

Darlington Multi-Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Procedural Flow Chart – Adults with care and support needs and children

Enabling disclosure

There are many reasons why victims won't, or feel they can't, make a disclosure so it's important to build trust to enable a possible future disclosure.

- Always be alert to the possibility that an individual is experiencing domestic abuse and be prepared to offer support.
- People with care and support needs and young people aged 16-18 may not recognise themselves as victims especially in cases involving coercion and control
- Be aware of signs that could indicate abuse is taking place, e.g. physical injury (inconsistent explanations for bruises or other injuries, frequent bruises or injury), controlling behaviour (partner always present during appointments, won't allow person to talk for themselves, person has limited access to money) and environmental indicators (holes in doors/walls, broken furniture, tense atmosphere in the home).
- Ensure professional interpreters are used, **never** use family members, children or friends where abuse is known or suspected.
- Only ask questions about domestic abuse when victims are on their own and in a private place.

This guidance is applicable to adults with care and support needs and children who are affected by domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is predominantly perpetrated against women by men, however it can be perpetrated within same sex relationships, by women against men, and by other family members such as adult children against their parents or the extended family/community as in cases of Honour Based Violence. Young people aged 16-18 can also perpetrate abuse against parents and other family members. Domestic abuse impacts upon children and/or adults with care and support needs in the household whether they are abused directly by the perpetrators and by hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents.

Remember: domestic violence and abuse commonly **escalates** and increases in **severity** over time. People with disability and mental health issues are more likely to experience domestic abuse and cases involving people with care and support needs are often not recognised and under reported. **Accurate and timely recording of information is essential.**

Separation does not ensure safety; it often increases the risk in the short to medium term. Always consult domestic abuse specialist agencies for safety planning advice if the victim wishes to separate (Please see over page)
IN ALL CASES A RISK ASSESSMENT MUST BE COMPLETED. Always use the [MARAC Risk checklist \(SafeLives DASH Risk Checklist\)](#) as a starting point.

Deal with any immediate risks, including risks to others and yourself. Check records for risk information or warnings. Contact emergency services if required. Remember that accurate and timely recording of information is essential.

Never assume that someone else will take care of the domestic abuse issues. You should seek confirmation that other professionals/agencies have acted in a way which you would expect. You may be the victim's first and only contact. Remember that victims can deny abuse is happening and minimise the risk and/or harm. Discuss with your line manager, assess the threshold level and act accordingly.



| Case meets MARAC Criteria (People aged 16 or over) | Case meets safeguarding adults criteria | Case does not meet MARAC or safeguarding adults criteria | Cases where children are involved (people aged under 18) |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clear with the victim about confidentiality and MARAC procedures. 2. Complete the MARAC Risk Checklist (SafeLives DASH Risk Checklist) with the victim where possible. 3. Complete MARAC referral form. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>Contact your agency's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for MARAC. Your agency SPOC:</p> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Make referral to NIDAS for an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) or Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA). 5. Agency SPOC sends referral to MARAC Coordinator. 6. IDVA or ISVA will contact the victim. 7. MARAC meeting takes place and victim's views are presented by IDVA/ISVA. 8. Action plan is developed. <p>Where the case is visible high risk (14 ticks) or based on your professional judgement the case is high risk and you have serious concerns about a victim's situation you must make a referral into MARAC.</p> | <p>Domestic abuse is a form of abuse covered by Darlington Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures and Darlington Joint Multi-Agency Procedure and Practice Guidance-Domestic Abuse</p> <p>Where the victim of domestic abuse is an adult at risk as defined by the Care Act 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aged 18 or over and • has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met) and • as a result of those needs is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. <p>A safeguarding adults referral must be made.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete and submit a Safeguarding Adults Concern Form 2. Telephone the First Point of Contact team (01325 406111) or contact allocated Social Worker. 3. Decision made whether Safeguarding Adults Enquiry need to progress and a Safeguarding Adults Plan developed. <p>It is good practice to make a safeguarding adults and a MARAC referral if both criteria are met.</p> <p>Further practice guidance (insert link) around domestic abuse and safeguarding adults is available.</p> | <p>You still need to take action and support the victim.</p> <p>Long term involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider immediate and long term risks. 2. Develop a safety plan with the victim (taking into consideration any dependents they may have). 3. Signpost/refer the victim to domestic abuse support services (see over). 4. Share information with other relevant agencies. 5. Regularly revisit level of risk in terms of MARAC and safeguarding action. <p>Short term involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider immediate and long term risks. 2. Review any previous risks/decision-making in relation to domestic abuse or safeguarding adults – do not assume it remains the same. 3. Discuss basic safety plan with alleged victim – ensure they know where to go for help if they need it. 4. Signpost/refer to domestic abuse support services (see over). 5. Share information with other relevant agencies. 6. Consider whether case needs allocating to a longer term worker. 7. Ensure recording is clear for future workers who may become involved. | <p>Remember that children are always impacted by domestic abuse. They are at risk of significant harm by direct abuse and from hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents. This will be dealt with under multi-agency safeguarding children procedures.</p> <p>If you have a concern that a child has been affected by domestic abuse:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the multi-agency referral form 2. Contact Children's Access Point (01325 406222) <p>A 16-18 year old in a coercive, controlling or abusive relationship should receive safeguarding services and support in line with the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 and practitioners should refer to Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures and the DSCB multi-agency threshold tool to establish the level of support and intervention required and consideration should be given to an Early Help Assessment.</p> <p>In all circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document decision-making, actions taken to manage risk and rationale for sharing or not sharing information. • Be aware of your professional role and consult with other partners to: clarify their roles and responsibilities, share information and seek advice e.g. Police, health, housing, domestic abuse/violence specialists • Follow up any referrals. • When signposting to other agencies always consider risks associated with the perpetrator finding leaflets/letters etc. |

| Domestic abuse support services. In an emergency always call 999 | Good practice guidance when responding to an adult victim of domestic abuse who has needs for care and support | Good practice guidance when responding to a child who is a victim of domestic abuse |
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| <p>Services for victims</p> <p>Family Help Darlington Family Help offer specialist domestic abuse support for women and women with children fleeing domestic abuse and can provide safe temporary accommodation in a purpose built refuge. Telephone number: 01325 364486 or e mail familyhelp@btconnect.com</p> <p>Harbour Support Services Harbour is an independent registered charity which provides assistance to individuals and families affected by Domestic Abuse Telephone number: 03000 202025 (24hrs) or e mail info@myharbour.org.uk</p> <p>The HALO Project The HALO Project is a national project which supports victims of Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). HALO also works with key partner Telephone 01642 2683045 or by e mail info@haloproject.org.uk</p> <p>National Domestic Violence Helpline The 24hr Freephone helpline is run in partnership with Women's Aid and Refuge and is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence and abuse, their family, friends and colleagues and anyone calling on their behalf. Translation facilities for callers whose first language is not English is available and there is a service for callers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Telephone: 0808 2000 247.</p> <p>Forward UK The Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development is the leading African women led organisation working on FGM, child marriage and other forms of violence against women and girls in the UK and Africa. Telephone: 0208 960 4000 or e mail support@forward.uk.org</p> <p>The Meadows Sexual Assault Referral Centre (all victims of sexual assault) Medical and counselling service following a sexual assault, you do not have to report to Police to access this service. 0191 3729202 (Monday to Friday office hours)</p> <p>The Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (Darlington and Co Durham) Information, support and counselling for women and girls aged 13 and over who have been raped, sexually abused or have suffered domestic abuse at any time in their life. Telephone number: Support Line: 01325 369933 (Monday –Thursday 6.30pm-9.00pm)</p> <p>Respect Male victims of Domestic Abuse advice line: Telephone 0808 801 0327 Male and female perpetrators of domestic abuse advice line: Telephone 0808 802 4040 Respect also provides advice in respect of young people using violence and abuse in close relationships</p> <p>Darlington ARQ Darlington ARQ provides counselling and mentoring services to people who identify as LGBTQ and the wider community. Telephone 01388 229516</p> <p>Men's Advice Line Advice and support for male victims of domestic abuse. Telephone: 0808 801 0327</p> <p>National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline Emotional and practical support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse including from family members 0800 999 5428</p> | <p>If you suspect that abuse is happening but it is not disclosed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional curiosity- when your suspicions are raised it is important that you act on them. You could provide the only opportunity for the victim to tell someone. Research suggests that female victims with disability do not routinely disclose but will give information if asked the question directly. Show the person you have time to listen – if you appear rushed or uninterested you are less likely to receive a disclosure. Safe enquiry- remember it can be dangerous to ask about domestic abuse in front of anyone else, particularly a partner. It is important to ensure privacy. A later opportunity should be identified to speak to the person alone or pass your concerns onto another professional who could also attempt to enquire. An assessment of risk should be undertaken which should encompass the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). Professional judgement should also be used in the assessment of risk which can incorporate the DASH-RIC but be aware that for people with care and support needs the DASH-RIC may have limitations. A risk assessment is likely to benefit from multi-agency information sharing. Begin with open questions, e.g. “tell me how things are going”. Follow up with direct questions, e.g. “I notice that you seem anxious/have some bruises/often miss appointments (whatever your concern is), is there anything happening at home that you are worried about? Is anything happening in your life that is making you feel unsafe? Is someone hurting you?”. It may be necessary to ask more than once, as many victims do not identify that they are experiencing abuse if it is not physical. This is especially true of coercion and control. Consider the need for a Mental Capacity Assessment and involve an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMCA). <p>Responding to an initial disclosure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sensitive, respectful and listen carefully to what you are being told. Seek to empower victims, not to take over or make decisions for them. Ask them what they want you to do. Remain non-judgemental – never imply that the victim is to blame for the abuse. Validate the victim's experience; tell them you are glad they told you. Give key messages, e.g. you are not alone, you do not deserve to be treated like this, there is help available for you. <p>Address immediate safety issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the immediate safety of the victim and anyone else in the family. Do not take any action that could place you or your colleagues at risk of violence. Seek emergency by contacting the police on 999 for assistance if needed. <p>If the person doesn't want you to take any action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider mental capacity, coercion, public interest and vital interest, risks of significant harm to the victim and to others in the household. A lack of consent to the safeguarding process does not always mean that a practitioner should not take action to protect the victim or others at risk. Always leave the door open for future discussion e.g. “You can contact me in the future if you feel you need further help and support”. 'Think Family' (early intervention and prevention) is a whole system approach. When adult safeguarding is being addressed and children are involved or present professionals have a duty to refer the matter to Children's Services in accordance with Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures. Where there are opportunities for joint assessment and joint working across adult and children's services this should always be considered. | <p>Domestic abuse framing question for children (under 16): “We know that in many families, mums and dads have arguments and disagreements, does that ever happen in your family?”</p> <p>To obtain accurate and reliable information from a child regarding a domestic abuse situation the language and questions must be appropriate for the child's age and developmental stage.</p> <p>Professionals should not press a child for answers. Instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and believe what the child says; Reassure the children that the abuse is not their fault, and it is not their responsibility to stop it from happening; Give several telephone numbers, including Childline, Durham Constabulary and local domestic abuse services. Explain the limits of confidentiality and your safeguarding responsibilities. <p>Operation Encompass: Operation Encompass provides a method of sharing information between the police and local schools providing the designated key Adult within the school with information when a child has been present in a household where an incident of domestic abuse has been reported. For further information about Operation Encompass and the reporting mechanism see the Safeguarding Boards Website- Operation Encompass Protocol and Operation Encompass website</p> <p>For young people (16-17years old) at risk in intimate relationships: Professionals working with families, children and young people should be alert to the signs of domestic abuse in teenage intimate relationships. If domestic abuse is suspected complete the DASH-RIC assessment and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners should refer to the DSCB multi-agency threshold tool to establish the level of support and intervention required and consideration should be given to Early Help Assessment. Use adult questioning techniques and refer to domestic abuse specialist services. Safety plan with young person Pregnant girls aged 16-18 are particularly at risk. Teenage pregnancy with domestic abuse is high risk. MARAC and child protection procedures should be initiated. <p>Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) Depending on the age of the child (16 or over) it may fall under the Government's definition of domestic abuse. It is important that a young person using abusive behaviour against a parent receives a safeguarding response in accordance with Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures regardless of whether there is a criminal investigation. For further information and multi-agency-guidance see Home Office Information guide: adolescent to parent violence and abuse and the Darlington CAPVA flowchart.</p> |

