

CATCOTT PRIMARY



SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

‘...where learning takes you to greater heights...’

Approved by:

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The Home Office defines domestic abuse as: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality".

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can also happen between adults who are related to one another.

Domestic abuse can include:

- coercive control such as being told where to go and what to wear or being isolated from friends and family
- physical abuse such as being punched, kicked, cut, or being hit with an object
- emotional abuse such as being constantly undermined, sworn at, intimidated, ridiculed, harassed, or threatened with harm or death
- sexual abuse and rape including within a relationship or being made to have sex with other people
- stalking and harassment such as being repeatedly followed or spied on, being regularly given unwanted gifts or receiving unwanted communication
- economic and financial abuse such as having access to money controlled or withheld or being prevented from earning money
- technology-facilitated abuse such as having messages and emails monitored or deleted, constantly being sent messages or calls, or being tracked via device location

It can happen to anyone of any age, gender, ethnicity or sexuality.

Domestic abuse always has an impact on children. Being exposed to domestic abuse in childhood is child abuse. Children may experience domestic abuse both directly and indirectly.

Children may experience:

- not getting the care and support they need from their parents or carers as a result of the abuse
- hearing the abuse from another room
- seeing someone they care about being injured and/or distressed
- finding damage to their home environment like broken furniture
- being hurt from being caught up in or trying to stop the abuse
- being denied access to parts of their home, such as rooms being locked
- being forced out of or losing their home

The impact of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse undermines a child's basic need for safety and security. It can have a serious effect on their behaviour, brain development, education outcomes and overall wellbeing

Domestic abuse can cause confusing relationships with parents and carers. Children might experience conflicting feelings, including:

- not having a strong bond with their parents or carers
- hoping an abused parent will leave for safety reasons
- worrying about what might happen if their parents or carers separate
- being afraid of their parents or carers.

How children can experience domestic abuse:

- Being physically harmed or threatened with harm
- Being injured while trying to intervene
- Witnessing or overhearing the abuse of others
- Witnessing an assault or the outcomes of it
- Being encouraged and coerced to take part in the abuse
- Being threatened to remain silent or learning that you are expected to stay silent
- Seeing ill treatment of pets
- Seeing damage in the home or to toys

Becoming Aware of Domestic Abuse

It is important to always consider living with domestic abuse as a possible explanation for any unusual behaviour exhibited by a young person or child. The following circles list some typical warning signs; however, it is not an exhaustive list, and behaviours may be caused by other factors.

Step 1: Identify

- Injuries without explanation, concealed or minimised by client
- A partner who is unwilling to allow a parent to be alone with professionals
- A parent who appears passive and dominated by their partner
- Change in behaviour, for example appearing anxious

Step 2: Ask

- If you have a concern, always try to find out more from the person themselves. Make sure the person you are concerned about is on their own. If you are talking through an interpreter, make sure they are independent of the family and the community.

Ways to start the conversation:

- Are you happy?
- How are things in your relationship?
- Is anybody hurting you? Do not refer to 'partner' as it could be someone else
- Are you or your children scared or upset?

Step 3: Act

- If the situation is urgent, visible injury is evident or children are at risk, phone 999 or Somerset Council's Children's Services (0300 123 2224)
- Always complete the [Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment \(DASH\)](#) even if the victim is not in immediate danger to help inform your decision and determine escalation routes. If the **DASH** scores 14 points or more this is considered high risk and should be referred for a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). If a lower score is reached, professional judgement may be applied by speaking directly to the Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service who will consider the referral. Discuss with your **MARAC** representative for more support. Ensure the victim knows about sources of help and support that are available.

IMPORTANT:

If you have immediate concerns about the client's safety, please call the police on **999**.

If there is an immediate risk to children or vulnerable adults, initiate your agency's child protection or safeguarding adult procedures

Standard risk (score 1 – 9)

Provide with the following suggestions:

- National Domestic Abuse 24 hour Helpline: **0808 2000 247**
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: **0800 999 5428**

Medium risk (score 10 – 13)

- With the client's consent, refer to Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service for Overcoming Abuse group programme. Please use secure email when sending the completed documents.
- Email: youfirstsidas@theyoutrust.org.uk
- Attach your completed referral form and **DASH**.

High risk (score 14+ or professional judgement)

Send **DASH** to your agency's **MARAC** representative, who must:

- Complete a Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service referral for
- Send completed referral form and **DASH** together marked "**MARAC**" to: youfirstsidas@theyoutrust.org.uk