violence are reported each year (true level is expected to be 35 times higher)
* 170,000 women and girls are living with effects of FGM across the UK

**Warrington Picture**

Domestic abuse affects thousands of children and young people across Warrington each year.

* Between January 2020 and December 2020, the police recorded 3,457 domestic abuse related crimes
* For the same period, 88% of cases discussed at MARAC had children and young people living in the household (a MARAC is a meeting where cases are referred due to being at high risk of injury and or harm from a connected person)
* In the period April 2020 to March 2021, MASH received 1,315 calls related to domestic abuse. From this, 408 (31%) were referred to Children Social Care for further assessment and 167 families
* From April 2020 to March 2021, 217 children and young people (under 18) presented as homeless due to domestic abuse with their parent. This was 48% of all homelessness applications made as a result of domestic abuse

The number of children and young people affected by domestic abuse makes it incumbent that as a borough, we aim to work towards embedding a consistent approach in our response.

**Responding to a (DA) Notification Operation Encompass or VPA**

**What to do when a child/young person (CYP) discloses DA under 13**

**What to do when a Parent discloses DA**

**Disclosure by Young Person experiencing Domestic Abuse**

 **(13-17 year olds) in own relationship/connected person**

**Additional Guidance**

**The impact on children and young people experiencing domestic abuse**

Children and young people can be impacted in numerous ways depending on a wide-range of factors and different children within the household experiences will differ. The level of impact will vary on factors such as; the type of abuse they are experiencing at home, the length of time the abuse has been taking place, their wider support structure, gender, age, race, disability, are all factors that determine the level of impact and vulnerability on a child/young person. The impact can last into adulthood over time, domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience.

**Signs that a child has been a victim of domestic abuse can include:**

* aggression or bullying
* anti-social behavior, like vandalism
* attention seeking
* bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
* constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
* Anxiety, depression suicidal thoughts
* Drugs and alcohol abuse
* eating disorders
* problems in school or trouble learning
* tantrums
* withdrawal
* truancy/frequent unexplained absences

The table below indicates the detail of the impact and risks for children and young people living with or experienced domestic abuse. It provides some of the signs and symptoms that educational staff may recognise as a cause for concern and action. It also highlights some of the issues a child and young person is experiencing that require support.

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| **When Living with Domestic Violence and Abuse:**  |

 | **When Leaving Domestic Violence and Abuse:** |
| **Safety** |
| * Injury/threats if attempts to intervene
* Having to leave the house to get help or be safe
* Running away
* Being injured before birth, or as baby
* Self-harming in order to cope
 | * Continued threat from abuser
* Continued contact with abusive parent through a ‘Contact order’
* Greater risk to health and safety when in temporary accommodation
* At greater risk of being killed at this point or recently separated
 |
| **Education**  |
| * Erratic school attendance
* Late to school
* Attending school when ill because they do not want to be at home
* Faking illness to stay at home to protect abused parent/carer
* Disturbed sleep leading to a loss of concentration
* Unable to complete homework
* Concentrating extra hard to escape
* Not being able to take part in extra-curricular activities
 | * Disturbed sleep leading to a loss of concentration
* Not getting a new school place
* Late to school because of new accommodation
* Missing school to support parent
* Unable to complete homework
* Reduced finances affecting ability to buy uniform or take part in extra-curricular activities
* Risk of abduction because they can be found via school
 |
| **Emotional Health and Development**  |
| * Restricted access to health care
* Restricted access to food and clothing
* Unwilling or unable to bring friends home
* Erratic school attendance
* Disturbed sleep
* Altered brain development
* Living with conflict and tension
* Distorted vision of relationships
* Being forced to take part in abuse of parent
* Upset at death/ injury to pet
 | * Not being able to see friends and family
* Possible loss of a pet, possessions and all that is familiar
* Stigma of being in temporary accommodation
* Loss of access to activities e.g. sport or drama
* Finances can improve or get worse
* Maybe subject to an child protection investigation
* Disturbed sleep
* Stress related illness and/or behaviours
 |

**Domestic Abuse & Child Abuse**

It is now widely accepted that children living with domestic violence are also at greater risk of experiencing neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse. The NSPCC prevalence study found that young people experiencing family violence and abuse were between 2.9 and 4.4 times more likely to experience physical violence and neglect from a caregiver than those young people not exposed to family violence (Radford et al., 2011).

**Domestic Abuse and Impact on Parenting**

Domestic abuse frequently impacts on family functioning, housing, income and social integration (Cleaver et al 2008).

Children and young people may become more vulnerable due to the compromised parenting they experience as a result of living in a domestic abuse household, where their non -abusing parent is unable to meet their needs due the abuse.

Children and young people living in households with DA also frequently suffer from limited opportunities to choose, to feel free, and to develop a sense of independence and competence (Katz, 2015)

**Support within educational settings**

Following an initial disclosure from the CYP, or an incident of domestic abuse at home, a CYP may need extra on-going day to day support within an educational setting. However, any form of counselling, therapeutic intervention should only be undertaken by a fully qualified professional. Staff within educational settings can be sensitive to the CYP day to day support needs for example;

* Check in with them each day
* Offer them a snack /breakfast
* Give them a safe exit strategy from the classroom/time out
* Give them a way of saying they need space or someone to talk to
* Provide time in positive play or nurture groups
* Monitor CYP
* Simply be the stable environment in which they feel safe
* Seek consent with non- abusing parent and refer onto support services
* Provide information to older pupils about the specialist services such as counselling/domestic abuse support.
* Some parents may have an injunction against them which means that that they are not allowed access to, or custody of the child. Ensure class teachers and other relevant staff are aware if this.
* Provide support to parent

**Considerations for children/young people living in Temporary Accommodation i.e. Refuge**

Where a child is new in school because they have moved to a local refuge/temporary accommodation or a new address, they may need support in making friends and integrating into school life. They may not have space or easy access to a laptop/digital devices or WIFI in the refuge, so this needs to be taken into consideration when setting homework.

When police are called out to a domestic abuse incident in Warrington, if children or young people are present or registered living at that address then schools/educational settings will be informed of this the next working day via a `**Domestic Abuse Notification’** this initiative is known as **Operation Encompass.**

**Operation Encompass** is a police and education early information sharing partnership enabling schools/educational settings to offer immediate support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. Information is shared by the police with a school's/educational setting trained Key Adult (DSL) prior to the start of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident thus enabling appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the CYP. Operation Encompass recognises that CYP are victims of domestic abuse in their own right and should be acknowledged as such. Police officers that attend any domestic abuse incident must always record the personal details and school/educational setting information of any children who are registered living/or at present at a DA incident. This information is then received by the Police referral unit who ensure that it is sent to the relevant school(s)/educational setting in a timely manner.

In addition to the Operation Encompass process, the Police has a duty to complete a **Vulnerable Person Assessment** (VPA) report following attendance at any domestic abuse incident. Each of these reports is processed through the Police referral unit, risk assessed and shared with partner agencies as appropriate. Within the Safeguarding Hub there is a **daily meeting** whereby the most concerning of Domestic Abuse cases are discussed between agencies to ensure that a robust and timely safety plan is implemented. This meeting will involve the Education representative within the MASH who may as a result then liaise with the school (DSL) to implement any agreed actions.

**MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)**

MARAC is a multi-agency risk assessment conference that meets every 2 weeks in Warrington. Its purpose is for agencies to share information about `high’ risk victims of domestic violence and abuse and for agencies to work collaboratively to safeguard, and reduce the victims risk by putting in place safety measures to support victims. A range of agencies meet to identify and reduce risks for example: Police, Local Authority, Mental Health Services, Children Services, Probation, Adult Social Care, Education Safeguarding, Housing, substance misuse. Victims are referred to the MARAC by a number of agencies following the completion of a risk assessment tool called the Safelives-DASH Risk Identification Checklist. The Safe lives-DASH Risk assessment can be completed by **any** agency, including a member of staff at a school. There are 24 questions on the DASH Risk assessment:

**Risk and Referral Process:**

* **High Risk**

A victim is deemed high risk in any of the following:

* If a victim scores **14** or more on the risk assessment (yes responses)
* if there have been **3** or police callouts in **12 months**
* if the abuse is escalating
* or professionals have concerns about the victims and family safety

A referral should be made to the MARAC immediately via education **safeguarding lead.** Some head teachers/DSL/teaching staff who have a close supportive relationship with a parent may be in a position to complete a DASH with a parent, where he or she is unwilling to seek support elsewhere.

* **Medium Risk**

Victims who score between **9-13** on the **DASH RIC** are considered medium risk of serious injury/harm/homicide and should be referred to the MASH.

In Warrington victims who are risk assessed as medium and have children are likely to be heard at the daily domestic abuse meeting.

* **Standard Risk**

Victims who score between **1-8** on the **DASH RIC** are considered standard risk of serious injury/harm/homicide and should be offered support via the Early Help offer, IDVA service and wider agencies (see flowchart, DA Web page). Where there is an identified need for a Multi-agency approach then consideration should be given to complete an Early Help Assessment.

**Displaying Information**

For many victims in particular young victims, educational settings might be the **only** safe place they access. It would help if schools/educational settings displayed posters/leaflets with information about domestic abuse and support agencies for both adults and children.

**Appendix 1 - Glossary**

|  |  |
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| CAF | Common Assessment Framework |
| CAMHS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services |
| CSE | Child Sexual Exploitation |
| CP | Child Protection |
| Critical Register | A system used by the police to indicate families involving high risk of domestic violence, and child on the Child Protection Plan, and other critical factors |
| DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment & Honour Based Violence) | A national risk assessment identification checklist (RIC) tool used to help front-linepractitioners identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and ‘honour’-based violence |
| DSL | Designated Safeguarding Lead |
| DHR | Domestic Homicide Review – A review under taken when a death has occurred due to (DVA) |
| DA | Domestic Abuse |
| EH | Early Help |
| EPO | Emergency Protection Order |
| ES | Education Setting |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation – A procedure involving part or total removal of female’s external genitalia |
| FM | Forced Marriage - marriage conducted without valid consent (free will) of one or both parties  |
| HBV – Honour Based Violence | So-called 'honour'-based violence- An incident or pattern of violence which is construed as justified under protecting the families/communities honour |
| IDVA | Independent Domestic Violence Advocates- A specialist worker for high risk victims who has been trained to an IDVA qualification |
| MARAC | Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference. A forum of organisations that manage high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and ‘honour’- based violence |
| MASH | Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub |
| NFA | No further action |
| SAFELIVES | National organisation which developed the MARAC Model and DASH risk checklist  |
| SCR | Serious Case Review |
| SDVC  | Specialist Domestic Violence Court - A dedicated court where specially trained personnel hear and facilitate DA court cases |
| YPVA | Young Person Violence/ Advocate/Advisor |
| YP | Young Person |
| EHA | Early Help Assessment  |
| TAF | Team Around The Family |

**Further Resources**

[Impact on children and young people - Women’s Aid](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/impact-on-children-and-young-people/)

[Home | The Hide Out](http://thehideout.org.uk/children/home/) a webpage for children and young people affected by domestic abuse

**References**

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Katz, E. (2015). Beyond the physical incident model: how children living with domestic violence are harmed by and resist regimes of coercive control. Child Abuse Review, Early View.

Radford, L. Corral, S. Bradley, C. Fisher, H, Collishaw, S. Bassett, C. and Howat, N. (2011), Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK Today, London: NSPCC

**Support for Young Victims of Domestic Abuse**

Dial **999** and ask the police for assistance

Is there a threat of **immediate danger**?

**CHESHIRE POLICE**

Dial **101** (24 hour service) non-emergency

Is **police assistance** required?

**MASH**

Mon - Fri 9am - 4.45pm - **01925 443322**

Out of hours - **01925 444400**

Are there any safeguarding concerns?

Further support agencies can be found on:

https://www.warrington.gov.uk/domesticabuse

**ChildLine - 0800 1111**

(24 hour national helpline for children)

If you want to speak to someone about the abuse you have seen/affected by

Non abusing parent

School Staff

Trusted Adult

Trusted family member

Sibling

Friend

[**www.thehideout.org.uk**](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)Website for children and young people impacted by Domestic Abuse

For emotional support for a young person where the danger is **not** immediate

Young Person’s IDVA Service

(12-19 Year Old)

Mon- Fri 9am - 5pm - **01925 243 359**

**Email:** warringtonidvaservice@refuge.org.uk

**Domestic Violence and Abuse Support Services**

Further support agencies can be found on:

https://www.warrington.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Is there a threat of **immediate danger**?

Dial **999** and ask the police for assistance

**CHESHIRE POLICE SWITCHBOARD**

Dial **101** (24 hour service)

Is **police assistance** required?

**Warrington IDVA Service** – **01925 243 359**

**Duty IDVA** – warringtonidvaservice@refuge.org.uk or **CJSM** – warrington.idvaservice@refuge.cjsm.net

Support for Male and female victims

Is **Specialist Support** needed?

**Warrington Women’s Aid (Refuge accommodation and Outreach Support) - 01925 417138**

Out of hours 8am- 5.30pm - **01925 417138**

**MASH**

Mon - Fri 9am - 4.45pm - **01925 443322**

Out of hours - **01925 444400**

**Early Help**

Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm - **xxxxxxxx**

Advisors to support parents/carers/professionals

If you are concerned about a **child** impacted from direct or indirect domestic abuse contact:

**Remember, if in doubt – Report it**

**National 24 hour Domestic Abuse Helpline**

**0808 2000 247**

Offering advice and assistance with refuge accommodation

**Homeless Team**

Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5pm - **01925 246868**

Out of hours enquiries - **01925 444400**

Is alternative **housing /safe housing required?**

Is **alternative housing** or emergency refuge required?

Are you worried about your abusive **behavior** and want support?

**Respect Helpline**

Mon - Fri **9am - 8pm**

**Sat & Sun 10am - 12pm & 4pm - 6pm**

**0808 802 4040**

**Email:** info@respectphoneline.org.uk

**MY CWA**

9am - 5pm - **01270 250 390** **Email:** info@mycwa.org.uk

Support for men & women who use abusive behaviours in their relationship

**Police Non-Emergency**

**101**

Is there concern about a **vulnerable adult** experiencing abuse?

**Safeguarding Adults Team**

Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm - **01925 443322**

Out of hours - **01925 652222**