



Home Office

Domestic Abuse

Draft Statutory Guidance Framework

July 2020

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Chapter 1 – Context

Introduction

1. This guidance is issued and published as statutory guidance under section 68 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 (“the 2020 Act”).
2. Under section 68 of the 2020 Act, the Home Secretary has the power to issue guidance about domestic abuse, including Parts 1 to 5, section 61, Part 1 of Schedule 2, and sections 64, 65, 66 and 67 of the 2020 Act. Specifically, the Home Secretary is under a duty to issue guidance about the effect of the definition of domestic abuse in sections 1 and 2 of the 2020 Act, including guidance as to particular kinds of behaviour that amount to domestic abuse and the effect of domestic abuse on children.
3. This guidance does not cover the new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) which will be the subject of separate guidance, which the Home Secretary must issue under section 47 of the 2020 Act. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is also subject to separate guidance, which the Home Secretary must issue under section 65 of the 2020 Act.
4. The 2020 Act aims to:
 - **Protect and support victims** – to enhance the safety of victims and the support they receive;
 - **Transform the justice process** – to provide support to victims throughout the justice process and an effective response to perpetrators to end the cycle of abuse;
 - **Improve performance** – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse; and
 - **Promote awareness** – put domestic abuse at the top of everybody’s agenda.
5. The 2020 Act does not create an offence of “domestic abuse”. Domestic abuse may include behaviour amounting to criminal offences, such as: murder, manslaughter, rape, common assault, stalking and harassment and controlling or coercive behaviour. As such, this guidance will make reference to behaviours that may constitute domestic abuse, as set out in section 1 of the 2020 Act, which may also constitute other criminal offences.

Audience

6. This guidance extends to England and Wales only. In relation to Wales, the guidance is aimed at those agencies discharging functions which are reserved to the UK Government (policing, and criminal, civil and family justice).

7. Devolved bodies and local organisations in Wales should refer to the relevant Welsh legislation, such as the [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) and associated guidance, which is referenced throughout this document. We would expect both devolved and non-devolved organisations to continue to work together to implement the purposes of the 2020 Act.
8. The information within this guidance is relevant to organisations and agencies in England and Wales working with victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse, as well as with children affected by domestic abuse, and to those dealing with the other consequences of domestic abuse, such as financial institutions. Some of these organisations may have statutory duties to safeguard victims of domestic abuse. The following list is not exhaustive:
 - English local authorities;
 - Police forces and Police and Crime Commissioners;
 - The Crown Prosecution Service;
 - Specialist domestic abuse services;
 - Local housing and homelessness teams, registered social landlords;
 - Schools, colleges and universities;
 - Children’s social care;
 - Adult social care;
 - NHS England and NHS Improvement;
 - Clinical Commissioning Groups;
 - NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts;
 - Employers
 - Probation services;
 - HM Courts and Tribunals Service;
 - Jobcentre Plus;
 - Financial services (banks, building societies etc); and
 - Community and faith groups.
9. Section 68(4) of the 2020 Act provides that a person exercising public functions to whom this guidance is issued must have regard to it in the exercise of those functions.

Aims and Purpose

10. The guidance has three key functions:

- **To provide clear information on what domestic abuse is and how to identify it**, including the behaviours that amount to domestic abuse, the impact of domestic abuse and links to other forms of abuse;
- **To provide guidance and support to frontline professionals** who have responsibilities to safeguard and support victims of domestic abuse by outlining the strategic and operational frameworks that would produce the most effective commissioning of domestic abuse services; and
- **To signpost responding agencies to other sources of guidance on domestic abuse**, in particular regarding safeguarding and supporting victims; investigating cases of domestic abuse; and assessing and managing risk posed by perpetrators.

11. All names used in case studies have been changed to protect identities.

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Chapter 2 – Understanding Domestic Abuse

Background

12. We know that domestic abuse is common but is often hidden and therefore difficult to quantify. However, in the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales says that 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).¹ Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of their gender, age or race.
13. Data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows that there has been a small decline in the prevalence of domestic abuse compared to 2005.² However, police recording of domestic abuse is going up – the police recorded 732,444 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2019 (14% of all recorded crime).³ This suggests that more victims are reporting to the police, as well as better recording of crime by the police.
14. Domestic abuse is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, with women disproportionately the victims. Women are more likely to experience repeat victimisation, be physically injured or killed as result of domestic abuse and experience non-physical abuse (including emotional and financial abuse), than men.⁴ In 2018-19, 92% of defendants in domestic abuse cases referred to the CPS were male and 83% of the victims were female (where sex of the defendant or victim was recorded).⁵
15. [Research](#) published by the Home Office suggests that in the year ending 31 March 2017, domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales. The biggest component of the estimated cost is the physical and emotional harms incurred by victims (£47 billion), particularly the emotional harms (the fear, anxiety and depression experienced by victims as a result of domestic abuse), which account for the majority of the overall costs. The cost to the economy is also considerable, with an estimated £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity as a consequence of being abused.

The 2020 Act

16. Section 1 of the 2020 Act creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse (see box below which sets out the definition of domestic abuse which is found in Part 1 of the 2020 Act).

¹ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2019

² [ONS statistics](#), year ending March 2018

³ Ibid

⁴ [ONS statistics](#), year ending March 2018

⁵ [CPS Violence Against Women and Girls Crime report 2018-19](#)

17. Section 1(2) provides that behaviour of a person “A” towards another person “B” is domestic abuse if “A” and “B” are each aged 16 years, or over, are “personally connected” to each other and the behaviour is abusive.
18. In this guidance “A” is referred to as the perpetrator and “B” is referred to as a victim. The term ‘victim’ is used in this document to denote someone who has experienced domestic abuse. It should be noted that not everyone who has experienced, or is experiencing, domestic abuse chooses to describe themselves as a ‘victim’ and may prefer another term, for example, ‘survivor’.
19. Section 1(3) of the 2020 Act provides for what constitutes behaviour that is abusive. This behaviour might consist of a single incident or a course of conduct.
20. Section 2 of the 2020 Act provides the definition of “personally connected”, which is explained in the box below.
21. The definition of domestic abuse does not require “A” and “B” to be living together.
22. Section 2(3) of the 2020 Act for the purposes of the definition of “personally connected”, defines ‘child’ as a person under the age of 18 years. This will include a person aged 16 or 17.

Domestic Abuse Act 2020

Part 1 Definition of “domestic abuse”

Section 1: Definition of “domestic abuse”

- (1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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 (see subsection (4));
 - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

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

(4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to—

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- (b) obtain goods or services.

(5) For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

(7) For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

Section 2: Definition of “personally connected”

(1) Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies—

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- (g) they are relatives.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if—

- (a) the person is a parent of the child, or
- (b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

(3) In this section—

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989;

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

Types of domestic abuse

Intimate Partner Violence

23. Domestic abuse most commonly takes place in intimate partner relationships. The vast majority is perpetrated by men against women, but men are also subject to abuse by female partners, and both men and women experience abuse from same sex partners.

Such abuse in intimate relationships can vary in severity and frequency, ranging from a one-off occurrence to a continued pattern of behaviour.

24. It can involve or be perpetrated alongside abuse by other family members and in extended family households or settings, particularly where the victim is living with the perpetrator's family.
25. Abuse often continues even when a relationship has ended, which can be a significantly dangerous time for a victim. Post-separation abuse, including stalking, harassment and forms of physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse often continues and causes ongoing harm. 55% of the women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse in 2017 were killed within the first month of separation and 87% in the first year.⁶

Abuse by Family Members

26. Abuse within a family set up can encompass a number of different behaviours. A wide range of family members will be considered to be "relatives" that can perpetrate and be victims of abuse. In a study of 32 Domestic Homicide Reviews,⁷ a quarter were family related homicide, with most of those cases involving a parent killed by their adult child.⁸

Teenage Relationship Abuse

27. Relationship abuse happens at all ages, not just in adult relationships: latest figures show that men aged between 16-19 were most likely to experience domestic abuse than any other age group; women aged between 16-19 were more likely to experience domestic abuse than those aged over 25.⁹
28. Domestic abuse in teenage relationships is just as severe and has the potential to be as life threatening as abuse in adult relationships. Young people may experience a complex transition from childhood to adulthood, which impacts on behaviour and decision making. It may impact on the way that they respond to abuse as well as the way that they engage with services. Additionally, they may be unequipped to deal with the practical problems such as moving home to escape the abuse or managing their own finances. As a result, young people who experience domestic abuse do so at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives.¹⁰
29. Abuse in relationships between those under the age of 16 years will be treated as child abuse as a matter of law and child safeguarding procedures should be followed. It is important to remember that abuse perpetrated by someone over the age of 18 against someone under the age of 18 also constitutes child abuse as a matter of law. However, young people experiencing abuse in their own relationships need to be supported in a way that is specifically tailored to their needs – those aged 16 to 17, due to their age, will

⁶ [Femicide Census](#), 2018

⁷ For further information on Domestic Homicide Reviews, please see paragraph 254

⁸ Sharp-Jeffs and Kelly, [Domestic Homicide Review Case Analysis](#), 2016

⁹ [ONS statistics](#), March 2019

¹⁰ <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

often have to rely on specialist services designed for adult victims that are not always appropriate.

30. The Home Office has funded Young People's IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) to work with individuals who have experienced teenage relationship abuse and has also funded Child Independent Sexual Violence Advisers to provide support to young people who have been victims of sexual abuse.
31. The statutory guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)'¹¹ sets out what professionals and organisations need to do to safeguard children.
32. Court and responding agencies must take into account youth justice guidelines when responding to cases of teenage relationship abuse, avoid unnecessarily criminalising young people, and identify appropriate interventions to address behaviours that might constitute or lead to abuse. Relevant youth justice guidelines include:
 - [The case management guidance for Youth Offending Teams](#)
 - [The standards for children in the Youth Justice System](#)
 - [The Crown Prosecution Service guidance on youth offenders](#)
 - [The Sentencing Council guidelines on sentencing children and young people](#)

Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse

33. Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA) is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic abuse. SafeLives data has shown that young people accessing services who cause harm to family members can do so through the same broad categories of behaviour seen in other forms of domestic abuse: physical violence was the most prevalent, with 57% of young people causing physical harm and nearly a quarter (24%) demonstrated jealous and controlling behaviour.¹²
34. Dynamics and motivations behind these behaviours may be different to partner abuse but it is important that a young person using abusive behaviour against a parent receives a safeguarding response, which may include referral to MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference), regardless of whether there is any police action taken. Responders should use their discretion and professional judgement when addressing cases of APVA.
35. The parent victim should also receive appropriate domestic abuse response and support. The provision of an understanding, respectful and professional first response is vital in determining the future resolution of this family crisis. Parents say that one of the most important forms of help and support is being listened to and believed. See the [Home](#)

¹¹ In Wales refer to '[Working Together to Safeguard People: handling individual cases to protect children at risk](#)'

¹² <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

[Office guide](#) on APVA for more information, including the recommended responses by police, health professionals and social workers.

Characteristics of Domestic Abuse

36. The characteristics listed here are those commonly seen in intimate partner relationships. However, it is important to remember that each person’s experience of domestic abuse will be different. All victims want the abuse to stop, but not all victims want or are able to leave their abuser at a particular time. Appropriate support must always be offered.
37. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours. It does not necessarily have to involve physical acts of violence and can include emotional, psychological, sexual and/or economic abuse under section 1(3) of the 2020 Act. Many victims will experience these abusive behaviours simultaneously. At the centre of all these abusive behaviours is the perpetrator’s desire to exercise power and control over the victim.
38. The power and control wheel¹³ illustrates the common themes and experiences of victims of abuse, as well as the tactics used by perpetrators. It is important to note that the model below generally applies to women experiencing abuse by men in intimate partner relationships. However, the same means of abuse are used by perpetrators of either gender, in same sex relationships and in family abuse; the difference will be on how much they rely on any one form of abuse to gain power and control within their circumstances.¹⁴



Physical abuse

39. Physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour, are forms of abusive behaviour. This can involve:

¹³ [The Duluth Model](#)

¹⁴ Roe and Jagondinsky’s LGBT power wheel can be found [here](#). Other examples of power wheel’s can be accessed [here](#).

- Being kicked, punched, pinched, slapped, choked and bitten;
- Use, or threats of use, of 'weapons' including knives and irons;
- Being scalded or poisoned;
- Objects being thrown;
- Violence against family members or pets;
- Causing some physical harm by denying access to medical aids or equipment; and
- Harming someone whilst performing 'care' duties (especially relevant for disabled victims) including force feeding, withdrawal of medicine or over-medication.

Sexual abuse

40. Many victims of domestic abuse experience behaviour that is sexually abusive in their relationships. This can involve:

- Rape;
- Being pressured into sex, or sexual acts, including with other people;
- Being forced to take part in sexual acts because of threats to others, including children;
- Unwanted sexual contact or demands;
- Being pressurised or being tricked into having unsafe sex;
- Forced involvement in making or watching pornography; and
- Hurting a victim during sex.

41. Victims can also be the subject of reproductive coercion, which can involve: restricting a partner's access to birth control; refusing to use a birth control method; forcing a partner to get an abortion, IVF or other procedure, or denying access to such a procedure.

42. There are also links between sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, including forced prostitution. Perpetrators may force or coerce a victim into exchanging sex for drugs, alcohol or money, or committing a crime, such as theft, to pay for the perpetrator's drugs or alcohol.

43. "Rough sex", which can take place as part of an intimate relationship, can involve the infliction of pain or violence, simulated or otherwise, with the aim of inciting or enhancing the sexual pleasure of the parties involved. Although such activities may take place in private and be consensual, any actual bodily harm (ABH), other serious injury or death that occurs through such activity, is likely to result in the person responsible for those injuries being liable to a criminal prosecution, irrespective of whether consent had been given by the person in receipt of the injuries or not.

Controlling or coercive behaviour

44. Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship to recognise that victims can experience extreme psychological and emotional abuse that can have severe impacts, whether or not accompanied by physical abuse. The offence is constituted by behaviour between current intimate partners, or between former intimate partners and family members who live together.
45. What constitutes controlling or coercive behaviour is outlined in guidance issued by the Government under section 77 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. Controlling or coercive forms part of the Government's non-statutory definition of domestic violence and abuse and is described as:
- 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; and
 - 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.
46. Controlling or coercive behaviour also forms part of the definition of domestic abuse in section 1(3)(c) of the 2020 Act.
47. The statutory guidance framework issued under section 77 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 for the controlling or coercive behaviour offence can be found [here](#).
48. Examples of controlling or coercive behaviour include:
- Controlling or monitoring the victim's daily activities, including making them account for their time, dictating what they can wear, when they can eat;
 - Isolating the victim from family and friends, intercepting messages or phone calls or refusing to interpret;
 - Intentional undermining of the victim's role as a partner, spouse or parent;
 - Preventing the victim from taking medication or over-medicating them, or preventing the victim from accessing health or social care (especially relevant for victims with disabilities or long-term health conditions);
 - Using substances to control a partner through dependency;
 - Using children to control their partner, e.g. threatening to take the children away or manipulating professionals to increase the risk of children being removed into care;
 - Parental alienation, including preventing children from spending time with one parent or grandparents, from visiting friends' houses and from participating in extracurricular activities;

- Threats to expose sensitive information (e.g. sexual activity) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet;
- Preventing the victim from learning a language or making friends outside of their ethnic/ or cultural background;
- Threatening precarious immigration status against the victim, withholding documents, and giving false information to a victim about their visa or visa application;
- Threats of institutionalisation (particularly for disabled or elderly victims); and
- Economic abuse (see paragraph 51).

49. As shown by the power and control wheel above, coercive or controlling behaviour is common in domestic abuse and can act as a driver for many of the other behaviours, as illustrated in the case study below.

Case Study

Deborah had been with her partner for almost 20 years and he had been abusive towards her from early on. She was forced to borrow money from close family as he emptied her account as soon as her wages went in every month. Her partner was incredibly jealous whenever she left the house, even to go to work. He would insist on driving her to the front door of her workplace and picking her up from exactly the same place. “He’d sexually abused me from early on in our relationship. I think I’d just really become numb to it. He was always angry and rude with me, he’d often hit or kick me and several times burned me and tried to strangle me. He thought I was seeing other people at work. Because of my job I had to take time off if he’d beaten me up really bad. I didn’t want anyone to know. But sometimes I would use the old lines that I’d accidentally fallen down the stairs or walked into a door. Silly things. Maybe they all knew. But no one ever said.”

Because she was dependent on her partner to get to work this often meant he refused to take her or she was late and, coupled with the time off she had when she’d been physically assaulted, this caused problems with her employer. Eventually they said that she had to leave as she was too unreliable to be part of the team. “This was my life, what I’d always wanted to do. And a break from everything back home. I was completely floored when I lost it all. Plus it meant we couldn’t pay for the house or anything. My ex completely lost it when he realised what this meant.”

Following a further attack where Deborah was stabbed with a kitchen knife and feared for her life, she called the police. She then moved to a refuge.

Emotional or psychological abuse

50. Domestic abuse often involves emotional or psychological abuse. This can include:

- Manipulating a person’s anxieties or beliefs;
- Withholding affection;

- Turning children and friends against the victim (with a subsequent impact on children);
- Being stopped from seeing friends, relatives, or care workers;
- Being insulted, including in front of others. This includes insulting someone about their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith, ability to parent and ability to work;
- Repeatedly being belittled;
- Keeping a victim awake/preventing them from sleeping;
- Using social media sites to intimidate the victim; and
- Persuading a victim to doubt their own sanity or mind (including “gaslighting”).

Economic abuse

51. Section 1(3) and (4) of the 2020 Act, provide that economic abuse includes any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect¹⁵ on an individual’s ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or to obtain goods or services.¹⁶ This can include an individual’s ability to acquire food, clothes, transportation and utilities. Economic abuse can also constitute controlling or coercive behaviour.¹⁷ It can make the individual economically dependent on the abuser, and/or create economic instability, thereby limiting their ability to escape and access safety. This can result in an individual staying with an abuser and experiencing more abuse and harm as a result.¹⁸
52. Given that economic abuse does not require physical proximity it can continue, escalate or even begin after separation, creating a significant barrier for victims seeking to rebuild their lives.¹⁹
53. The police and responding agencies should ensure they remain alert to the need to consider and recognise economic abuse when carrying out risk assessments.
54. Examples of economic abuse might include the following examples where they have a substantial adverse effect on the victim:
- Controlling the family income;
 - Not allowing a victim to spend any money unless ‘permitted’;
 - Denying the victim food or only allowing them to eat a particular type of food;

¹⁵ Economic abuse can be prosecuted under section 76 of the Serious Crimes Act 2015. As defined in the 2015 Act, substantial adverse effect may include, but is not limited to: the victim stopping or changing the way they socialise; physical or mental health deterioration; a change to their routine at home including those associated with mealtimes or household chores; the victim putting in place measures in their home to safeguard themselves or their children; changing working patterns, employment status or routes to work.

¹⁶ See Adams et al., Development of the Scale of Economic Abuse, Violence Against Women, 14: 564, 2008

¹⁷ Sharp, [The Economic Abuse Wheel](#), 2008

¹⁸ Earlywhite and Stohl, In Our Shoes: The Next Steps, Washington: State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2008

¹⁹ Surviving Economic Abuse, [‘Criminalising post-separation \(economic\) abuse’](#)

- Running up bills and debts such as credit/store cards in a victim's name, including without them knowing;
- Refusing to contribute to household income;
- Deliberately forcing a victim to go to the family courts so they incur additional legal fees;
- Interfering with or preventing a victim from regularising their immigration status so that they are economically dependent on the perpetrator;
- Preventing a victim from claiming welfare benefits, force someone to commit benefit fraud or misappropriating such benefits;
- Interfering with a victim's education, training, or employment;
- Not allowing a victim access to mobile phone/car/utilities; and
- Damaging property.

Verbal abuse

55. Examples of verbal abuse include:

- Repeated yelling and shouting;
- Verbal humiliation either in private or in company;
- Being laughed at and being made fun of;
- Insults and threats; and
- Mocking someone about their disability, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearance etc.

Online and digital abuse

56. Perpetrators can use technology and social media as a means of controlling or coercing victims. This happens frequently both during and after relationships with abusers. Examples of online abuse include:

- Placing false or malicious information about a victim on their or others social media;
- Being trolled;
- Image-based abuse – for example the non-consensual distribution of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause the person depicted distress;
- Hacking into, monitoring or controlling email accounts, social media profiles and phone calls;
- Blocking the victim from using their online accounts, responding in the victim's place or creating false online accounts;
- Use of spyware or GPS locators on items such as phones, computers, wearable technology, cars, motorbikes and pets;

- Hacking internet enabled devices such as PlayStations or iPads to gain access to accounts or trace information such as a person's location;
- Using personal devices such as smart watches or smart home devices (such as Amazon Alexa, Google Home Hubs, etc) to monitor, control or frighten; and
- Use of hidden cameras.

Intersectionality and other considerations

57. Individuals can be the victims of multiple and different abusive behaviours because of the way different characteristics, such as immigration status, race, ethnicity, socio-economic position and sexuality intersect and overlap, particularly in relation to accessing services and support if they are not adequately designed to meet their needs. It is important that commissioners, service providers and statutory agencies consider this intersectionality when developing their responses, in order to fully identify the lived experiences of all victims vis-a-vis the abusive behaviour they experience and ensure that services are provided to victims without discrimination. [The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \('the Victims' Code'\)](#) also makes it clear that the offer of support should be based on the victim's needs and all services should be offered without discrimination of any kind.

58. There are many practical and psychological barriers that victims may face when leaving an abusive partner, including feeling shame or guilt, fear of what the perpetrator will do to them or their children, or a belief that the situation might get better. Other factors that can also create additional barriers to leaving include:

- Risk of escalation of abuse and violence – the post-separation period carries a high-risk of violence for victims and children, with the greatest risk of serious harm and homicide. The victim may be fearful of what the perpetrator may do to them or their children, including if they leave their situation, or fear losing custody of their children based on threats from the perpetrator;
- Impact of coercive control and trauma – the abuse may make the victim feel worthless, to feel they are to blame for the abuse and/or be convinced they cannot look after themselves;
- Shame and stigma – including fear of not being believed, feeling shame around disclosing abuse and/or being able to access support;
- Economic dependence – the victim may not have access to resources they need to be able to support themselves or their children independently, or may not be able to afford legal representation;
- Living in a rural community – a victim may face increased isolation from support networks and lack of access to services if they are living in a rural community compared to an urban setting;
- Connections to local area – the victim may fear leaving their local area where they have a network of support (friends/family) and where their children are settled in schooling;
- Religious/community/family pressures – the victim may be under pressure from religious or community figures, or members of their extended family, not to leave, or to return if they have left; and

- Immigration status – if the victim has insecure immigration status, they may fear being detained in immigration centres and being deported.

59. We want, wherever possible, for victims to stay in their homes. Sometimes however it is not safe to do so. Physically leaving the perpetrator does not mean all of risks have been overcome; rather, the risks are even greater; women are at the greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner.²⁰

60. For many victims, ending the relationship is not possible as they feel that the risks are so great. Furthermore, if a victim is experiencing abuse from their child or another member of the family, particularly if they are providing them with care, they may feel that leaving them may not ever be possible.

61. Other considerations that need to be taken into account when supporting victims are discussed below.

Gender

62. Domestic abuse perpetrated towards women by men is a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and is linked to wider gender inequality, misogyny and perceptions around harmful gender norms. These may include a belief in stereotypical gender roles, such as men being dominant in relationships and women being submissive, or that men should be in charge of family finances and should be entitled to make all decisions.

63. Whilst the statutory definition of domestic abuse is gender-neutral, we recognise that more women than men are affected by domestic abuse. Statistics from the last ONS [bulletin](#) showed that in the year ending March 2019 women were around twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse as men. [Research](#)²¹ also suggests that when controlling or coercive behaviour is taken into account, the differences between the experiences of male and female victims becomes more apparent, with the vast majority of victims being women.

64. Women are far more likely than men to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence. Women experience higher rates of repeated victimisation and are much more likely to be seriously hurt or killed than male victims of domestic abuse.²² Figures show that from the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2018, the majority of victims of domestic homicides (homicides by an ex/partner or by a family member) were female (74%).²³ This contrasts with non-domestic homicides where the majority of victims were male (87%). Of the female victims, 81% were killed by a partner or ex-partner, 9% were killed by a parent and 10% were killed by a child or other family relative, such as a brother or sister.

²⁰ [Femicide Census](#), 2018

²¹ Myhill, [Measuring Coercive Control](#), 2015

²² Walby and Towers, [Measuring violence to end violence: mainstreaming gender](#), 2017

²³ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2019

65. We recognise that men are also victims of domestic abuse. Whilst they may experience many similar types of abuse as women, men can face specific barriers, including shame and fear of stigmatisation, which may be due to myths around masculinity and that men cannot be victims of domestic abuse.

66. A research study found five key themes explaining men's reluctance to seek help: service target perception; shame and/or embarrassment; denial; stigmatisation; and fear.²⁴ In addition, structural inequalities can discriminate or exclude, explicitly or implicitly, groups of victims and survivors such as gay, bisexual and transgender (GBT) men and boys.

Pregnancy

67. Pregnancy is a specific risk factor that can make victims more vulnerable. Pregnancy can be a trigger for domestic abuse and existing abuse may get worse during pregnancy or after giving birth.²⁵

Age

68. The definition of domestic abuse in the 2020 Act includes a minimum age for the victim and the perpetrator of 16 years.

69. However, CPS' guidance applies to all cases of domestic abuse irrespective of the age of the perpetrator or victim (including those under 16). This approach means it is possible to apply for protective orders such as Restraining Orders to benefit victims under 16 as well as determining if diversion or prosecution is appropriate to help early intervention for perpetrators who are under 16 years of age.

70. Older people can be victims of interpersonal violence, or abuse by family members. This abuse may include economic, emotional, psychological, sexual or physical abuse or neglect and can affect both men and women. SafeLives' research has found that victims aged 61 and over were much less likely to attempt to leave the relationship in the year before getting help and those that were accessing support services were much more likely to experience abuse from an adult family member.²⁶

71. The upper age limit for the Crime Survey for England and Wales self-completion modules was increased from 59 to 74 in April 2017.²⁷

Sexual Orientation

72. Heterosexual and LGBTQ+ people may experience similar patterns of domestic abuse. ONS research indicates that LGBTQ+ people experience higher levels of domestic

²⁴ Tsui, Cheung & Leung, Help-seeking among male victims of partner abuse: men's hard times. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38(6), 769–780, 2010

²⁵ Taft, [Violence against women in pregnancy and after childbirth](#), 2002

²⁶ <http://www.safelives.org.uk/spotlight-1-older-people-and-domestic-abuse>

²⁷ [ONS User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#)

abuse than heterosexual people.²⁸ However, there are some specific issues that are unique to the experiences of LGBTQ+ people, which include:

- threat of disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity to family and friends;
- pressure to keep the relationship, their own or the perpetrator's sexual orientation or gender identity a secret;
- increased isolation due to lack of family support or safety nets; and
- discrimination in society and myths about the nature of abuse in LGBTQ+ relationships.²⁹

73. LGBTQ+ people experience distinct personal and structural barriers in accessing help and reporting abuse. This may include services lacking quality referral pathways with LGBTQ+ specialist sector and low visibility and representation of LGBTQ+ issues within services. It can also include lack of understanding and awareness by professionals around unique forms of coercive control targeted at sexual orientation or gender identity, and professionals minimising the risk experienced by LGBTQ+ people.³⁰

Race

74. Those from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds may experience additional barriers to receiving help or reporting abuse. This may include:

- A distrust of the police;
- Hostility towards the police due to lack of perceived or real support for their community historically and/or currently;
- Concerns about racism;
- Language barriers;
- Being disproportionately impacted by certain forms of VAWG, including forced marriage, so-called 'honour-based' abuse and FGM;
- Concerns about family finding out; and
- Fear of rejection by the wider community.

75. There is often under-reporting of domestic abuse by minority communities, with many victims reporting that stereotypical assumptions were made about them coming from 'cultures where VAWG was normalised and accepted' or their experiences of domestic abuse were treated as housing and immigration cases by public authorities.³¹

²⁸ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2019

²⁹ SafeLives, [Free to be Safe](#), 2018

³⁰ Magić, and Kelley, *Recognise & Respond: Strengthening advocacy for LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse*, 2019

³¹ Imkaan

76. There are distinct structural barriers that minority communities face in accessing support. The involvement of specialist “by- and for-” services is key to ensuring a local area can meet the needs of victims from BME backgrounds.

Immigration Status

77. Victims who have entered the UK from overseas may face additional barriers when attempting to escape domestic abuse that are related to their lack of access to public services and funds, leading to higher dependence on the partner or family that has supported their being in the UK. This may be exploited by partners or family members to exert control over victims. Examples of this could include: threatening to inform immigration authorities, being separated from their children or threatening to no longer provide support for their stay in the UK. Therefore, victims from overseas may be more reluctant to come forward and report abuse unless additional support is available. It is possible that victims may also be reluctant to report abuse due to the fear of information sharing by the police and other statutory services with the Home Office for the purpose of immigration control, should they be unaware of the steps the Home Office can take to help them to regularise their status and provide support. They may also face a greater economic impact of leaving an abuser if they are unable to claim benefits or access housing, or if they lose their immigration status by leaving their partner, including destitution and homelessness.

Disability

78. Data shows that those with a long-term illness or disability are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those without; this is true for both men (9.8% compared with 3.5%) and women (16.8% compared with 6.3%).³² Disabled victims are more likely to face abuse from an adult family member compared to non-disabled victims, and are also more likely to be still living with the perpetrator.³³

79. Victims may face additional forms of abuse related to any impairment (this includes physical impairment, mental health difficulties, learning difficulties, cognitive issues, long-term health conditions and neurodiversity).

80. Disabled victims may be vulnerable to particular examples of abusive behaviour, either from an intimate partner, family member, or carer (who is personally connected to them)³⁴, including: control of medication; refusal to interpret; denial of access to health services or equipment; actions which makes the person’s health condition worse; and otherwise using the person’s impairment to control them.

81. Disabled victims face multiple barriers to seeking and receiving help to escape domestic abuse, for example accessible accommodation and transport, the need for assistance

³² [ONS data](#), year ending March 2018

³³ SafeLives, [Disabled Survivors Too: Disabled people and domestic abuse](#)

³⁴ The relationship between carers and the cared for will not be included in the definition of domestic abuse in the 2020 Act unless there is also a personal connection between them

with personal care or sign language interpreters, fear of losing their children and possibly for specialised emotional support, which impact their decision and ability to leave.³⁵

Overlaps with other types of abuse

82. Victims of domestic abuse may often also experience other types of abuse:

Stalking or harassment

83. There is no specific definition of harassment, but it is generally acknowledged to cover behaviour that is intended to cause a person alarm or distress or to cause them to fear violence and the abuser knows that their conduct amounts to harassment. Where there is evidence to show that such conduct has occurred on more than one occasion, the abuser could be prosecuted.

84. The abuser's conduct, specifically their behaviour towards someone, might be the same on each occasion – for example, they may send several texts which the recipient finds alarming, distressing or causes them to fear violence. Alternatively, the abuser's behaviour may differ on each occasion, for example they could use a variety of means to harass someone such as sending threatening texts or emails, making abusive phone calls, damaging property or falsely reporting a person to the police when they have done nothing wrong.

85. Similarly, there is no specific definition of stalking. However, the police and CPS have adopted the following description, which appears in Stalking Protection Order guidance: a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive. It can include harassment that amounts to stalking or stalking that causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress to the victim.

86. Even though the actual stalking behaviour shown by a perpetrator may vary, they are often motivated by obsession and share a consistent set of characteristics referred to as the acronym FOUR (Fixated, Obsessive, Unwanted, Repeated).

87. Section 2A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 includes the following non-exhaustive list of examples of 'acts or omissions associated with stalking':

- Following a person;
- Contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means;
- Publishing any statement or other material—
 - (a) relating or purporting to relate to a person, or
 - (b) purporting to originate from a person;
- Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication;

³⁵ Nosek et al., The investigation of abuse and women with disabilities: Going beyond assumptions. *Violence Against Women*, 7 (4), 2001

- Loitering in any place (whether public or private);
- Interfering with any property in the possession of a person; and
- Watching or spying on a person.

88. There is no such thing as a 'typical' stalking perpetrator or a 'typical' stalking victim. This crime disproportionately affects women and girls but it is important to recognise that men and boys may be victims too. Stalking affects people of all ages, and victims come from a wide range of backgrounds – stalking is not restricted to public figures and celebrities.

89. Stalking is often a characteristic of domestic abuse, particularly once the relationship has ended. A study of female homicides that occurred as a result of male violence found that stalking behaviours were present in 94% of cases and in 71% of cases the victim and perpetrator were in, or had previously had, an intimate relationship.³⁶ Stalking behaviour can be carried out online, therefore potentially combining online and offline behaviours.

90. The perpetrator's behaviours may appear 'harmless' and may in themselves seem lawful, particularly if considered in isolation rather than as part of a pattern of behaviour. However, these behaviours may amount to stalking depending on:

- The context of the behaviour;
- The motivations driving the behaviour; and
- The impact on the victim.

91. Further guidance on stalking can be found [here](#).

So-called 'Honour-Based' Abuse

92. So-called 'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of the family and/or community, or when individuals try to break from constraining 'norms' of behaviour that their community is trying to impose. HBA can cover a range of circumstances, not all of which represent domestic abuse, for example if the victim and perpetrator are not personally connected. However, HBA will typically be carried out by a member or members of the family and is likely to involve behaviours specified in the statutory definition of domestic abuse.

93. Evidence has shown that victims at risk of HBA who were accessing domestic abuse services were seven times as likely to be experiencing abuse from multiple perpetrators, and had experienced abuse for an average of two years longer before accessing support than those not identified as at risk of HBA.³⁷

94. This type of abuse is most commonly experienced by victims from close-knit or closed communities with a strong culture of 'honour' and 'shame', such as some migrant

³⁶ Monckton-Smith et al., [Exploring the Relationship between Stalking and Homicide](#), 2017

³⁷ <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Spotlight%20on%20HBV%20and%20forced%20marriage-web.pdf>

communities, travelling communities or closed religious communities and other particularly isolated social groups.

Forced Marriage

95. A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. In the case of a person lacking capacity to consent to the marriage, a marriage can be forced notwithstanding there is no pressure or abuse. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

96. The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

- physical – for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence;
- emotional and psychological – for example, making someone feel like they are bringing ‘shame’ on their family; and/or
- financial abuse, for example taking someone’s wages, may also be a factor.

97. Forced marriage is a criminal offence under section 121 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Guidance on forced marriage can be found [here](#).

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

98. FGM is a form of violence against women and girls which is, in itself, both a cause and consequence of gender inequality.³⁸ As FGM is generally inflicted upon children, the Government considers it to be a type of child abuse. However, it is also carried out on women for a variety of reasons such as giving a woman social acceptance before marriage or ensuring her chastity. Whilst FGM may be an isolated incident of abuse within a family, it can be associated with other behaviours that discriminate against and which limit or harm women and girls. These may include other forms of so-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (e.g. forced marriage, breast ironing etc) and domestic abuse. FGM is a criminal offence under section 1 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (the 2003 Act). Failing to protect a girl from FGM is also criminal offence under section 3A of the 2003 Act. Statutory guidance on FGM can be found [here](#).

Modern Slavery

99. Modern slavery takes many different forms, both within and outside personal relationships. Where there is evidence of this type of exploitation in a relationship with an abusive person, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 provides the appropriate means to prosecute offenders. In some cases, the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour may also apply.

³⁸ www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/4th_milestones_meeting/publications/en/

Case Study

Ms K was born in Amritsar and moved to the UK to study when a family friend she viewed as her 'uncle' offered to pay for her studies. She obtained a student visa and arrived in the UK and went to stay with her 'uncle'. During her stay, her 'uncle' arranged her marriage by advertising on a matrimonial website.

Within three weeks of her marriage, Ms K was subjected to physical, verbal and emotional abuse and forced into domestic servitude. Her mother-in-law continuously verbally harassed her; she called her names and encouraged her husband to use her as a slave. Ms K was often forced to cook all the family's meals, do all the laundry, and clean the entire house. She fell pregnant but was forced to continue to do all the housework late into her pregnancy.

Ms K's husband, who had previously been jailed for murder, was physically abusive in a manner that intensified during the course of their marriage. The abuse towards Ms K escalated during her pregnancy. Her 'uncle' visited her occasionally to intervene and to beg them to stop the abuse.

When she was around seven months pregnant, Ms K's husband assaulted her because she was sitting down on the sofa. She attempted to leave, but her mother-in-law forced her to sit down again, telling her she had to stay until she gave birth and then give the baby to them. Ms K managed to leave the room and called her 'uncle' to collect her. When her 'uncle' arrived, her husband stood in the doorway to prevent her from leaving the house. He became extremely angry and threw her belongings onto the driveway and told her not to return. Ms K's 'uncle' took her to the hospital for a check-up and she also gave a report at a local police station. The police referred her to Southall Black Sisters (SBS), but later, she reconciled with her husband following coercion from her in-laws and retracted her complaint.

However, soon after reconciling, her husband began to abuse her again. To ensure that she had no opportunity to disclose the abuse to anyone outside the family, her mother in-law accompanied her to her GP appointments. However, the domestic abuse had a significant impact on Ms K's mental health, causing her to become depressed and anxious. She lived in constant fear for her life and that of her child.

Ms K gave birth to her son but following this the abuse towards her escalated. Ms K's in-laws threatened to take her son away and have her deported, especially if she dared to disclose her experiences to anyone outside the home. All of this led to her feeling isolated and trapped in her marital home. Her mother in-law often told Ms K that the baby belonged to her, and they were capable of killing Ms K and keeping the baby.

Following a number of death threats to Ms K and her family, and the relentless physical and verbal abuse to which she was subjected, Ms K finally decided to leave the marital home. She made a complaint to the local police and contacted SBS for assistance.

SBS were able to assist Ms K with making a complaint to the police and draw up a safety plan. They liaised with social services to help secure emergency accommodation for her and her son, referred Ms K to support and counselling services and helped her to obtain legal advice regarding her immigration status.

DRAFT

Perpetrator tactics

100. Domestic abuse perpetrators can be particularly adept at manipulating professionals, agencies and systems and may use a range of tactics in order to perpetuate contact with and control over the victim. These can include:

- Causing or creating vexation or using the system against the victim by making false or vexatious allegations;
- Using the courts to continue abuse, for example not turning up to court dates, sending unnecessary and repeated legal letters and making threats around contact;
- Making counter-allegations against the victim;
- Attempting to frustrate or interfere with a police investigation, including attempting to undermine the victim's statements by claiming they are mentally ill;
- Telling the victim that they will not be believed because they have mental health issues, learning difficulties or disabilities, manipulating the victim's knowledge of what support is available and making professionals believe that the victim does not have capacity;
- Using threats in order to manipulate the victim. For example, by telling the victim they will not be believed by the police or other agencies, that they will inform social services, that their children will be taken away; and
- Manipulating the victim's immigration status as a form of coercive control, including withholding ID, passports and visas from victims, lying about their status, purposely letting a victim's visa lapse or failing to act on sponsorship duties for immigration purposes.

101. There are many reasons why an individual may become a perpetrator of domestic abuse and these can include: a desire to exert power and control over someone; misogyny; low self-esteem; or experience of abuse in their childhood (although the majority of children who experience abuse in their childhoods do not go on to become perpetrators). Evidence also shows that more than a third of Drive³⁹ service users had employment, training or educational needs, just over a quarter had mental health needs, around a quarter misused alcohol, and just under a quarter had housing needs, with some service users having needs across multiple categories.⁴⁰

102. However, there is never any moral justification for perpetrating domestic abuse and although the perpetrator and others may blame the victim for causing their behaviour, it is never the victim's fault. Perpetrators choose to be abusive, are responsible for that choice and should be held accountable for their behaviour.

103. Factors such as alcohol and drugs misuse can increase the likelihood and severity of domestic abuse. In the context of perpetrators, up to 60% of men in perpetrator

³⁹ See paragraph 237

⁴⁰ Evaluation of Year 2 of the Drive Project <http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Drive-Year-2-UoB-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

programmes have problems with alcohol and/or drugs.⁴¹ However, there is not a simple causal relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse.

104. Given the frequent coexistence of domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol, it is important that responding agencies understand the subtle ways in which a perpetrator may use the victim's substance use as an explanation or a moral justification for their abuse.⁴² Some of the ways in which a perpetrator may use reliance on or abuse of substances include:

- Perpetrators may use the disinhibiting effects of substances as an excuse for their violence and abuse, e.g. 'I'm not usually like that, but I was off my head';
- Alcohol in particular can act as a disinhibitor and as a pre-emptive justification for violence towards a victim. A perpetrator may drink when already frustrated or angry at their victim and then use the alcohol in order to wind themselves up towards violence - should they then act violently they will have a ready-made excuse for their behaviour;
- A victim's substance use can be presented as an excuse for violence by the perpetrator;
- Perpetrators may control or withhold substances as a means of abuse;
- Perpetrators may abuse the victim by forcing them to use substances against their will, or by administering them without their knowledge;
- Perpetrators may sabotage victims undergoing treatment for substance use; and
- Perpetrators may force or coerce a victim into exchanging sex for drugs, alcohol or money, or committing a crime, such as theft, to pay for the perpetrator's drugs or alcohol.

105. Addressing a perpetrator's drug or alcohol use alone is unlikely to reduce or solve the problem of their abusive behaviour. It is important that any alcohol or drugs treatment programme for perpetrators, as well as addressing the causes of the substance abuse, also addresses the complex dynamics and power and control which underpin domestic abuse.

⁴¹ Brown et al., [The Comparability of Male Violent Substance Abusers in Violence or Substance Abuse Treatment](#), Journal of Family Violence 14: 297, 1999; Stuart et al., [Substance Abuse and Relationship Violence among Men Court-referred to Batterer Intervention Programs](#), Substance Abuse 24, pp. 107–122, 2003; Stuart et al., [Relationship Aggression and Substance Use among Women Court-referred to Domestic Violence Intervention Programs](#), Addictive Behaviors, 2003; Bennet, [Substance Abuse by Men in Partner Abuse Intervention Programs: Current Issues and Promising Trends in Violence and Victims](#), 2008; Kraanen et al., [Substance use disorders in perpetrators of intimate partner violence in a forensic setting](#), Int. J. Offender Ther. Comp. Criminol., 2010, and [Substance use disorders in forensic psychiatry: Differences among different types of offenders](#), International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 2012.

⁴² <https://avaproject.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Stella-Project-Toolkit-2007.pdf>

Chapter 3 – Impact on Victims

Impact on the Victim

106. Domestic abuse can have a long-lasting effect on adult and child victims. It can lead to the development of lasting health problems, such as mental health issues including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder and eating disorders. It is estimated that around three women a week take their own lives as a result of domestic abuse⁴³ and that women who experience domestic abuse are twice as likely to experience depression.⁴⁴ Many victims are seriously physically injured as a result of domestic abuse and have long-term injuries. Long-term trauma may not always be recognised in victims with disabilities or cognitive issues.
107. There are strong links between women's experience of domestic abuse and coercive relationships, and their offending. Almost 60% of female offenders have experienced domestic abuse and more than a third have a problem with a current partner.⁴⁵ This means that women are often trapped in a vicious cycle of victimisation and criminal activity.
108. Some victims may also use drugs or alcohol to help cope with abuse. For some, substance abuse may progress to addiction. Perpetrators can also exploit and sustain addictions to keep a victim controlled and dependent on them, as well as manipulate the threat of exposing this to professionals (given the possible subsequent impacts should the victim have children). Research⁴⁶ has shown that first responders can find it difficult to correctly identify perpetrators of abuse due to a tendency to see the perpetrator as the individual who is abusing alcohol or drugs. Alcohol use by women in particular has in other studies⁴⁷ been found to be a response to experience of abuse from partners.
109. Many victims can also be made homeless by domestic abuse. Statistics show that domestic abuse accounts for at least one in ten people who require local authority support for homelessness in England and Wales.⁴⁸ The majority of women who experience homelessness have been abused.⁴⁹ Women who are homeless are particularly vulnerable to being further targeted by perpetrators of both physical and sexual abuse, with 28% of homeless women having formed an unwanted sexual partnership to get a roof over their heads, and 20% having engaged in prostitution to

⁴³ Walby, [The Cost of Domestic Violence](#), 2004

⁴⁴ WHO, [Violence Against Women: Health Consequences](#)

⁴⁵ [Ministry of Justice Female Offender Strategy](#), 2018

⁴⁶ <https://www.nr-foundation.org.uk/downloads/Who-Does-What-to-Whom.pdf>, 2009

⁴⁷ Humphreys et al., [Domestic Violence and Substance Use: Tackling Complexity](#), British Journal of Social Work, 2005

⁴⁸ [MHCLG data](#), October-December 2019

⁴⁹ Mayock et al., [Women, Homelessness and Service Provision](#), 2015

raise money for accommodation.⁵⁰ Evidence also indicates that 13% of men sleeping rough have experienced domestic abuse from a partner.⁵¹

110. The risk of homelessness can also prevent a victim from leaving a home shared with a perpetrator, and a victim may remain in an abusive situation in order to avoid homelessness for them and their children.

111. Victims may also suffer from the effects of economic abuse; these effects can be unemployment, diminished employment prospects, or poverty. Such abuse can cause severe and long-term debt and poor credit ratings which can negatively impact the victim for decades.⁵²

112. As set out throughout this guidance, victims with multiple and/or complex needs can face additional barriers to accessing support services.

Impact on Children

113. Between 25-30% of children in the UK live in households with domestic abuse⁵³ and domestic abuse is a factor in 50% of social worker assessments of children in need, over half of serious case reviews and two-thirds of child contact applications from 2017-2018.⁵⁴

114. We know that being exposed to domestic abuse can have devastating consequences for children. Domestic abuse can impact children in a range of different ways. Some of the effects can include:⁵⁵

- Feeling anxious or depressed;
- Having difficulty sleeping, nightmares;
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches or bed wetting;
- Reduction in school attainment, truancy;
- Inconsistent regulation of emotions, including becoming distressed, upset or angry;
- Becoming aggressive or internalising their distress and become withdrawn; and
- Using alcohol or drugs, or self-harming.

115. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it difficult to express their feelings, especially if they are non-verbal. Distress could be presented in

⁵⁰Crisis, [Homeless Women: Still Being Failed but Striving To Survive](#), 2006

⁵¹Crisis, [Nations Apart? Experiences of single homeless people across England and Wales](#), 2014

⁵² Surviving Economic Abuse, 2018 https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SEA-Roundtable-Report_FINAL-1.pdf

⁵³ Oliver et al., [The Economic and Social Cost of Domestic Abuse](#), 2019

⁵⁴ [Department for Education](#)

⁵⁵ [NSPCC](#)

different ways, including through challenging behaviour. Professionals must consider this and take the individual needs of the child into consideration to support them to communicate in a way they feel comfortable.

116. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation can impact children's wellbeing and development. Domestic abuse is an example of an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), experiences that are known to have lifelong impacts on children's mental and physical health and behaviour into adulthood. Studies indicate that children exposed to parental violence are almost three times more likely to experience abuse in their own adult relationships.⁵⁶ They are at greater risk of substance abuse, juvenile pregnancy and criminal behaviour than those raised in homes without violence. Evidence suggests that 60% of children who were exposed to domestic abuse experienced behavioural problems and 52% experienced problems with social development and relationships.⁵⁷
117. [Research](#) shows that receiving help from specialist children's services reduces the impact of domestic abuse on these children and improves children's safety and health outcomes. Their role in early intervention and prevention can be particularly crucial; evidence suggests that abusive behaviour in children exposed to domestic abuse dropped from 24% to 7% after receiving appropriate support.⁵⁸
118. Research⁵⁹ also shows that perpetrators of domestic abuse may target and undermine parents' relationships with their children, using power and control dynamics, for example using vexatious applications to the family court to prolong proceedings (sometimes referred to as "parental alienation"). Perpetrators can also use contact with children as a form of abuse. Therefore, providing support to both children and the non-abusive parent is essential. There should be a focus on the importance of joint and parallel work for victims, including children and a range of services to sensitively address and overcome the harm domestic abuse has caused to the parent-child relationship. This should also include appropriate access to relevant services for the perpetrator.
119. Young people can also experience domestic abuse in their own relationships; domestic abuse in teenage relationships is just as severe and life threatening as adult abuse. Young people may experience a particularly complex transition from childhood to adulthood, which impacts on behaviour and decision making. It may impact on the way that they respond to abuse as well as the way that they engage with services. Additionally, they may be ill-equipped to deal with the practical problems such as moving home or finances. As a result, young people who experience domestic abuse do so at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives.⁶⁰ Young people commonly experience abuse through new technologies and social media, which can be used as a monitoring or harassment tool by the perpetrator.⁶¹

⁵⁶ <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

⁵⁷ SafeLives, [Children's Insights England and Wales dataset 2015-18](#)

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Radford et al., Meeting the needs of children living with domestic violence in London, London: NSPCC/Refuge/City Bridge Trust, 2011

⁶⁰ <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

⁶¹ <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

120. We know that domestic abuse affects different children in different ways. Children should be offered support based on their individual needs, with a range of interventions, so that each child is able to access the specialised help they require. This could include: access to psychoeducational support, therapeutic services (for example counselling) or specialist children's workers. A trauma informed approach should be at the centre of all support provided to children and young people affected by domestic abuse. A strengths-based approach to recovery, building on 'the resilient blocks in the child's life', has been shown to be effective in interventions for children.

Case Study

Carrie was supported by Action for Children's specialist therapeutic counselling service, Breaking the Cycle, after experiencing her father abusing her mother, who are now separated. Carrie had been present when her father was abusive towards her mother and had also been directly affected by her father's coercive and controlling behaviours. Carrie has contact with her father, and wanted this, but she was struggling to make sense of her feelings. It was felt that independent counselling would help her to understand her emotions and manage how she was feeling.

Carrie was offered over ten counselling sessions which took place at her school. Her counsellor used creative interventions like mindfulness, therapeutic play and metaphoric image work (which can help people to step outside of themselves and process feelings at a safe distance).

Through these interventions, Carrie and her counsellor explored her fears and anxieties; her relationships at home and at school; things within and beyond her sphere of control; and feeling and staying safe.

By the end of the counselling sessions, Carrie had an improved sense of what is and what is not within her control, and better understood both what is a good relationship and what is domestic abuse, and the importance of asking for help when needed. She became less anxious and tearful at home, and more able to manage difficult and complicated emotions. She also felt more confident communicating her own wants and needs.

Chapter 4 – Agency Response to Domestic Abuse

121. We know that it often takes victims of domestic abuse a significant period of time to seek effective help from agencies. They may not be aware that they are a victim of domestic abuse, they might blame themselves for the abuse, fear the consequences of leaving the abuser, not know where they can seek help, or fear that they will experience stigma and shame if they do try to seek help.
122. Further to this, victims of domestic abuse with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may face additional barriers to accessing support. See, for example, paragraph 57 onwards.
123. Given that only one in five victims report their abuse to the police⁶², many victims of domestic abuse do not come into contact with the criminal justice system. So it is important that a wide range of agencies and bodies are able to identify victims and know how to provide the right response. Early intervention by the voluntary sector and statutory agencies working together can help to protect adults and children from further harm, as well as preventing escalation and recurrence of abuse.
124. Given the complex nature of domestic abuse, a multi-agency response is critical to identify victims and their families sooner before reaching crisis point. Multi-agency working enables professionals to get a better understanding of all the risks and needs of the victim, children and the perpetrator (and any other family members and linked individuals) and enables professionals to work collaboratively to respond to these risks without waiting for the abuse to escalate.
125. Professionals can use the [Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment \(DASH\) risk assessment](#) to help identify the level of risk an individual is facing and to tailor their support accordingly.
126. Below is a non-exhaustive list of agencies that victims of domestic abuse and their families may come into contact with. The information below is to assist those organisations exercising public protection duties and frontline professionals so they can properly identify all the victims of the abuse, including children, and ensure that they receive support and protection tailored to their particular needs.

⁶² [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2015. Compendium: Intimate personal violence and partner abuse.](#) Table 4.28

Schools and colleges

127. Schools and colleges can play a key role in preventing and detecting domestic abuse. They can make a difference by training their staff to spot the signs of domestic abuse in children, parents and colleagues so they know what to do if they have a concern and/or how to handle a disclosure.
128. Schools and colleges must have regard to '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' – statutory safeguarding guidance.⁶³ The guidance is clear that schools and colleges should ensure that all staff receive regularly updated safeguarding training, so they can take appropriate steps to identify, protect and support children. Schools and colleges should consider reflecting domestic abuse in this training. The guidance also makes it clear that if a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care immediately and if appropriate the police. The guidance includes an annex providing additional information on specific types of harm and abuse and additional information for staff on identifying and responding to domestic abuse. The guidance sets out that all schools and colleges should have an effective child protection policy.
129. Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who provides support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services, such as children's social care and the police. The lead should be a senior member of staff and full details of the role is set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).
130. There is also [guidance](#) available on child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools and colleges.
131. The organisation Operation Encompass has also developed [guidelines](#) on domestic abuse, how teachers can deal with disclosures and how Designated Safeguarding Leads should engage and work with their local police force (where the force has signed up). Further information can be found on their [website](#).
132. Educating young people about domestic abuse through age-appropriate materials is vital in ensuring they can experience healthy relationships. From September 2020, Relationships Education for all primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for all secondary pupils will be compulsory. Health Education will also be compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools. Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE. These policies must be published online and must be available to any individual free of charge.

⁶³ In Wales, refer to '[Keeping Learners Safe](#)' guidance

Children's Social Care

133. Domestic abuse is the most common risk factor identified by social workers in assessments and is a key driver of need for children's social care. Children's social workers are therefore an important partner both in the identification of domestic abuse and the service response – whether by engaging families to keep children safe from harm, finding the best possible care when children cannot live at home, or creating the conditions that enable children to thrive and achieve. Children's social workers play a crucial role within the wider multi-agency response, alongside other safeguarding partners like the police, schools and NHS to help protect children.

Identification

134. Social workers should receive training so they have the relevant knowledge and skills that are set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statements for child and family social work. The '[Post-qualifying Standard: Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners](#)' (KSS) clearly states that practitioners should be able to identify the impact of adult problems, including domestic abuse and the effect it has on children.

135. Social Work England's [Professional Standards Guidance](#) states that social workers must use social work theories, models and research alongside the evidence from assessments in making their professional judgements. In responding to domestic abuse this might include taking into account known risk factors associated with domestic abuse such as pregnancy,⁶⁴ as well as co-occurrence with other factors including adult mental ill-health and substance use.⁶⁵ It is important that social workers continue to develop their knowledge and skills through continuing professional development; this should include understanding of the different forms of domestic abuse.

136. Given the insidious and often hidden nature of domestic abuse, it is critical that social workers employ professional curiosity to recognise patterns of behaviour over time. Social workers should understand the stigma and fear that victims may have when disclosing domestic abuse, including the fear by the non-abusive parent of the possibility of having their children removed should they disclose abuse. Social workers should have the ability to build empathic and trusting relationships to seek to overcome this, understanding the nuances of each situation and working with the victim's wishes where possible.

137. Practitioners work most effectively when they are able to combine practical, theoretical, therapeutic and systemic knowledge. Within the statutory system, social workers must look to understand and consider the wishes of the child where possible.

138. Effective social work practice will build on an understanding that a full disclosure – from an adult or child victim – can take time and trust, and the absence of a disclosure of abuse doesn't necessarily mean that abuse is not occurring. This includes understanding the different effects domestic abuse can have on children and how these

⁶⁴ Harrykissoon et al., [Prevalence and patterns of intimate partner violence among adolescent mothers during the postpartum period](#), Archives of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 156: 325–30, 2002

⁶⁵ Humphreys et al., [Domestic Violence and Substance Use: Tackling Complexity](#), British Journal of Social Work 35: 1303–20, 2005

effects present in their behaviour (set out in Chapter 3) and recognising and being responsive to children and young people where they are victims of intimate partner abuse in their own relationships.

139. Efforts should be made to provide support for children to maintain and sustain relationships with the non-abusive parent, and to direct the professional focus on working with the whole family to help them to be safe and recover. Social workers should view every family member as one part of a complex picture and include perpetrators in the picture as far as possible. It is important that there are multiple channels of engagement to challenge perpetrators to identify, understand and change behaviour. This should not sit solely within the criminal justice system.⁶⁶
140. All practitioners working with children need to recognise that risk cannot be assessed in isolation, and information sharing underpins the effective identification of all forms of abuse and neglect, which includes domestic abuse. [‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#) (WT), the statutory guidance which guides inter-agency safeguarding, sets out how all practitioners should proactively share information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children.
141. Multi-agency working is underpinned by the new system of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, provided for by the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. As set out in WT, the arrangements put a statutory duty on police, health and local authorities to work together on local safeguarding arrangements. They will jointly be responsible for coordinating safeguarding services to keep children safe and will be accountable for how well local agencies work together to protect children from abuse and neglect. It is our expectation that this will create a cultural shift in the way police, health and local authorities work together in local areas to secure better outcomes for children.
142. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children, which must always be the paramount concern.

Response

143. The local authority and its social workers have specific roles and responsibilities to lead the statutory assessment of children in need and to lead child protection enquiries, including children in families with no recourse to public funds. Following acceptance of a referral by the local authority children’s social care, a social worker should lead a multi-agency assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
144. Assessments should determine whether the child is in need, the nature of any services required and whether any specialist assessments should be undertaken to assist the local authority in its decision making. Every assessment should draw together relevant information gathered from the child and their family and from relevant practitioners including teachers, school staff, early years workers, health practitioners,

⁶⁶ [Learning from the Department for Education’s Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme](#)

the police and adult social care. Where information gathered during an assessment results in the social worker suspecting that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the local authority should hold a strategy discussion to enable it to decide, with other agencies, whether it must initiate enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

145. It is important that social work appropriately identifies and supports young people experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationships. Evidence suggests that young people are more likely than adult victims to still be within the relationship at the point at which they access support and are likely to have been referred to support by a range of professionals who may have identified the abuse before the young person has chosen to disclose it.⁶⁷
146. It is vital that young people who experience domestic abuse within their own relationships are also referred through the multi-agency risk assessment and are supported in a way that is specifically tailored to their needs. Individuals with a specialist understanding and experience of young people and the intricacies of ‘peer-on-peer’ abuse, such as Young People’s Violence Advisors (YPVA), should be involved in the multi-agency response. Services designed for adult victims of domestic abuse are not always appropriate for young people who have experienced abuse in their own relationships.
147. The 2017 joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) on [‘The multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse’](#), conducted by Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), HMI Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), and HMI Probation (HMIP), advises on good practice in this area. The report draws attention to the importance of striking a balance between responding to immediate individual crises, and developing long-term solutions for the family, including attending to the overall needs of children. Understanding the emotional and psychological impact of domestic abuse is extremely challenging, and social workers will draw on a wide range of skills in assessing and responding effectively.
148. The JTAI also highlighted the need to:
- Develop age-appropriate tools to understand the range of risks that children face;
 - Adopt a systematic focus on the perpetrator’s behaviour rather than just focussing on the victim as the sole solution; and
 - Help schools support victims and families, particularly given the protective role education can play when the impact of domestic abuse is fully understood and taken into account.
149. It is important for social workers to work in partnership with children, families and professionals, being both authoritative and empathic and recognising the shame, fear and resistance that can surround domestic abuse. In doing so they can draw on the key

⁶⁷ <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

features of effective practice, including using a strengths-based and systemic approach, doing skilled direct work and conducting group case discussions.

150. Successful whole family approaches utilise multi-disciplinary teams that can tackle issues on multiple fronts and share responsibility and risk across professionals. It is vital that social workers work effectively across all safeguarding agencies, including health and police professionals, in response to domestic abuse, including joint visits and approaches where possible, and adopt a timely flow of information to ensure plans and interventions are aligned. This includes children's and adults' specialists and where available local specialist domestic abuse services should be involved. A focus on underlying issues including mental health and substance misuse is important in order to break cycles of disengagement and re-offending.
151. The co-location of specialists can help facilitate multi-disciplinary working particularly in places where families already know and feel comfortable. There should be data-sharing within and between teams, including qualitative recording of families' experiences of working with professionals. Separate workers for victims and perpetrators and for adults and children, operating within the same team, can be crucial to building families' trust and ensuring safety.⁶⁸
152. Above all, social workers should follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 that state that the welfare of children is paramount, putting the needs of children first.

Case Study

Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding is an innovative whole-system approach to safeguarding children and young people. It was developed in 2014 by Hertfordshire County Council using Department for Education Innovation Programme funding. It is currently being rolled out as part of the Department for Education's Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme.

The approach places specialist mental health practitioners, domestic abuse workers, probation officers and children's social workers together in a Family Safeguarding team to give direct help to parents. Hertfordshire started to adopt this practice model in 2015 and have seen significant improved outcomes for children and their families.

Adopting a whole family approach makes it easy for parents to access all the support they need from within one team, to help them deal with the complex issues of domestic abuse, mental health and drug/alcohol abuse that harm their lives and those of their children. Staff are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, a technique used to support behaviour change, tapping into the strengths and resources within the family and wider support network to ensure vulnerable children and families are safeguarded.

⁶⁸ [Learning from the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme](#)

As a result, Hertfordshire saw the number of children on child protection plans reduce by 55 per cent in just 30 months. Children's exposure to harmful parental behaviours drastically reduced, and at the same time their school attendance and life chances improved. It also achieved a 39% reduction in the number of days children spent in care, for cases allocated to the safeguarding team, a 53% drop in hospital admissions for adults in that family, and a 66% reduction in contact with the police.

This approach is one of three models that is being rolled out to 18 Local Authorities as part of the Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme. For more information on the programme, please use this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strengthening-families-protecting-children-sfpc-programme>

Adult Social Care

153. Victims of domestic abuse may also have care and support needs and already have involvement with safeguarding agencies. Individuals who have care and support needs may be particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse from intimate partners or family members, who may use the fact that they have caring responsibilities as a cover for their abuse.
154. The Care Act 2014⁶⁹ specifies that freedom from abuse and neglect is a key aspect of a person's wellbeing – this includes domestic abuse. These provisions apply to an adult who appears to have needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting those needs), is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk of or the experience of that abuse or neglect.⁷⁰
155. Under the Care Act 2014, a local authority has duties to:
- Make, or cause to be made, enquiries if it believes the adult is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect;
 - Determine what action should be taken by the authority or others. All local authorities have safeguarding adults procedures to support such enquiries and coordinate action with partner organisations;
 - Arrange for independent advocacy to be available to adults who have difficulty in taking part in the process, and where there is no other appropriate adult to assist;
 - Co-operate with other agencies;
 - Establish a Safeguarding Adults Board to co-ordinate efforts by partner agencies to protect adults with care and support needs; and
 - Provide information about services available in the area that can prevent abuse and support people to safeguard themselves.

⁶⁹ In Wales, refer to the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

⁷⁰ See paragraph 14.2 of the [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#)

156. Both local domestic abuse and safeguarding adults' protocols will apply to situations where a person who has care and support needs that prevent them from safeguarding themselves is experiencing domestic abuse. Safeguarding work should ensure that the person experiencing abuse has support to access a choice of specialist domestic abuse services and partnership working with health and social care providers, housing and criminal justice agencies, as well as specialist domestic abuse and advocacy services.
157. Adult social workers need regular updated domestic abuse training.
158. Safeguarding Adults Boards need to manage MARAC and domestic abuse data.

Health Professionals

159. Almost all survivors interact with health services at some point and, for many victims, it may be the only service they are able to access alone and feel safe to disclose. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) frequently site health professionals as those with the best chance of taking action, and [analysis](#) of DHRs has shown the significant role of health professionals play.
160. The NHS has a key role in providing care and support to victims of domestic abuse through a wide range of health care services, including services for physical and mental health. Staff working in the NHS can help to identify victims and potential victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and provide, signpost or refer them to appropriate support, for example to local safeguarding arrangements or specialist domestic abuse services.
161. Working together across agencies helps to provide holistic support for the victims. The new 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' arrangements help to strengthen this multi-agency approach of partnership and collaborative working. Effective safeguarding arrangements seek to prevent and protect individuals from harm or abuse. The safeguarding of children, young people and adults who are at risk is an important part of the role of NHS professionals. NHS England's Information on safeguarding can be found [here](#).
162. Safe, routine enquiry should be in place in maternity and mental health services, to improve earlier disclosure and support people to get the care that they need.
163. DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care) published an online domestic abuse resource for health professionals and have developed a number of e-learning and training modules with the Institute of Health Professionals and the Royal Colleges of Nursing and GPs. Further details of the DHSC online resource can be found [here](#).
164. Healthcare professionals should seek to create opportunities to speak to patients without the presence of others to facilitate the opportunity to disclose, and only use professional interpreters where needed.
165. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published its Quality Standard for Domestic Abuse in March 2016. This includes identifying and supporting

people experiencing domestic abuse, as well as support for those who carry it out. It also covers children and young people (under 16) who are affected by domestic abuse that is not carried out against them. The NICE quality standard can be found [here](#).

Housing

166. Housing is a major barrier to escaping and factors strongly into a victim's decision making about whether they stay or leave a perpetrator. As the majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated at home, housing providers can play a unique role in supporting victims of abuse who are their tenants and holding perpetrators to account. Some local authorities offer sanctuary schemes and support for victims to stay in their own home. Housing services may consider re-housing the perpetrator in certain circumstances rather than the victim.
167. Many victims of domestic abuse have to leave their homes and the area where they live. [The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#)⁷¹ states that in formulating their homelessness strategies, housing authorities should consider the particular needs (which may be multiple) that victims of domestic abuse have for safe accommodation. Housing authorities should work co-operatively with other local authorities and commissioners to provide services to tackle domestic abuse, including refuge provision.
168. We recognise the need to ensure that all survivors are able to access safe accommodation irrespective of where they originally reside. Many survivors fleeing domestic abuse will travel across borders in order to seek help and move away from the perpetrator. MHCLG will publish statutory guidance that will make clear Government expectations on cross-border access that will include specific mention of local authorities needing to meet the needs of all victims including those who present from outside of the locality, within the statutory guidance. This will seek to address some of the cross-border barriers we know some victims face when attempting to access support from an area outside of where they reside, to help ensure all victims will be able to access the support they need, when they need it.
169. Part 4 of the 2020 Act introduces a new statutory duty on local authorities, placing clearer accountability on local areas to ensure the needs of victims within refuges and other forms of domestic abuse safe accommodation are met in a consistent way across England. Under this new duty Tier One authorities (County Councils, Unitary District Councils, and the Greater London Authority and the Council of the Isles of Scilly) in England will be required to appoint a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to support them in undertaking local needs assessments, including in developing and monitoring local strategies.
170. Tier One authorities will also be required to effectively commission services based on a robust needs assessment, and report back annually to Government. The annual reporting requirement will help the Government and others to monitor how the new duties

⁷¹ In Wales, refer to Part 2 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

on local authorities are working, understand where there may be challenges and how the funding is being used, and help identify and disseminate good practice. The duty will also require Tier Two authorities in two-tier areas (District, City, and Borough Councils) to co-operate with the lead Tier One authority. Separate guidance for local authorities relating to the exercise of their functions under Part 4 of the 2020 Act will be published ahead of the new duty coming into force.

171. The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) is a partnership of three agencies that has established the first domestic abuse accreditation for housing providers. It aims to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process. DAHA have produced a [toolkit](#) which sets out the steps that housing providers should take in order to become accredited.
172. In addition, DAHA has led the introduction of a ['Whole Housing Approach'](#) to domestic abuse in partnership with groups that include Surviving Economic Abuse and Safer London. The programme is being piloted in three local areas (London 'three boroughs', Cambridgeshire and Stockton) and recognises the diversity in both the housing needs of survivors and the approaches required across different tenures, including social and private renting and privately owned.

Jobcentre Plus

173. DWP employees are highly likely to come into contact with victims of domestic abuse. Each Jobcentre has assigned points of contact who have undergone training to identify and support the needs of anyone experiencing domestic abuse and will work closely with local services to share knowledge and signpost victims to additional, external support.
174. There are a range of measures that may help victims of domestic abuse, including:
- Easements – survivors of domestic abuse can be exempt from work-related requirements for up to 26 weeks;
 - The Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) (see paragraph 242);
 - Advance payments;
 - Exception within the policy to support a maximum of two children;
 - Housing Benefit paid to a Universal Credit claimant (such as for Temporary Accommodation) is exempt from the benefit cap;
 - Waiver of the Child Maintenance Scheme application fee;
 - Dual housing benefit if the victim intends to return to their former home;
 - Spare-room subsidy for survivors staying in exempt accommodation (such as refuges, hostels and managed accommodation);
 - Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) - The DHP Guidance Manual highlights that DHPs may be directed towards individuals or families fleeing domestic abuse as a priority;

- Alternative payment arrangements, including split payments; and
- Universal Credit claimants in joint claims are encouraged to nominate the bank account of the main carer to receive their UC payment.

175. Job centre staff should be aware that perpetrators may make vexatious allegations of benefit fraud in an attempt to control and abuse partners/former-partners.

Criminal Justice System – Police

176. We know that each year there are over one million calls to the police in England and Wales about domestic abuse, and on average someone contacts the police every 30 seconds for help with domestic abuse.⁷² 78% of victims at the highest-risk of serious harm or murder report the abuse to the police in the year before they get effective help, on average almost three times each.⁷³

177. The College of Policing has developed guidance – [Authorised Professional Practice](#) – which sets out principles and standards for officers on investigating domestic abuse.

178. Controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or familial relationship has been a criminal offence since 2015 by virtue of section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 where the requirements of the offence are made out. The statutory guidance issued to police and criminal justice agencies under section 77 of that Act about investigations of this offence can be found [here](#). This guidance should be considered when investigating the offence. The police should take into account the following when supporting victims of domestic abuse:

- An awareness of how race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, other protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) and any vulnerabilities may impact on the victim and how they seek support, avoiding making assumptions based on stereotypes;
- Barriers that may exist for victims to disclose information or seek support, for example: fear of the perpetrator; fear that they may not be believed; pressures from family or the community; negative past experiences with the police or services; a desire to make the relationship work; economic barriers; not wanting to uproot the children or fear that the children will be taken into care; fear of repercussions related to insecure immigration status etc;
- Building trust can help people to disclose;
- Be aware that domestic abuse can involve the wider family particularly where there is honour-based abuse or wider caring responsibilities;
- Carry out safe enquiry, follow risk identification, assessment and management procedures, including the need to refer to an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) or Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), make referrals to local specialist support services as appropriate;
- Follow local procedures for safeguarding adults and children;

⁷² HMICFRS, [Everyone's Business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse](#), 2014

⁷³ [SafeLives: Insights Idva England and Wales dataset 2017-18](#)

- Recognise the impact ‘first responders’ may have on children who are involved in a domestic abuse incident, ensuring premises are consistently checked for the presence of children, and responders are trained to recognise vulnerability and signs of abuse during a call for service for domestic abuse;
- Act to safeguard children by making a referral to social services where required;
- Consider whether the perpetrator also needs a response that offers the chance to change their behaviour and holds them to account if they continue with their abuse. The [Respect Phonenumber](#) can offer advice and information to perpetrators, their family and friends and to professionals, and can signpost to local Respect accredited programmes;
- Investigate the history of the relationship and recognise the dynamics including any power imbalance;
- Where substance misuse has occurred, be alert to the more complex dynamics that might exist meaning the abuse is not necessarily ‘alcohol-related violence’ and that the violence may be symptomatic of domestic abuse⁷⁴;
- Record any crimes and any previous incidents and place a domestic abuse flag on them, following National Crime Recording Standards;
- Consider whether an application under the ‘Right to Know’ route of the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) needs to be made;
- Make the victim aware of their rights under the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \(Victims’ Code\)](#);
- Be aware that perpetrators may raise counter or cross-allegations when reported by victims of abuse, and care should be taken to assess evidence and correctly identify victims and perpetrators, which can include family members;⁷⁵
- Ensure victims of domestic abuse have an interpreter where required, ensuring police supervision during interviews to report domestic abuse, and in line with the [Victims’ Code](#), ensure access to Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings interviews, intermediaries or someone to sit with the victim during police interviews; and
- Consider and follow your force’s positive action policy.

179. Perpetrators of domestic violence can use insecure immigration status as a way to inflict abuse on the victim, for example by way of threats to tell the police. When dealing with victims with insecure immigration status, police should treat all individuals who report domestic abuse as victims first.

180. If a victim is referred to the Home Office by the police then the Home Office can help the individual to regularise their status and provide support.

Tools Available for the Police

Bail

⁷⁴ See, for example, AVA’s research [Domestic Abuse and Change Resistant Drinkers](#)

⁷⁵ Further information on identifying perpetrators as victims can be found [here](#)

181. Bail conditions are an important means of supporting the positive action of arrest. They offer protection for the victim and witnesses while criminal offences are investigated or during criminal proceedings. If a suspect breaches bail conditions, they should be swiftly held to account and remanded in custody if appropriate in the circumstances. Bail can be applied for both pre-charge and post-charge:

- **Pre-charge bail:** Perpetrators may be released from custody and subject to pre-charge bail before being charged if it is necessary and proportionate to do so, otherwise they will be Released Under Investigation. A custody officer should consider making them subject to appropriate bail conditions if it is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances, for instance to protect victims or witnesses. The National Police Chiefs' Council has produced updated [guidance](#) on pre-charge bail and Released Under Investigation.⁷⁶
- **Post-charge bail:** Appropriate bail conditions can be applied once a perpetrator is charged to protect victims, witnesses and the public. Post-charge bail can be used to protect victims and witnesses from the risk of danger, threats, pressure, or repeat offences.

Voluntary Attendance Interview

182. A Voluntary Attendance (VA) Interview can also be used for progressing investigations. There must be a good reason why it is used as no conditions can be put on a perpetrator when they are investigated by VA. As such, VA should only be used when appropriate as it may not afford enough protection for the victim in cases of domestic abuse. Further information on VA can be found [here](#).

Protective Orders

183. **Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPN/DVPO)** can allow for protective measures to be put in place for a victim following a domestic incident of violence or the threat of violence involving a perpetrator over the age of 18. These may be used, for example, where there is no substantive criminal offence to prosecute, where the case has been designated as No Further Action (NFA) or where the perpetrator is to be cautioned or bailed without any conditions. A DVPN issued by the police prohibits the perpetrator from molesting the victim, as a minimum. There is no legal definition of "molestation", but this could include prohibiting the perpetrator from contacting the victim by any means, from using or threatening physical violence against the victim, or from intimidating, harassing or pestering them. A DVPN may also exclude the perpetrator from the premises if they live with the victim. It protects the victim from violence or the threat of violence and gives them a respite from the abuser and an opportunity to engage with services without the perpetrator being on the scene. It also protects the victim and prevents further abuse until the matter goes

⁷⁶ The Government is currently reviewing pre-charge bail and the practice of release under investigation. As part of this the Government consulted on several proposals to make sure we have a system that prioritises the safety of victims and witnesses and supports the effective management of investigations; and the timely progression of cases to courts. The consultation closed on 29 May 2020. The Government will respond to the consultation and set out next steps in due course.

before a magistrate. The DVPN is followed up with an application for a DVPO in a magistrates' court within 48 hours of service (not including Sundays, bank holidays, Christmas Day or Good Friday). The resulting DVPO, if granted, lasts for between 14 and 28 days. Guidance on DVPOs can be found [here](#).

184. The Act introduces Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs). DAPOs bring together the strongest elements of the existing protective order regime into a single comprehensive, flexible order which will afford more effective and longer-term protection to victims of domestic abuse and their children. Separate guidance for the police on DAPOs will be published. DAPOs will be piloted in a small number of police force areas before being rolled out nationally; the existing DVPN/DVPOs will continue to apply in the non-pilot areas until DAPOs are rolled out fully on a national basis. When DAPN/DAPOs are rolled out fully on a national basis, the existing provisions in the Security and Crime Act 2010 relating to DVPN/DVPOs will be repealed – DVPNs/DVPOs and the guidance which underpins them will no longer be used.

185. **Restraining Orders**⁷⁷ can be made by a court to protect a victim, victims or any other person from conduct that amounts to domestic abuse, harassment or stalking; for example, where someone has been convicted or acquitted of such an offence. Restraining orders can prohibit and place restrictions on someone from doing anything described in the order; for example, a person may be prohibited from coming within a certain distance of the victim's home. A person who is subject to such an order and who breaks the terms of the order without reasonable excuse will be in breach of the order and may be guilty of an offence. Additionally, section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides a civil remedy. This enables a victim of harassment to seek an injunction restraining a person from pursuing a course of conduct which amounts to harassment, the breach of which is a criminal offence. There is no need for a person to have been convicted of harassment in order for an injunction to be granted against them. If a court is satisfied that harassment has taken place or is anticipated, then it may grant the injunction.

186. **Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs)** issued under the Stalking Protection Act 2019 allow for early police intervention pre-conviction in stalking cases before stalking behaviours becomes entrenched or escalate in severity. However, they can be applied for at any point, not just pre-conviction. An application for such an order would be made to the court by the police.

187. The police should consider applying for an order where it appears to them that:

- The respondent has carried out acts associated with stalking;
- The respondent poses a risk of stalking to a person; and
- There is reasonable cause to believe the proposed order is necessary to protect the other person from that risk (the person to be protected does not have to have been the victim of the acts mentioned above).

⁷⁷ Sections 5 and 5A, Protection from Harassment Act 1997

188. There is no restriction as to the stage of the criminal justice process at which an order may be made, provided the Court is satisfied that the three criteria set out in section 2(1) of the 2019 Act are met. Statutory guidance for the police on the Stalking Protection Act 2019 can be found [here](#).
189. **Forced Marriage Protection Orders** issued under Part 4A of the Family Law Act 1996 are granted by courts and can be applied for by the person who is to be protected by the order, a relevant third party or any other person with the permission of the court (including police).
190. A Forced Marriage Protection Order is unique to each case and contains legally binding conditions and directions that change the behaviour of a person or persons trying to force someone into marriage. The aim of the order is to protect the person who has been, or is being, forced into marriage. The court can make an order in an emergency so that protection is in place straightaway. Further information can be found [here](#).
191. **FGM Protection Orders** (FGMPOs) issued under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 offer a legal means to protect and safeguard victims and potential victims of FGM. FGMPOs are granted by a court and are unique to each case. They can be applied for by a person who has had or is at risk of FGM, a local authority, or any other person with permission from the court (including police).
192. FGMPOs contain conditions to protect a victim or potential victim from FGM. This could include, for example, surrendering a passport to prevent the person at risk from being taken abroad for FGM or prohibiting a person or persons from making arrangements for FGM to be performed on the person being protected. Further information can be found [here](#).
193. **Non-molestation orders and occupation orders** issued under the Family Law Act 1996 can only be applied for by the victim, and made by the court. In certain circumstances, a non-molestation order can also be made by the court without an application having been made, as part of any family proceedings. However, the police can support orders through their response to incidents and how breaches are enforced. Further information on these orders can be found from paragraph 203.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

194. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS, also known as “Clare’s Law”) enables the police to disclose information about previous abusive or violent offending by a current or former partner (male or female) where this may protect a potential victim from harm. It was introduced following the case of Clare Wood, who was murdered by her former partner in Greater Manchester in 2009.
195. The DVDS includes two routes for disclosing information:
- “Right to Ask” is triggered by a member of the public applying to the police for a disclosure; and

- “Right to Know” is triggered by the police making a proactive decision to disclose information to protect a potential victim.

196. Section 65 of the 2020 Act places a duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance to chief officers of police about DVDS. Section 65(2) imposes a duty on chief officers of police to have regard to guidance issued under section 65(1) of the 2020 Act. Placing an express duty on the police to have regard to the guidance, which means they must have a good reason to depart from it, will help raise awareness of the scheme, increase the number of disclosures made to prevent harm and ensure that the scheme is used and applied consistently across all police forces. The existing non-statutory guidance can be found [here](#).

Criminal Justice System – CPS

197. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. The CPS is independent and make their decisions independently of the police and Government. Their duty is to make sure that the right person is prosecuted for the right offence, and to bring offenders to justice wherever possible and in the public interest to do so.

198. The CPS does not decide whether a person is guilty of a criminal offence – that is for the jury, judge or magistrate - but it must make the key decision of whether a case should be put before a court. Every charging decision is based on the same two-stage test outlined in the [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#):

- Does the evidence provide a realistic prospect of conviction? That means, having heard the evidence, is a court more likely than not to find the defendant guilty? and;
- Is it in the public interest to prosecute? That means asking questions including how serious the offence is, the impact on communities and whether prosecution is a proportionate response.

199. Cases involving domestic abuse are regarded as particularly serious by the CPS given the abuse of trust involved. The CPS recognises the difficult decision victims may have to take before they report abuse and the vulnerable position many face. There may be an ongoing threat to the safety of victims as their life maybe closely intertwined with that of the perpetrator – for example they may have dependents and they may live, or have lived, together.

200. [CPS guidance and training](#) to prosecutors on handling cases of domestic abuse applies to all, irrespective of age, and sets out handling on all aspects of offending related to domestic abuse including recognising the lasting trauma that victims and their extended families may face and reminding prosecutors that abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional.

201. The CPS works closely with the police to build the strongest possible case in order to bring offenders to justice and is committed to taking all practicable steps to help victims through the often difficult experience of becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

Working with the police, the CPS has developed a proactive prosecution approach, which looks at how strong cases can be presented at court without the need for the victim to attend. This includes the use of technology such as police body worn video footage and 999 calls where appropriate.

202. The CPS also operates a Victim's Right to Review making it easier for people to seek a review of a decision not to bring charges or to terminate all proceedings in eligible cases. Further information can be found [here](#).

Criminal Justice System – Courts

203. Domestic abuse is dealt with under both the criminal law and the civil law. The two systems are separate and are largely administered by separate courts. Criminal courts primarily punish offenders who have committed a criminal offence, such as assault or other more serious injury, with the police and CPS involved in progressing a case to court. The civil law is primarily aimed at protection (or in some cases compensation). Victims or other professional agencies, depending on the nature of the abuse, can apply for a protective measure to protect a victim or a person who may become a victim of abuse.

204. Courts can also make a protective order of their own volition, to protect a victim or person who may become a victim, where statute allows for this.

205. A **non-molestation order** protects a named person from specific behaviour by an abuser, which can include prohibiting the abuser from:

- Using or threatening physical violence;
- Going to the victim's home or workplace;
- Intimidating, harassing or pestering;
- Communicating with the named person; and
- Instructing or encouraging others to do the above on their behalf.

206. The order is usually granted for between six and twelve months and can only be made by the family courts. Although it is a civil order, a breach of the order is a criminal offence under section 42A of the Family Law Act 1996 (inserted by section 1 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004) and therefore arrestable. A breach of the order can still be dealt with as a civil contempt of court matter if the applicant chooses to do so, or does not support criminal proceedings, but the breach can only be dealt with once, in either the criminal or civil court.

207. An **occupation order** can manage the abuser's attendance at the family home by:

- Suspending their rights to occupy or visit;
- Evicting the abuser from the home;
- Preventing them from returning home; and

- Preventing them from coming within a specified distance of the home.

208. The order is usually granted for between six and twelve months. A power of arrest can be attached to any non-compliance, but it remains a civil contempt of court matter. Legislation for occupation orders sit under section 33 of the Family Law Act 1996.

Criminal Justice System – Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework

209. The CPS, together with the police and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) are leading efforts to implement a best practice framework for use across all magistrates' courts. The framework has been developed by identifying common components from high performing courts and aims to improve the capacity and capability of the criminal justice system to respond effectively to reports of domestic abuse offending, whilst providing a level of service to victims, which increases their safety and satisfaction in the criminal justice system.

210. The framework has identified common components including:

- A clear multiagency/community approach which addresses risk management and safeguarding procedures. Multiagency fora enable agencies to discuss the handling of domestic abuse cases ensuring all information is provided in a timely, safe and efficient manner and the correct support is put in place for the victim. Agencies should scrutinise their local data and put in place mitigating actions to address any emerging issues;
- IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) support – ensure victims are informed at each stage of the prosecution process, working with prosecutors to support the victim;
- Trained, consistently deployed staff across all agencies (including judges); and
- In court services – proactive witness services/pre-trial familiarisation visits/appropriate use of special measures. As part of this in some areas they have considered fast tracking or expedited trial systems.

211. Following the testing of the Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework (DA BPF) in three test sites, all of the sites improved their performance in respect of managing domestic abuse cases, moving from being low performing areas to being in line with or above national average domestic abuse performance. The framework was rolled out in January 2019.

212. Regions all have strategic and operational groups which should drive forward adoption of the DA BPF in each local area. They are being supported by a national implementation group – membership of which includes representatives from HMCTS, Police, CPS, Victim Support and specialist domestic abuse support services.

Criminal Justice System – Prison and Probation

213. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has a key role to play in tackling domestic abuse as part of its wider role of protecting the public and reducing re-offending. HMPPS work closely with a variety of other agencies, to manage the risks

perpetrators pose and to ensure that risk management plans address the safety and wellbeing of victims and children. [The Police Framework](#) for HMPPS staff sets out the organisation's commitment to reducing domestic abuse-related reoffending and the risk of serious harm associated with it. It also seeks to encourage staff to approach the issue with professional curiosity in each and every case and sets out the principles of good practice in relation to working with domestic abuse.

Criminal Justice System – Local Criminal Justice Boards

214. We know that an effective response by the criminal justice system is crucial in supporting victims of domestic abuse and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice.
215. Local criminal justice boards (LCJBs) or partnerships manage the criminal justice system at a local level, by joining up local criminal justice agencies to achieve common aims and objectives. Targets are set at a local level to reduce crime, bring more offenders to justice, and increase public confidence in the criminal justice system. LCJBs should be used by senior officers to monitor criminal justice responses to domestic abuse within agencies that have key responsibilities and targets.

Employers

216. Any employer with a substantial headcount is likely to have some employees affected by domestic abuse, either as victims or perpetrators. Domestic abuse reduces work performance, increases absenteeism and ultimately may result in staff leaving. As such, employers have an important role to play in supporting victims of domestic abuse.
217. The [Employers' Initiative for Domestic Abuse](#) (EIDA) is a network of over 300 employers, working together to encourage employers to do more to tackle domestic abuse. EIDA has published a [toolkit](#) which provides employers with guidance and information on domestic abuse, to help them better understand the scope of the problem and subsequently improve the support available to their employees.

Financial services

218. Control of, and access to, finances is a significant part of domestic abuse. The VAWG National Statement of Expectations recommends that local commissioners explore what local banks are doing to identify and support victims of coercive control, including whether they can provide a safe disclosure point for a victim.
219. In 2015, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which regulates the financial services industry in the UK and helps protect consumers, published research⁷⁸ to challenge firms to better support vulnerable customers. The FCA has worked with stakeholders to ensure that vulnerable consumers are consistently treated fairly across financial services sectors. In 2019 they published a [consultation](#) on proposed guidance for firms on the fair

⁷⁸ <https://www.fca.org.uk/publications/occasional-papers/occasional-paper-no-8-consumer-vulnerability>

treatment of vulnerable customers. This proposed guidance identifies life events, which would include relationship breakdown and domestic abuse, as things which can cause consumers to become vulnerable to financial harm and have particular additional needs.

220. In October 2018 UK Finance and the Building Societies Association recognised the role that financial services have to play in responding to domestic abuse by introducing a [Financial Abuse Code of Practice](#). The voluntary Code of Practice sets out how participating banks and building societies should support customers who are victims of domestic and economic abuse. The Code aims to bring increased awareness and better understanding of what financial abuse looks like for firms, colleagues, victims, potential victims and their families, and ensure more consistency in the support available for those who need it.
221. Since the launch of the Code, over 20 financial institutions have signed up to and implemented the principles set out in the Code, improving how they support customers to understand and regain control of their finances – which is often an important first step in regaining their independence. The Home Office has funded from the charity Surviving Economic Abuse to support these efforts.

Links with the voluntary sector

222. The voluntary sector plays a key role in providing specialist support for victims, their families and perpetrators. The state sector should work closely with the voluntary sector to ensure full and proper combination of expertise to provide holistic support.
223. The Government funds the Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline for England (0808 2000 247), run by Refuge. The Helpline offers confidential, non-judgmental information and expert support to keep victims safe and provide them with information in order to make informed choices. The Live Fear Free helpline is the national helpline in Wales. These helplines and a list of other specialist domestic abuse support can be found at Annex A.
224. IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) are specialist trained practitioners that act as a victim's point of contact to support victims at high risk of harm from perpetrators (including ex-partners and family members). IDVAs work with their clients from a point of crisis to assess risk levels, discuss options and create safety plans. This includes actions from Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) as well as sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ SafeLives [National Definition for IDVA work](#), 2014

Chapter 5 – Commissioning Response to Domestic Abuse

225. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 on public authorities and those exercising public functions to have due regard to the need in exercising their functions to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. This means that in some instances, in order to have regard to these factors, a local authority might (or might not) need to commission single-sex services and specialist services, depending on their needs.
226. The National Statement of Expectations as explained below sets out what local areas are expected to put in place to ensure their response to VAWG issues.
227. Part 4 of the 2020 Act introduces a new statutory duty on local authorities, placing clearer accountability on local areas to ensure the needs of victims within refuges and other forms of domestic abuse safe accommodation are met in a consistent way across England. Under the new duty in the 2020 Act, tier one authorities in England will be required to appoint a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to support them in undertaking local needs assessments including developing and monitoring local strategies. The Board will be made up of members representing organisations who have a stake in this vital work.
228. The Local Partnership Boards will be central to ensuring that local authorities set out a robust strategy for tackling domestic abuse based on an assessment of the needs of all victims in their local area.
229. The Local Partnership Boards will also be required to assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support.
230. Tier one authorities will be required to deliver their strategy, and report back annually to Government. The annual reporting requirement will help the Government and others to monitor how the new duties on local authorities are working, understand where there may be challenges and how the funding is being used, and help identify and disseminate good practice. The duty will also require tier two authorities to co-operate with the lead tier one authority.

National Statement of Expectations

231. The [National Statement of Expectations](#)⁸⁰ (NSE) sets out what local areas are expected to put in place to ensure their response to VAWG issues is as collaborative, robust and effective as it can be so that all victims and survivors can get the help they need.

232. Local areas should set out strategies and services that:⁸¹

- Put the victim at the centre of service delivery that meets their needs;
- Respond to the needs of diverse groups including those with complex needs, BME, LGBTQ+, disabled, young (16-18) and older victims, male victims, those with insecure immigration status, offenders, and children of victims;
- Have a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims safe and reduce the likelihood of future victims;
- Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG;
- Are locally-led and safeguard individuals at every point; and
- Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG.

233. Alongside the NSE, there is a practical [toolkit](#) for commissioners and service providers (in England), to demonstrate how professionals can work together to provide an effective commissioning approach to anyone affected by any form of VAWG. Examples of best practice include:

- Needs assessment – a meaningful needs assessment has to consider intersecting identities and intersecting experiences of domestic abuse. This includes understanding the different ways in which victims across a range of protected characteristics prefer to access support and should make best use of local data from specialist services and involve the lived experience of survivors;
- Identifying opportunities for joint commissioning – PCCs, public health and local authority working together can lead to more joined-up services. Establishing a VAWG joint commissioning group is good practice; and
- Pooling budgets – combining funds from different departments or organisations to tender for services and achieve shared outcomes can help to promote integrated services and enable organisations to develop and build on joint working.

234. [A separate toolkit](#) has been developed to reflect the specific context in Wales.

⁸⁰ In Wales, refer to the [Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV services in Wales](#)

⁸¹ In Wales, refer to the [Guidance for Local Strategies](#)

Perpetrator Programmes

235. It is also important that local areas commission safe, effective perpetrator programmes. There are a number of different accreditation schemes and standards operating in perpetrator work.
236. The expert sector organisation Respect has developed quality standards for services working with perpetrators. The Respect Standard is nationally recognised and sets out an evidence-based, safety-focused framework which identifies good practice and offers guidance for organisations to ensure that they are meeting the needs of service users safely and effectively, with the safety of survivors and their children at its heart. More information can be found [here](#).⁸²
237. The [Drive](#) partnership works with high risk perpetrators to challenge behaviour and prevent abuse. Service providers deliver the intervention in local areas. An evaluation by the University of Bristol has shown that the programme has a positive effect on reducing harm to victims, including children.
238. The Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) model is part of the Whole System Approach to Domestic Abuse piloted in the North East and Yorkshire. The model involves data analysis to identify high harm perpetrators who are then referred into a multi-agency panel to coordinate action including education, diversion, disruption and enforcement to prevent abuse. reductions in reoffending. Findings of the two year evaluation show reductions in reoffending across domestic abuse other offence types.
239. The Make a Change programme led by Respect and Women’s Aid builds on Women’s Aid’s ‘Change that Lasts’ programme to provide a community response to domestic abuse perpetrators and enable professionals and members of the community to support an early response to abusive attitudes and behaviour.
240. HMPPS have their own accreditation approach for HMPPS programmes for those convicted and sentenced by the courts based on the following criteria. Accredited programmes:
- are evidence based and/or a have a credible rationale for reducing reoffending or promoting desistance;
 - address factors relevant to reoffending and desistance;
 - are targeted at appropriate users;
 - develop new skills (as opposed to only awareness raising);
 - motivate, engage and retain participants;
 - are delivered as intended; and
 - are evaluated.

⁸² In Wales, refer to the [Perpetrator Service Standards](#)

Standards and accreditation

241. There are numerous (non-obligatory) sector standards under which commissioners can be accredited to ensure their commissioned services are safe, effective and deliver good outcomes for survivors and their children. This includes, but is not limited to, the [VAWG Sector Shared Standards](#), [Women’s Aid’s National Quality Standards](#), [Imkaan’s Accredited Quality Standards](#) and [Safe Minimum Practice Standards](#), [Respect’s Standard](#), [Rape Crisis’ National Services Standards](#) and [DAHA Accreditation](#).

Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC)

242. One form of support for victims who have been granted a visa or leave to remain as the spouse or partner of a British Citizen or settled person is the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC). The DDVC also applies to refugees and victims granted leave as a partner or spouse of a member of HM Forces who is exempt from immigration control and has served for at least four years. Under this concession migrant victims may apply for three months leave outside the immigration rules, independent from their sponsor. Leave under the concession is granted without any condition restricting access to public funds, which may mean they are no longer dependent on the abusive spouse or partner, or their family. Victims who have been granted a visa or leave to remain as the spouse or partner of a British Citizen, settled person, member of HM forces who is exempt from immigration control and has served for at least 4 years, or person with refugee leave can apply for indefinite leave to remain using the Domestic Violence Indefinite Leave to Remain (DVILR) provisions of the Immigration Rules, a form of leave which is independent of the spouse or partner.

Case Study

Hounslow Domestic and Sexual Violence Outreach Service is a London Borough of Hounslow VAWG service for all survivors of gender-based violence. Survivors living in Hounslow can access the service themselves or partner agencies can refer. Examples of the way in which Hounslow provide support to victims of domestic abuse include:

Adult Social Care IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) – supports vulnerable adults, including those with disabilities, the elderly and those with complex needs.

Health IDVA – co-located with the Clinical Commissioning Group and supports survivors identified and referred by GPs, Maternity and the local hospital. The referral pathway is via the NHS System 1 ensuring speedy referrals from busy medical staff.

Metropolitan Police – The IDVA is co-located with the Safeguarding Unit to respond quickly to reports of high-risk domestic abuse incidences thereby providing earlier intervention and safety plans.

Freedom Programme – a 12-week programme designed to empower female survivors of domestic abuse.

Hounslow One Stop Shop – A designated venue offering a free weekly drop in providing information and advice from a variety of partners to survivors of VAWG. Partnerships with housing services, welfare benefits advisers, Family Law solicitors, Immigration Solicitors, children’s support workers, BME support workers and IDVAs work together to support families in Hounslow.

Daily Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) – Given the increasing number of cases being presented at the monthly MARAC, it was agreed that cases heard at the end of the day may not receive the same input from agencies as cases at the beginning of the day. The daily MARAC was developed to address this. Referrals are received and often discussed within 48 hours. This prompt response provides quicker safeguarding and support action plans to be developed. Police, Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Adult Social Care, IDVA Service, Education Welfare Service and the Health Service work together every morning to discuss a maximum of 4 cases. If the risks or family details are complex and the larger MARAC panel discussion is required, the case is referred to the following monthly MARAC. Since the daily MARAC started, the monthly MARAC caseload has been greatly reduced making it a more effective and relevant meeting for partner agencies.

Children Affected by domestic abuse project – provides a coordinated early help response delivering improved outcomes for children and families affected by domestic abuse. The project supports Operation Encompass which notifies schools within 24 hours after police have responded to an incident where a pupil is residing at the address. Specialist Parent and Child Domestic Abuse Workers (PCDAWs), co-located in schools, receive all notifications and work with the schools to provide holistic therapeutic support to children and non-abusive parents. They also work with non-abusive parents empowering them to make informed choices and supporting them to help address their child’s needs. The PCDAWs liaise regularly with the Designated Safeguarding Leads within the schools, enhancing the support that schools can offer children affected by domestic abuse. These practitioners also enhance information sharing to schools, social care and other specialist services via the Domestic Abuse Early Help Lead (DAEHL) co-located in the MASH. The DAEHL, triages all domestic abuse contacts which come into the MASH, working in partnership with the borough’s MASH members such as the Police, Health, Education and Children Social Care to identify the needs and risks to the family – better informing social care decisions and practices. Outcomes from these assessments have included referrals to the project, MARAC, the local perpetrator programme and children’s therapeutic services.

Chapter 6 – Working Together to Tackle Domestic Abuse

243. To provide effective support and protection to victims of domestic abuse it is essential that agencies work together. This includes through strategic planning, co-commissioning and creating joined-up services. Co-locating specialist domestic abuse services or providers can also be an effective way of multi-agency working. For example, some local areas have IDVAs based in police stations and hospitals.
244. It is important to note that agencies should not wait until a case is discussed in a formal mechanism such as a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) before taking safeguarding action and putting in place measures to support and protect a victim and their children. Further information on MARACs can be found at paragraph 247.
245. The best way to achieve this is through Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). These brings together expert professionals from a range of services that have contact with children, young people, adults and families, making the best possible use of their combined knowledge and information to safeguard children who are at risk of harm or neglect. Many local areas have a MASH or other forum, with the aim of providing a 'one front door' model, where professionals gather information and make decisions about which pathways to follow for different contacts and referrals. This may lead to an assessment by children's social care, early help or a response from universal services.
246. Effective multi-agency working (for example a MASH):
- Should be designed around the needs of users;
 - Should have a clear strategic focus;
 - Requires active partners participating in meaningful joint working;
 - Needs specialist skills;
 - Requires safe and effective information sharing;
 - Needs to see and respond to the whole picture;
 - Addresses the behaviour of the perpetrator; and
 - Values and employs staff with the right values.
247. These best practice principles are discussed in greater detail below.

Designing around the needs of users

- **Consider the needs of all local communities** making appropriate provision for those who face additional barriers to seeking and engaging with the support available such as language, mobility, physical impairments, learning difficulties or social attitudes. An equality impact assessment should be developed and reviewed regularly with input from service users and specialists to identify barriers and provide responses experienced by some groups;
- **Listen to the views and experiences of victims and their family members.** Their views should be used to assess the risk that the perpetrator(s) of the abuse pose(s) to other family members and the impact this has on their needs, such as safety, health, housing and wellbeing. **The safety and support for the victim should be central to any approach/engagement with other family members;**
- **Be trained to identify and understand the different typologies of abuse and abusers,** the prevalence of different types of abuse in the local area, and the appropriate strategies to deal with different types of perpetrators to reduce their abusive behaviour;
- **Have embedded, or have readily available, input from specialist agencies** that have a specialist proven track record of supporting victims of domestic abuse and who are aware and experienced in working with victims with protected characteristics, including being BME, LGBTQ+, disabled etc;
- **Victims should be fully informed about the purpose and aims of the multi-agency safeguarding team.** The team needs to be aware that victims may perceive the involvement of statutory agencies in their situation in a negative way. They may fear that they will not be believed, they will be blamed for the abuse and they may lose their children. Agencies should be trained to understand coercive, controlling and violent behaviour and the impact it has on victims, and this should inform professional practice;
- **Develop processes to ensure that individuals do not have to repeat their story** to several professionals in different agencies. The team should consider a single point of contact approach with the person acting as that lead seeking consent to share information with relevant partners in all situations where it is possible and legally required;
- **Develop processes that ensure that the safety, needs and wishes of all non-abusive family members are sought at the earliest opportunity** and that plans are developed which are responsive to the views they have given; and
- **Embed reflective practice throughout the service** centred on feedback from victims (both adults and children). Consult them regularly and use this to enable reassessment of situations in light of new information, inform continuous development and improvement of the collaborative work of the agencies.

A clear strategic focus

- **Have an integrated governance and operational structure,** so that agencies are regularly meeting at strategic, operational and decision-making level. Accountability and leadership is clear and effective and is appropriately linked to local bodies such as the Community Safety Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Adult Safeguarding Board;
- **Agree a statement of common purpose** which sets out a shared vision and ambition and a high-level operating manual and protocols for the multi-agency safeguarding team;

- **Agree a common outcomes framework**, which will focus on four key measures: effective informed support provided to victims and family members, which increases their level of safety and wellbeing at the earliest opportunity; increasing victim trust and confidence in safeguarding; perpetrator behaviour addressed at the earliest opportunity by agencies; family needs considered holistically by agencies, not in isolation from each other;
- **Take ownership of the need to understand local referral pathways and available provision**, identifying any gaps in provision and considering within strategic governance how these gaps can be addressed;
- **Together, regularly analyse performance and outcome measurement data**, undertake deep dive case audits to check for missed opportunities and consider the feedback being received from service users and specialist organisations. A key element of monitoring process should involve scrutiny around whether the data collected reflect any disproportionality in terms of decisions or practice for particular groups e.g. BME, LBGTQ+ or disabled victims. The data collected should be used to improve ongoing practice. This process might be facilitated by a critical friend – a peer multi agency team or independent local or national organisation;
- **Identify a dedicated multi agency team coordinator or manager** with specific responsibility for team building, developing a common culture of meaningful partnership through the creation of operating manuals, joint protocols, agreed assessment procedures, joint induction and training programmes and common monitoring and evaluation processes. All multi-agencies partner are clear about the role, responsibility, authority and accountability of the multi-agency safeguarding team co-ordinator/manager; there is a clear, multi-agency safeguarding escalation process for any concerns; and
- **Share information in a way that is timely, proportionate, legal and safe.** A protocol will be in place between agencies to govern this information sharing process, and be the subject of annual review. All IT and use of that IT will be compliant with data protection legislation. The multi-agency safeguarding team will have developed and published a data protection impact assessment (DPIA).

Participation as active partners in meaningful joint working

- **Engage the core agencies whose collaborative working will be needed** to improve outcomes for victim and their children. This is likely to include the police, probation, children's services, health (physical and mental), housing, specialist domestic abuse services, education, adult safeguarding services, drugs and alcohol support and Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service); and
- **Demonstrate both in policy and practice that agencies consider the safeguarding need of all family members**, ie that those agencies primarily charged with child safeguarding are considering the safety and wellbeing of the non-abusive parent and other family members, and the agencies primarily charged with safeguarding adults will also consider the support needs of the child(ren).

Specialist skills

- **Invite a specialist domestic abuse service to be embedded within the team.** The specialist should have the skills and experience in identifying the individual circumstances of risk and need that someone might be facing. Professionals from that service should be treated as having parity of status with statutory bodies in the multi-agency safeguarding team (they should, for example, be included in all

relevant meetings, have good access around the building, expect that their skills, knowledge and experience will be drawn on for key decisions and the outcome of decisions shared with them); and

- **Set an expectation** that the service invited to join the multi-agency safeguarding team is able to evidence that it meets the [common sector standards](#) agreed between Imkaan, Respect, SafeLives and Women's Aid and published in 2016.

Safe and effective information sharing

- **Make mandatory, appropriate information sharing training available** to the multi-agency safeguarding team so that they are professionally competent and confident about when and how to share (or not share) information, in line with the multi-agency safeguarding team protocol (see above). Training should be informed by service user feedback and learning from Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews;
- **Develop links and information sharing protocols that place the safety of the victim and their children at the centre** with other multi-agency safeguarding arrangements including MAPPA (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements), MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), Operation Encompass, CSE (child sexual exploitation) operational groups, the Community Safety Partnership and Troubled Families; and
- **Decision-making about what to share, and when, should be governed by a clear, collective understanding** about the risks to safety for an individual and family, and how those risks and the other needs within that family can be addressed. Information-sharing should happen with the express intent of reducing risk to one or more family members. The process should be consent-led, but there will be circumstances in which the risk to an individual has to be acted on. **You can share confidential information without consent** if it is required by law, or directed by a court, or if the benefits to a child or young person that will arise from sharing the information outweigh both the public and the individual's interest in keeping the information confidential.
- **Document these decisions** to demonstrate data protection compliance.

Seeing and responding to the whole picture

- **Develop a collaborative approach built around co-ordinating the skills, experience and perspectives of people from each agency.** Any assessment process should recognise and allow for fluctuations in the victim's needs and safety and should be informed by the assessment provided by the specialist domestic abuse service;
- **Use a common assessment process for all family members**, identifying the risk to/from each family member and the needs of each family member. The primary goal of this assessment should be the increased safety and well-being of all non-abusive family members, with the response tailored to their particular situation and the views they have expressed. This assessment process should be well-evidenced, tested with service users, and be the subject of regular, high quality training on how it should (and shouldn't) be used. It should have reference to existing assessment methods such as the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour-Based Violence (DASH) risk assessment and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) work; and
- **Develop processes and pathways** that ensure that once needs and risks are identified, family members get the most appropriate support as soon as possible.

Addressing the behaviour of the perpetrator

- **Take the earliest opportunity available** to consider how the behaviour of the perpetrator can be disrupted or constrained, putting the emphasis for change (considering ACE factors) on that individual. Consider creative options to address the behaviour of the perpetrator, including recourse to Youth Offending Teams (YOT), Integrated Offender Management (IOM), Multi-agency Targeting And Coordinating (MATAC), Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (DAPPs), safeguarding, housing, DWP and the full range of quality assured perpetrator programmes; and
- **Ensure multi-agency safeguarding team staff receive mandatory training** on the dynamics of domestic abuse and the basic typologies of different perpetrators, making those professionals more likely to identify and be confident to competently address coercive, controlling and manipulative behaviours. Staff need to be aware of the complexity of different forms of perpetration which may not neatly fit into the binary of 'victim' or 'perpetrator'. For example, a young person may be perpetrating domestic abuse but may be a victim of CSE themselves or a woman may be perpetrating abuse within a forced marriage context but may also be experiencing domestic violence herself.

Valuing and employing staff with the right values

- **Demonstrate in both policy and practice that they take the duty of care to their staff seriously.** This should involve a focus on reflective practice, joint training programmes which bring different organisations' staff together, clinical supervision and employee assistance programmes;
- **Create opportunities for staff to have sight of any positive outcomes,** such as case studies or local stories, and to be able to link back to families that they had initial contact with, to understand the impact of their work;
- **Recognise the specialised nature of the work,** choosing staff who hold specialist qualifications, training, accreditation or other recognised professional standard which gives parity of status with agency colleagues; and
- **Have a domestic abuse policy in place,** in complement to the policies held by each individual agency, which addresses the potential for staff to themselves be victims, survivors or perpetrators, which they action and own.

248. There are a number of different existing initiatives and processes beyond MASHs (or equivalent) that agencies should be feeding into. These include:

Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences

249. A Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a non-statutory process that brings together statutory and voluntary agencies to jointly support victims of domestic abuse, and their children, who are at a high risk of serious harm or homicide, and to disrupt and divert the behaviour of the perpetrator(s). The MARAC's working assumption is that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim and their child(ren), but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The core MARAC agencies are: Police, IDVA services, Housing, Children's services, National Probation Service and/or Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), Primary health, Mental Health, Substance Misuse Service and Adult Social Care.

250. At the beginning of the MARAC process, local agencies will refer victims to the local MARAC. Before the meeting, all participating agencies will gather relevant, proportionate and necessary information regarding the victim, any children and the perpetrator(s). The local agency representatives will attend the MARAC meeting, (usually taking place monthly or fortnightly) to discuss the shared information and expertise and suggest actions. The IDVA is a specialist practitioner who works in partnership with other agencies to implement the action plan, mobilising resources on behalf of the victim (and any children) to increase their safety. Whilst they are not a statutory requirement for MARACs they crucially they represent the victim at the MARAC, making sure their voice is heard. In the 12 months following the MARAC process nearly half of victims make no further call outs to police.⁸³
251. The victim, children and perpetrator(s) do not attend the meeting. The victim is informed that the case is being taken through the MARAC process, unless it is deemed unsafe to do so. If the victim objects to the disclosure of personal information and they are deemed to be mentally competent to understand the risks to themselves of that decision then their objection should generally be respected. However, if it is believed that withholding information puts a child at risk of significant harm, or another adult at risk of serious harm, then disclosure may be justified in the public interest. The process must be compliant with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and the common law duty of confidence. The Information Sharing Protocol and Caldicott Principles must be adhered to and the decision to share must be recorded as being both proportional and relevant in relation to the risks. Dependent on which regime the processing falls within, you will need to ensure that the appropriate conditions for processing (including for sensitive processing) are satisfied. Advice on data sharing for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers can be found [here](#).

Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements

252. Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a set of statutory arrangements to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders. They are established by virtue of sections 325 to 327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and apply to all police force areas in England and Wales. MAPPA requires local criminal justice agencies and other bodies to work together in partnership in order to protect the public from serious harm. MAPPA brings together the Police, Probation and Prison Services into what is known as the MAPPA 'Responsible Authority' for each MAPPA Area (coterminous with police force areas). A number of other agencies are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the Responsible Authority (e.g. Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Health Trusts and Authorities, Youth Offending Teams, Home Office Immigration Enforcement).

⁸³ [Research from SafeLives \(2012\)](#)

Perpetrator Panels

253. Many local areas are introducing multi-agency perpetrator panels, such as the Multi-agency Tasking and Coordination meeting (MATAC), which has been piloted in Northumbria and rolled out across six other police forces in the North East and Yorkshire. The Drive programme⁸⁴ has also successfully used perpetrator panels in other forces in England and Wales. Such panels bring together local agencies to identify strategies for responding to the most harmful domestic abuse perpetrators. Interventions identified through MATAC or Drive can include education, prevention, diversion, disruption and enforcement.

Domestic Homicide Review

254. A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) (section 9(3) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004) is a review into the circumstances of a death of person where that death appears to have occurred as a result of violence, abuse or neglect by someone with whom they were in a close relationship with or lived with. Such reviews are carried out by community safety partnership in the local areas to identify what lessons can be learnt from the death, particularly regarding the way in which professionals and organisations work together to safeguard victims.

255. When a domestic homicide occurs, the relevant police force should inform the relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in writing of the incident. Overall responsibility for establishing a review rests with the local CSP as they are ideally placed to initiate a DHR and review panel due to their multi-agency design and locations across England and Wales. CSPs are made up of representatives from the 'responsible authorities' (police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, probation service and health) who work together to protect their local communities from crime and help people feel safer. Guidance on conducting DHRs is [here](#).

Operation Encompass

256. Operation Encompass is a specialist charity which runs a scheme (also called Operation Encompass) which helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to pupils affected by domestic abuse. The system ensures that the police report to schools before the start of the next school day when a child/young person has been involved in or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening. Appropriate school staff will be made aware and be able to support the child accordingly. Whereas children's social services only intervene in the most serious cases, Operation Encompass enables every child to receive support, regardless of whether or not the incident has been recorded as a crime.

257. Many police forces already use Operation Encompass, or a similar scheme. More information about the scheme and how to become involved is [here](#).

⁸⁴ See paragraph 237

Annex A – Support Available for Victims

- **Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Abuse helpline** – 0808 2000 247
- **Men’s Advice Line** – 0808 801 0327
- **National LGBT Domestic Abuse helpline** – 0300 999 5428
- **National Stalking helpline** – 0808 802 0300
- **Revenge Porn helpline** – 0345 6000 459
- **UK Forced Marriage Unit** – 020 7008 0151
- **Refuge**
- **Women’s Aid** (www.womensaid.org.uk)
- **Karma Nirvana** (forced marriage, honour-based abuse)
- **Southall Black Sisters** (support for BME and migrant women)
- **Sign Health Domestic Abuse Service** (support health and wellbeing of deaf people)
- **Respect** (work with male victims and domestic abuse perpetrators)
- **Surviving Economic Abuse** (economic abuse)
- **Stay Safe East** (support for disabled and deaf victims)
- **NSPCC**
- **Paladin** (support for victims of stalking)
- **Victim Support**
- **NSPCC** – (including support for victims of FGM)
- **ManKind Initiative** (support for male victims)
- **Jewish Women’s Aid** (support for Jewish women and children)
- **Muslim Women’s Network** (support for Muslim women and girls)
- **Restored** (Christian alliance)

Wales specific organisations:

- [Live Fear Free helpline](#) – 0808 801 0800
- [Dyn Wales helpline](#) – 0808 801 0321 (support for male victims)
- [Welsh Women's Aid](#)
- [BAWSO](#) (support for BME communities)

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Annex B – Glossary of Acronyms

- **ACE** – Adverse Childhood Experience
- **APVA** – Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse
- **BME** – Black and Minority Ethnic
- **CJS** – Criminal Justice System
- **CPS** – Crown Prosecution Service
- **CQC** – Care Quality Commission
- **CRC** – Community Rehabilitation Company
- **CSE** – Child Sexual Exploitation
- **CSP** – Community Safety Partnership
- **DA BPF** – Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework
- **DAEHL** – Domestic Abuse Early Help Lead
- **DAHA** – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance
- **DAPNs** – Domestic Abuse Protection Notices
- **DAPOs** – Domestic Abuse Protection Orders
- **DAPPs** – Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes
- **DASH** – Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour-Based Violence
- **DDVC** – Destitute Domestic Violence Concession
- **DHR** – Domestic Homicide Review
- **DHSC** – Department of Health and Social Care
- **DVDS** – Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, also known as “Clare’s Law”
- **DVILR** – Domestic Violence Indefinite Leave to Remain
- **DVPN** – Domestic Violence Protection Notices
- **DVPO** – Domestic Violence Protection Orders
- **DWP** – Department for Work and Pensions
- **FCA** – Financial Conduct Authority
- **HBA** – ‘Honour-based’ abuse
- **HMCTS** – Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service
- **HMICFRS** – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
- **HMI Probation** – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation
- **HMPPS** – Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service
- **IDVA** – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

- **IOM** – Integrated Offender Management
- **JTAI** – Joint Targeted Area Inspection
- **KSS** – Knowledge and Skills Statements
- **LCJBs** – Local criminal justice boards
- **LGBTQ+** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer +
- **MAPPA** – Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements
- **MARAC** – Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
- **MASH** – Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub
- **MATAC** – Multi-agency tasking and coordination meeting
- **MHCLG** – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- **NICE** – National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
- **NSE** – National Statement of Expectations
- **ONS** – Office for National Statistics
- **PCC** – Police and Crime Commissioner
- **PCDAW** – Parent and Child Domestic Abuse Worker
- **RSE** – Relationships and Sex Education
- **VAWDASV** – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- **VAWG** – Violence Against Women and Girls
- **YOT** – Youth Offending Team
- **YVPA** – Young People’s Violence Advisor

Annex C – Guidance Documents

Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732573/APVA.pdf

Authorised Professional Practice on Domestic Abuse

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/domestic-abuse-index/>

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF

Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482528/Controlling or coercive behaviour - statutory guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482528/Controlling_or_coercive_behaviour_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) toolkit

<http://accreditation.dahalliance.org.uk/>

DASH risk checklist <https://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/DASH-2009.pdf>

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575273/DHR-Statutory-Guidance-161206.pdf

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) Guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575361/DVDS guidance FINAL v3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575361/DVDS_guidance_FINAL_v3.pdf)

Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) and Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) Guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575363/DVPO guidance FINAL 3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575363/DVPO_guidance_FINAL_3.pdf)

Forced Marriage Statutory Guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322310/HMG Statutory Guidance publication 180614 Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322310/HMG_Statutory_Guidance_publication_180614_Final.pdf)

Guidance for Local Strategies (Wales)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/guidance-for-local-strategies.pdf>

HMPPS Domestic Abuse Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-policy-framework>

Homelessness Code of Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a969da940f0b67aa5087b93/Homelessness_code_of_guidance.pdf

Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf

Male Victims Statement (Crown Prosecution Service)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-public-statement-male-victims-crimes-covered-cps-vawg-strategy>

Male Victims Position Paper (Home Office)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783996/Male_Victims_Position_Paper_Web_Accessible.pdf

Multi-Agency Working and Information Sharing Project

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338875/MASH.pdf

National Statement of Expectations

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574665/VAWG_National_Statement_of_Expectations_-_FINAL.PDF

NICE Quality Standard <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs116>

Perpetrator Service Standards (Wales)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/perpetrator-service-standards.pdf>

Pre-Charged Bail and Released Under Investigation Guidance

<https://cdn.prgloo.com/media/832fb4a76353450ab555b7db1c93ed48.pdf>

Priorities for Domestic Abuse Services

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721495/Fund_for_domestic_abuse_services_2018-20_prospectus.pdf

Respect Standard Accreditation Guidance <http://respect.uk.net/what-we-do/accreditation/the-respect-standard/>

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in the NHS: Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/safeguarding-children-young-people-adults-at-risk-saaf.pdf>

SafeLives MARAC guidance <http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings>

Sanctuary Schemes for Households at Risk of Domestic Violence: A Guide for Agencies <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanctuary-schemes-for-households-at-risk-of-domestic-violence-guide-for-agencies>

Sentencing Children and Young People Sentencing Council Guidelines <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/overarching-guides/magistrates-court/item/sentencing-children-and-young-people/>

Sexual Violence and Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

Stalking Protection Act: Statutory Guidance for the Police <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stalking-protection-act-statutory-guidance-for-the-police>

Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System 2019 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780504/Standards for children in youth justice services 2019.doc.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780504/Standards_for_children_in_youth_justice_services_2019.doc.pdf)

Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/statutory-guidance-for-the-commissioning-of-vawdasv-services-in-wales.pdf>

Statutory Guidance Framework: Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-framework-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-in-an-intimate-or-family-relationship>

Strengthening Families and Protecting Children Programme <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strengthening-families-protecting-children-sfpc-programme>

Supporting Local Commissioning Toolkit [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576238/VAWG Commissioning Toolkit.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576238/VAWG_Commissioning_Toolkit.pdf)

Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Service in Wales https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/media/jmun2m2n/vawdasv-toolkit_wales_web.pdf

The Multi-Agency Response to Children Living With Domestic Abuse [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/680671/JTAI domestic abuse 18 Sept 2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/680671/JTAI_domestic_abuse_18_Sept_2017.pdf)

Violence Against Women and Girls: local commissioning guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-services-local-commissioning>

Violence Against Women and Girls: Sector Shared Core Standards

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/commissioning-support/vawg-sector-shared-core-standards>

Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Working Together to Safeguard People: Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk

<https://gov.wales/safeguarding-children-risk-abuse-or-neglect>

Youth Offenders CPS Legal Guidance

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/youth-offenders>

Youth Offending Team and Managers Case Management Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/case-management-guidance>

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