



Home Office

Domestic Abuse

Draft Statutory Guidance Framework

July 2021

DRAFT



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Executive Summary

This guidance is issued under Section 84 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ('the 2021 Act') and has been formulated to set standards and promote best practice. The guidance therefore is aimed at statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims, perpetrators and commissioning services, including the police, local authorities, and the NHS to increase awareness and inform their response to domestic abuse. It is also aimed at support organisations working with victims.

Chapter 1 provides the objectives of the guidance and Chapter 2 sets out background on domestic abuse and our understanding of it as seen in data and evidence. Chapter 2 details the statutory definition and expands on this through setting out some of the key forms of abuse in different relationship contexts and a range of abusive behaviours, in order to assist in recognising abuse. It also explores intersectionality and related considerations – that individuals can be victims of multiple and different abusive behaviours because of the way different personal or situational characteristics overlap, including effects on their access to services and support if services are not designed to meet their needs.

Chapter 3 describes the impact of domestic abuse on victims, highlighting common themes and experiences. It looks in detail at the impact on children, who are for the first time recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, intending to highlight different aspects of the experience of young people, or factors which affect this, so that this can be considered in seeking to meet their needs. It explains how the statutory definition of domestic abuse is to operate alongside other measures that address the safeguarding of children and for all victims it promotes consideration of intersectionality in assessing impact.

Chapter 4 outlines the role of individual agencies in responding to domestic abuse. It sets out the context of existing guidance and strategies and the tools available to organisations. Chapter 5 sets out the responsibility for agencies to work together and share information and discusses in detail best practice principles for multi-agency working.

Chapter 6 discusses standards for agencies commissioning responses, including the public sector equality duty and the national statement of expectations. It details the duty on local authorities, under Part 4 of the 2021 Act, to provide support to victims and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. It also references standards and expectations for perpetrator programmes and behaviour change interventions.

The guidance is supplemented with case studies to help illustrate some of the subject matter described and annexes are included to signpost a wide array of support available for victims (Annex A), define the acronyms used within the guidance (Annex B) and highlight the diverse guidance available to support frontline professionals (Annex C).

This guidance extends to England and relates to reserved or non-devolved matters to Wales. 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), although not all criminal offences are reserved, such as the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour which is devolved to Wales.

Devolved bodies and local organisations in Wales should also refer to the relevant Welsh legislation, in relation to devolved matters, such as the [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) and associated guidance, which is referenced throughout this document. Devolved bodies in Wales may need to have regard to this guidance in relation to reserved matters. We would expect both devolved and non-devolved organisations to continue to work together to implement the purposes of the 2021 Act, where relevant and appropriate.

The information within this guidance is relevant to organisations and agencies in England and Wales working with victims (including children) or perpetrators of 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
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)
- Specialist domestic abuse and other violence against women and girls support services
- Local housing and homelessness teams, registered social landlords
- Early years, childcare, schools, colleges and higher education setting
- Children's social care providers
- Adult social care providers
- NHS England and NHS Improvement (from 2022, NHS England)
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (from 2022, Integrated Care Systems)
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts
- Employers
- HM Prison and Probation services

- HM Courts and Tribunals Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- Financial services (banks, building societies etc)
- Community and faith groups.

Section 84(4) of the 2021 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.

The Government will be publishing a refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy followed by a Domestic Abuse Strategy. Domestic abuse, a form of violence against women and girls, is a high-volume and high-harm crime. In the year ending March 2020, an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse, the majority of whom were women. In producing these strategies, we intend to shine twice as much light on the issue of violence against women and girls and the strategies will work together to prevent and reduce VAWG crimes. The Government will update this guidance following publication of both the strategies.

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Chapter 1 – Objectives

Introduction

The prevention of abuse and the protection of all victims lies at the heart of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the wider programme of work. The measures in the 2021 Act seek to:

- **promote awareness** - to put abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, by introducing a statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognise children as victims in their own right;
- **protect and support victims** - including by establishing in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner, introducing a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order and placing a new duty on tier one local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation;
- **tackle perpetrators** - extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse, extending the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress to cover threats to disclose such material, creating a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person, clarifying by restating in statute the general position that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death;
- **transform the justice response** - including by helping victims to give their best evidence in the criminal courts through the use of video evidence, screens and other special measures, and ensuring that victims of abuse do not suffer further trauma in family court proceedings by being cross-examined by their abuser; and
- **improve performance** - to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse.

This guidance has **three** key objectives:

1. To provide clear information on what domestic abuse is and how to identify it

One of the central functions of this guidance is 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 on adult and child victims, as well as the links to other forms of abuse. Individuals 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.

2. To provide guidance and support to frontline professionals

We acknowledge that there is a significant amount of work underway to improve the response of frontline staff to domestic abuse, whether that is police forces, housing officers, across the National Health Service or in job centres. Of course, there is always room and scope for improvement in the response. The second function of this publication is to provide guidance and support to frontline professionals who have responsibilities to safeguard and support victims of domestic abuse. The document also outlines the strategic and operational frameworks that produce the most effective commissioning of domestic abuse services.

3. To signpost responding agencies to other sources of guidance on domestic abuse

Another function of the guidance is to support and signpost frontline professionals who have responsibilities to safeguard and support victims of domestic abuse. It is important that public authorities are able to identify victims and know how to provide the right response, and this guidance is dedicated to improving the agency response to domestic abuse, and details best practice, specific considerations and guidance. 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 a range of abuses which can form part of domestic abuse, such as stalking, harassment, and sexual violence.

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

Chapter 2 – Understanding Domestic Abuse

Background

1. Domestic abuse is a unique crime type. Whilst it is common, it is often hidden and therefore difficult to quantify. However, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years had experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020.¹ Over 40% of victims of partner abuse have at least one child under the age of 16 years old living in the household,² and [Childhood Local Data on Risks and Needs](#) estimated that 66 in 1,000 0-17 year olds lived in households where a parent is suffering domestic abuse in 2019.
2. The police recorded a total of 1,288,018 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police)³ in the year ending March 2020. This is an increase of 4% from the previous year. This follows a broader pattern of increases in police recorded domestic abuse and may reflect general improvements in crime recording by the police. This suggests that more victims are coming forward to report domestic abuse, and that there is greater police awareness of this crime. Excluding fraud, overall 15% of all police recorded crime was identified as domestic abuse related in the last year.⁴
3. Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Domestic abuse can also manifest itself in specific ways within different communities.
4. Women are disproportionately the victims of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse perpetrated on men by women and on victims in LGBT relationships is often due to the need of the perpetrator to exert power and control over their victim. The CSEW for the year ending March 2020 estimated that 1.6 million females and 757,000 males aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in that year. Women are more likely to experience repeat victimisation, be physically injured or killed as a result of domestic abuse and experience non-physical abuse - including emotional and financial abuse - than men.⁵ According to the CSEW for the year ending March 2020, around one in four women aged 16 to 74 (27.6%) had been a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime. 274 women were killed in domestic homicides between April 2016 and March 2019. In

¹ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

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

³ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁴ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁵ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2018.

263 cases (96%) the suspect was male.⁶ According to the CSEW for the year ending March 2020 around one in seven men aged 16 to 74 (13.8%) had been a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime. 83 men were killed in domestic homicides between April 2016 and March 2019. In 44 cases (53%) the suspected perpetrator of these homicides was male.⁷

5. [Research published by the Home Office](#) has estimated the social and economic costs of domestic abuse in the region of £66 billion for the victims identified in England and Wales within the year 2016/17. 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 overwhelming 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 domestic abuse.
6. There are also additional barriers to services experienced by victims from protected groups and those experiencing multiple disadvantages. Black, Asian and ethnic minority women, women with insecure immigration status, deaf and disabled women and LGBT victims will experience further barriers when accessing services. Similarly, the co-occurrence of homelessness, drug and alcohol use, criminal justice system involvement and mental health will often mean that victims will face huge challenges when seeking support.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

7. Section 1 of the 2021 Act creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse (see box below which sets out the definition of domestic abuse, which is found in Sections 1 to 3, or Part 1 of the 2021 Act).
8. 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.
9. In this guidance “A” is referred to as the perpetrator of the abuse and “B” is referred to as a victim of the abuse. The term ‘victim’ is used in this document to denote someone who has experienced domestic abuse. This includes children who have seen, heard, or experienced domestic abuse and are related to either the adult victim or the perpetrator (section 3). It should be noted that not everyone who has experienced, or is experiencing, domestic abuse chooses to describe themselves as a ‘victim’ and they may prefer another term, for example, ‘survivor’. We recognise both terms, but in this document will use the language of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which is ‘victim’.

⁶ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁷ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

10. Section 1(3) of the 2021 Act provides for what constitutes behaviour that is abusive. This behaviour might consist of a single incident or a course of conduct.
11. Section 2 of the 2021 Act provides the definition of “personally connected”, which is explained in the box below.
12. The definition of domestic abuse does not require “A” and “B” to be living together.
13. Section 2(3) of the 2021 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.
14. Section 3 provides that a child (0-18), is for the purposes of the 2021 Act, recognised as a victim of domestic abuse if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, and is related to “A” or “B”.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

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.

Section 3: Children as victims of domestic abuse

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who —

- (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse, and
- (b) is related to A or B.

- (3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if –
- (a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
 - (b) the child and the person are relatives.
- (4) In this section –
- “child” means person under the age of 18 years;
 - “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
 - “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

Forms of domestic abuse

15. Professionals and agencies must be aware that the types of abuse can differ in nature, dynamics, and impact, therefore to ensure they can deliver an effective response, there must be an explanation of the types and forms of abuse.

Intimate partner abuse

16. It has long been accepted that domestic abuse most commonly takes place in intimate partner relationships, including same sex relationships.⁸ Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2020 shows that in the previous year, 4% of adults experienced abuse by an intimate partner compared to 1.9% by a family member⁹ and for every three victims, two are female and one is male. Such abuse in intimate relationships can vary in severity and frequency, ranging from a one-off occurrence to a continued pattern of behaviour. Further detail on the types of abusive behaviour can be found at paragraph 45 onwards.

17. Abuse often continues or intensifies when a relationship has ended, which can be a very dangerous time for a victim. Post-separation abuse, including stalking, harassment and forms of physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse controlling and coercive behaviour often continues and causes ongoing harm. In the year ending March 2020 61 women and 9 men were recorded as being victims of homicide by a current or ex-partner.¹⁰ According to the Femicide Census, 38% of the women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse from 2009 to 2018 were killed within the first month of separation and 89% in the first year.¹¹

Teenage Relationship Abuse

18. Relationship abuse happens at all ages, not just in adult relationships. Young people can experience domestic abuse in their relationships, regardless of whether they are living together. The latest figures from the CSEW show that women aged 16 to 19 years were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women

⁸ World Health Organisation (2012) [Understanding and addressing violence against women. Intimate partner violence.](#)

⁹ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

¹⁰ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020 - Homicide in England and Wales, March 2020.

¹¹ [Femicide Census](#), 2020.

aged 25 years or over.¹² Similarly, men aged between 16 to 19 were most likely to experience domestic abuse than at any other age. It should be noted that if a young person is under 16 years old, the definition of domestic abuse under the 2021 Act will not apply to them, instead this abuse would be considered as child abuse. Victims under 16 would be treated as victims of child abuse and age appropriate consequences will be considered for perpetrators under 16.

19. Abuse may also arise out of casual relationships. Some perpetrators may deny abuse by stating that they were not in a relationship with the victim. Some victims may not self-identify as victims due to the casual nature of their relationship. Some perpetrators may have multiple romantic and sexual partners via dating apps and demonstrate abusive behaviour even though the perception is not one of being in an intimate personal relationship with the victim.
20. Teenage relationship abuse is not a term that is defined by the 2021 Act, or elsewhere in law, but if the victim and perpetrator are at least 16 years old abuse in their relationship will come under the statutory definition of domestic abuse set out in the Domestic Abuse Act. The Act does not create a specific offence of domestic abuse and whilst young people under the age of 16 can experience behaviours which encompass domestic abuse, these would be considered child abuse. These can include a wide range of incidents or patterns of incidents of controlling or coercive behaviour, violence or abuse between teenagers (and may involve children younger than 13) who are, or have been, in an intimate relationship. This abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse. For teenagers in particular, this abuse can often occur through technology. For instance, technology may be used to harass and control victims, including social media, or location-based tracking apps such as Find My Friends. Young people's lives are often heavily online-based and perpetrators of abuse may exploit this, demanding access to passwords or monitoring online activity. Young people may also experience intimate image abuse within their relationships, including threats to expose intimate images.
21. It is important to recognise that young people may not identify as victims of domestic abuse – or with the term 'domestic abuse'. Teenage relationship abuse often occurs outside of a domestic setting, and victims may feel that domestic abuse occurs only between adults who are cohabiting or married. Research by SafeLives shows that the most common words that young people associated with abusive relationships were toxic (69%), controlling (61%) and manipulative (55%). The least common were coercive (24%), intimate partner violence (31%) and domestic violence (36%).¹³ Teenage victims may also find it difficult to view their abuse as abuse – for instance, controlling or jealous behaviour may be interpreted as love. Practitioners should consider this when dealing with incidents of teenage relationship abuse.
22. 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 who experience

¹² [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk).

¹³ SafeLives, [My Story Matters](#) 2020.

domestic abuse do so at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives.¹⁴ 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, or indeed whether they do engage with services. Professionals should be mindful that young people may be reluctant to discuss relationships or their concerns around abuse with parents, teachers and professionals they may come into contact with. Research by SafeLives suggests that young people are more likely to first approach their peers or families for advice.¹⁵ It should also be noted that young people are also more likely than adult victims to still be in a relationship with the perpetrator when they access services.¹⁶ Additionally, young people may be unequipped to deal with the practical problems such as moving home to escape the abuse or managing their own finances.

23. Some young people may also face added barriers in disclosing or reporting their abuse, as well as accessing services. These barriers may relate to a protected characteristic such as disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Domestic abuse manifests itself in specific ways within some communities.
24. Due to the stigma attached to LGBT identities, young people from the LGBT community may lack relevant and accurate information on healthy relationships, which may inform behaviour and decision making within a relationship. LGBT young people may also face unique obstacles to seeking help, especially in a context of a first relationship or when first coming out as they may be unable to confide in their peers or family, owing to the reaction they might receive due to their LGBT identity.¹⁷
25. Abuse in relationships between those under the age of 18 years will be treated as child abuse as a matter of law and child safeguarding procedures should be followed. Abuse involving perpetrators and victims aged between 16 and 18 could be both child and domestic abuse. 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. The statutory guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)'¹⁸ sets out what professionals and organisations need to do to safeguard children.
26. Young people experiencing or perpetuating abuse in their own relationships need to be supported and engaged with in a way that is specifically tailored to their needs; children and young people, due to their age, will often have to rely on specialist services designed for adult victims that are not always appropriate.
27. Professionals should always take the individual needs of the young person into consideration to support them to communicate in a way they feel comfortable. This may

¹⁴ SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse](#), 2017.

¹⁵ SafeLives, [My Story Matters](#), 2020.

¹⁶ SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse](#), 2017.

¹⁷ Galop [LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse: a report on Galop's domestic abuse advocacy service](#), 2017.

¹⁸ In Wales refer to '[Working Together to Safeguard People: handling individual cases to protect children at risk](#)'.

include drawing on multi-agency approaches, working with educational psychologists, and utilising the knowledge of those who know the young person best, such as their teacher, trusted adult, youth worker or any therapists currently involved in their support.

28. Similarly, young people perpetrating abuse in their relationships must be supported in an appropriate way that places emphasis on tackling the drivers of their behaviour. 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:

- a. [Case management guidance for Youth Offending Teams](#)
- b. [Standards for children in the Youth Justice System](#)
- c. [Crown Prosecution Service guidance on youth offenders](#)
- d. [Sentencing Council guidelines on sentencing children and young people](#)

29. Professionals should be equipped to identify and respond to teenage relationship abuse. It is important that professionals are aware of the range of support available, from early intervention to crisis stage. Best practice responses involve an integrated response which combines child safeguarding and high-risk domestic abuse expertise, particularly in relation to risk assessment and safety planning. Further details on responding to young people experiencing abuse can be found in the [SafeLives Practice Briefing](#). For more information on responding to children experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse, see Chapter 4 – Agency Response.

Abuse by family members

30. Abuse by family members can involve abuse by any relative or multiple relatives. A wide range of family members will be considered to be “relatives” that can perpetrate and be victims of abuse, and there is no requirement for the victim and the perpetrator to live together within the 2021 Act. For instance, familial abuse may be perpetrated by children, grandchildren, parents, those with parental responsibility, siblings, or extended families. In some cases, familial abuse may be perpetrated towards a victim by more than one person in the same family.

31. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2020 found that in the previous year 1.9% of adults aged 16 to 74 experienced abuse by family members.¹⁹ In a study of 32 Domestic Homicide Reviews,²⁰ a quarter were family related homicide, with most of those cases involving a parent killed by their adult child.²¹ Data from the Homicide Index between the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2019, shows

¹⁹ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

²⁰ For further information on Domestic Homicide Reviews, please see paragraph 418.

²¹ Sharp-Jeffs and Kelly, [Domestic Homicide Review Case Analysis](#), 2016.

that, of the 357 domestic homicide victims, the suspect was a family member in 97 (or 27%) of cases.

32. Abuse within a family set up can encompass a number of different behaviours, including but not limited to violence, coercive or controlling behaviours, and economic abuse. Abuse by family members also encompasses forced marriage, “honour”-based abuse and female genital mutilation. Further detail on these forms of abuse can be found at paras 72, 158 and 162.
33. Young people in particular may be at an increased risk of abuse by family members²² and this may especially be the case if they belong to a marginalised group. For example, LGBT young people (aged 13-24 years) disclose disproportionately higher levels of abuse from immediate family members compared to other age groups.²³
34. In responding to abuse by family members, services should consider the ways in which inter-familial abuse patterns may differ from those of intimate partner violence and ensure assessment procedures are used appropriately to identify risk.

Child-to-Parent Abuse

35. Abuse within the family includes child-to-parent abuse (CPA). CPA can also be called adolescent to parent violence/abuse (APV/A), Child and Adolescent to Parental Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) or parent abuse. Child-to-parent abuse can involve children of all ages and it is important that this does not exclusively involve physical violence. If the child is over 16 years of age, CPA is considered domestic abuse in accordance with the statutory definition under the 2021 Act. It is important to remember that this form of abuse, though commonly referred to as CPA, can also include parents, those with parental responsibility, siblings, or extended families.
36. There is no specific legal definition of CPA, but it is important to recognise that CPA is likely to involve a pattern of behaviour. This can include physical violence from a child towards a parent or other family members such as siblings and a number of different types of abusive behaviours, including damage to property, emotional abuse, and economic/financial abuse. Violence and abuse can occur together or separately. Abusive behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating language and threats, belittling, damage to property and stealing and heightened sexualised behaviours. Patterns of coercive control are often seen in cases of CPA, but some families might experience episodes of explosive physical violence from their child with fewer controlling, abusive behaviours. SafeLives data has shown that amongst young people accessing services who cause harm to family members, physical violence was the most prevalent form of abuse, with 57% of young people causing physical harm and nearly a quarter (24%) demonstrating jealous and controlling behaviour.²⁴

²² SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse](#), 2017.

²³ Galop [LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse: a report on Galop's domestic abuse advocacy service](#), 2017.

²⁴ SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse](#), 2017.

37. As with domestic abuse, child to parent abuse is often gendered, with the majority of cases being perpetrated by sons against their mothers, though men and boys are victims too.²⁵
38. CPA is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic abuse, though it remains under-reported and under-researched which can contribute to a lack of understanding about the appropriate response amongst commissioners and frontline services. It is important to recognise that incidents of CPA reported to the police are likely to represent only a small percentage of actual incidents and actual levels are likely to be much higher as parents may be particularly reluctant to disclose or report violence from their child.
39. A young person may not recognise their behaviour as abusive which might hinder their engagement with services. Children and young people should be offered support based on their individual needs, with a range of interventions so that each child and young person is able to access the specialised help they require, avoiding unnecessary criminalisation. Professionals should be mindful of the relationship and history between the parent and young person.
40. CPA can have serious and at times fatal consequences, and responders need to be aware of risk posed by this form of domestic abuse and take appropriate action to protect those at risk. It is important that a young person using abusive behaviour against a parent or family member receives a safeguarding response, which should include referral to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (or local equivalent) in the first instance where a parent advocate can attend, followed by referral to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) if necessary, regardless of whether there is any police action taken. Responders should use their discretion and professional judgement when addressing cases of CPA, and work with the parent to identify the appropriate response.
41. The parent victim should also receive appropriate domestic abuse response and support. Parents report feelings of isolation, guilt and shame surrounding their child's abuse towards them, and fear that their parenting skills may be questioned and that they will be blamed or disbelieved by those to whom they disclose the abuse. Many parents worry that their victimisation will not be taken seriously or, if they are taken seriously, that their child may be taken away from them and/or criminalised. This may mean parents are reluctant to seek help.
42. Parents who do decide to disclose their victimisation to support services or to the police find that appropriate help and support is not always available. Parents report mixed responses from the police, which often confirm their fears of being blamed, held to account or disbelieved. Case studies show that when police do respond proactively, parents often face a difficult scenario whereby their child may be criminalised as a result of the parent's report and the child may be removed from the family home. This is often not what the parent wishes.

²⁵ Standing Together [Domestic Homicide Review Case Analysis](#), 2016.

43. It is important that frontline professionals responding to cases of CPA are able to recognise the dynamics, impact, and risk of cases of CPA. This may include, for instance, commissioning specialised local CPA services or embedding staff within the multi-agency 'front door' referral system (e.g. MASH) who are trained to identify and respond appropriately to both the child and the parent victim.
44. The Home Office has published guidance on APVA which provides more information, including the recommended responses by police, health professionals and social workers.

Case Study

Between 2017-2019, Caroline experienced escalating abusive behaviours from her adolescent daughter, including physical and verbal attacks, as well as threats to kill. During this time, Caroline struggled to find help and support from services and statutory agencies.

When Caroline's youngest son was assaulted by her daughter, she made the decision that she could not remain at home safely with the family but was met with the threat of abandonment prosecution by her local authority. Despite the police also raising concerns, social care services stated she was to remain at home, leaving the family to deal with high-risk incidents.

Caroline was forced to home educate her daughter as she had stopped attending school. Throughout this time, her daughter's abusive behaviour was increasing, and Caroline and her family were living in constant fear. Caroline had to give up her job as she could not leave her daughter at home alone for fear of further risk to the family. Caroline's requests for more support, and for her daughter to be voluntarily accommodated by the local authority as part of a placement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, were ignored.

Caroline's daughter's behaviour was a daily battlefield of physical and verbal attacks. She could not leave her other children in the same room with her and had to install CCTV. Eventually provision at a care home was offered to Caroline's daughter for two nights a week, giving the family some respite. However, she soon stopped attending when told she did not have to.

Events escalated over a 5-day period in 2019. Caroline's daughter's GP raised urgent concerns as she had said she had planned to kill her mother. A mental health assessment suggested no mental health problems, but professionals raised extreme concerns for the family's safety and welfare. The police also raised concerns, but support was not offered from social care services. At one point the family were in a crisis situation for over 12 hours.

Caroline's daughter was arrested but Caroline was still initially told she had to come home as she was too high risk to be accommodated and as Caroline had Parental Responsibility it was up to her to care for her. After a further 7 days the local authority agreed to her daughter becoming a looked after child under a voluntary accommodated Section 20 placement. The situation could have been avoided had Caroline and her family been listened to at the earliest opportunity, support offered, and therapeutic work put into place. Instead, she was faced with blame, judgement and the seriousness ignored, leaving her and her family at high risk of harm.

Recognising Domestic Abuse

45. It is important to remember that each person's experience of domestic abuse will be different. Not all victims want or are able to leave their abuser at a particular time, and abuse can begin, continue or escalate post-separation. Many victims may not seek to pursue a criminal justice outcome, and so appropriate support must always be offered. It is important to remember the experiences of children and young people who are living with domestic abuse and their needs in any decisions made about the adult victim.
46. 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, controlling, or coercive, sexual and/or economic abuse under section 1(3) of the 2021 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.

Physical abuse

47. Physical abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, are forms of abusive behaviour. This can involve, but is not limited to:
- Being, or threatened to be, kicked, punched, pinched, pushed, dragged, shoved, slapped, scratched, choked and bitten;
 - Use, or threats of use, of 'weapons' including knives and irons;
 - Being burned, scalded or poisoned;
 - Objects being thrown;
 - Violence or threats against family members and/or pets;
 - Causing harm by denying access to medical aids or equipment – for example Deaf persons may be prevented from communicating in sign language or may have their hearing aids removed; and

- Harming someone whilst performing ‘caring’ duties, which are often performed by relatives. This is especially relevant for disabled victims and may involve force feeding, withdrawal of medicine or over-medication.

Sexual abuse

48. 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;
- ‘Corrective’ rape (the practice of raping someone with the aim of ‘curing’ them of being LGBT);
- Intentional exposure to HIV or sexually transmitted infections;
- Being pressurised or being tricked into having unsafe sex, including deception over the use of birth control.
- Forced involvement in making or watching pornography; and
- Hurting a victim during sex including non-fatal strangulation.

49. 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; deception regarding the use of birth control including falsely claiming to be using contraception; forcing a partner to get an abortion, IVF or other related procedure, or denying access to such procedures.

50. 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 example, for the perpetrator's drugs or alcohol.

51. “Rough sex”, including sadomasochistic activity, can involve the infliction of pain or violence, simulated or otherwise with the aim of providing sexual gratification for the parties involved. This type of activity can encompass a wide range of behaviours and, although it may occur in private and be consensual, section 71 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 states that the infliction of serious harm, which results in actual bodily harm (ABH) or other more serious injury or death, will mean that the person responsible for those injuries will be liable to a criminal prosecution, irrespective of whether consent had been given by the person in receipt of the injuries or not.

52. Non-fatal strangulation can also be part of sexual abuse. The 2021 Act addresses this, clarifying that a person commits the offence of strangulation or suffocation, if they intentionally strangle another person, or do any other act that affects that person's ability to breathe and constitutes battery. Whilst it is a defence for the person responsible to show that the individual consented, this does not apply where the individual suffers serious harm as a result of the strangulation, or other act, and where there has been intent to cause harm or the person responsible was reckless as to whether that person would suffer serious harm.

Controlling or coercive behaviour

53. Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship in recognition of the severe impact of coercive control, economic abuse, threats and psychological and emotional abuse, whether or not accompanied by physical abuse. The offence currently captures behaviour between current intimate partners, or between former intimate partners and family members who live together.

54. The 2021 Act amends the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to remove the "living together" requirement, which means it may now apply to partners, ex-partners, or family members regardless of whether the victim and perpetrator live together. This amendment will commence in Spring 2022 and the Government will update the relevant guidance, including this guidance, ahead of commencement.

55. What constitutes controlling or coercive behaviour is outlined in [statutory guidance issued by the government under section 77 of the Serious Crime Act 2015](#). Controlling or coercive behaviour is defined 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.

56. Controlling or coercive behaviour also forms part of the definition of domestic abuse in section 1(3)(c) of the 2021 Act.

57. Below is a list of behaviours that are within the range and continuum of coercive or controlling behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

- Controlling or monitoring the victim's daily activities, including making them account for their time, dictating what they can wear, what and when they can eat, when and where they may sleep etc;

- Isolating the victim from family, friends and professionals who may be trying to support them, intercepting messages or phone calls;
- Refusing to interpret, and/or hindering access to communication;
- Intentional undermining of the victim's role as a partner, spouse or parent;
- Preventing the victim from taking medication, or accessing medical equipment 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 victim through dependency, or controlling their access to substances;
- Using children to control their victim, e.g. threatening to take the children away or manipulating professionals to increase the risk of children being prevented from having contact with the victim or having children's social care involvement;
- Using pets to control or coerce a victim, e.g. harming, or threatening to harm or give away pets;
- Alienating behaviours²⁶, including invidious drip feeding of negative views to a child by one parent about the other parent, or any attempt by one parent to frustrate or limit the child's contact with the other parent, other than for reasons based on concern about the risk to that child;
- Threats to expose sensitive information (e.g. sexual activity, or sexual orientation) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet;
- Intimidation and threats of disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity to family, friends, work colleagues, community and others;
- 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, giving false information to a victim about their visa or visa application, e.g. using immigration law to threaten the victim with potential deportation;
- Threats of institutionalisation (particularly for disabled or elderly victims);
- Emotional and psychological abuse (see paragraph 60);

²⁶ Whilst there is no single definition of alienating behaviours (sometimes referred to as 'parental alienation'), the Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) defines parental alienation as when a child's resistance or hostility towards one parent is not justified and is the result of psychological manipulation by the other parent.

- Spiritual abuse (see paragraphs 62-64);
- Economic abuse (see paragraph 76-79); and
- Verbal abuse (see paragraph 61).

58. Coercive or controlling behaviour is common in domestic abuse and can coincide with many of the other behaviours, as illustrated in the case study below.

Case Study

Susan 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 Susan was stabbed with a kitchen knife and feared for her life, she called the police. She then moved to a refuge.

Technological abuse

59. 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 and is particularly common amongst younger people. Examples of online abuse include:

- Placing false or malicious information about a victim on their or others social media;
- Set up false social media accounts in the name of the victim;
- ‘Trolling’ with abusive, offensive or deliberately provocative messages via social media platforms or online forums;

- Image-based abuse – for example the non-consensual distribution or threat thereof of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause the person depicted distress (revenge porn);
- 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.

Emotional or psychological abuse

60. 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 (which may have a subsequent impact on children) including falsely and without justification telling a child that the other parent abandoned them, never loved them, or never wanted them;
- Distorting a child's memories about the victim parent, including telling a child the other parent will pick them/meet them, when that was not true, falsely telling medical/school staff they have sole custody of a child so that no information is provided to the other parent, painting the other parent in a negative light to the child, including mocking their personality characteristics, job, friends, family and belittling them (including in front of the child);
- 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 or belief, ability to parent and ability to work;
- Repeatedly being belittled;

- Keeping a victim awake/preventing them from sleeping;
- Using violence or threats towards pets to intimidate the victim and cause distress, including threatening to harm the animal as well as controlling how the owner is able to care for the animal;
- Using social media sites to intimidate the victim; and
- Persuading a victim to doubt their own sanity or mind (including “gaslighting”).

Verbal abuse

61. 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 identity, religious or faith belief, sexual orientation, physical appearance etc.

Spiritual Abuse

62. Spiritual abuse is commonly understood as a part of emotional and psychological abuse that uses religion and faith systems to control and subjugate a victim.²⁷ It is often characterised by a systemic pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour within a religious context.

63. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on victims. The abuse may include, the following but is not limited to:

- Manipulation and exploitation through the influence of religion;
- Enforced accountability;
- Censorship of decision making;

²⁷ Oakley, L. R., Kinmond, K. S., & Humphreys, J. (2018). Spiritual abuse in Christian faith settings: Definition, policy and practice guidance. *Journal of Adult Protection*, 20(3/4), 144-154.

- Requirements for secrecy and silence;
- Marital rape and the use of religious scripture to justify that;
- Coercion to conform or control through the use of sacred or religious texts/teaching, e.g. theological justifications in sexual coercion or abuse;
- Causing harm, isolation and or neglect to get rid of an 'evil force', 'spirit' or 'jinn'²⁸ that is believed to have possessed the victim. This can include accusations of witchcraft, where the term witchcraft and association with it are used in a derogatory way.
- Requirement of obedience to the perpetrator of domestic abuse, owing to religion or faith, or their 'divine' position; and
- Community isolation as a means of 'punishment'.

64. Spiritual abuse can also involve, using, or preventing a victim from practising their faith or religious obligations. This may include:

- Forcing the victim to act or behave in ways which contradict religious beliefs and or spiritual rituals and practice, e.g. forcing the victim to transgress religious dietary observations;
- Preventing the victim from performing prayers and/or attending communal worship;
- Forcing sexual acts which contradict religious observance and or religious law (e.g. during and after menstruation or pre-marital sex); and,
- Forcing or limiting access to abortion, birth control or sterilisation when this will contravene religious observance.

Religious marriage and divorce

65. Religious marriages from faith communities other than Christianity are not recognised in British law. A couple need to register their religious marriage for them to access their legal rights and obligations under British law. This can be used by perpetrators to:

²⁸ Jinn – in Islamic theology, a supernatural spirit

- Actively discourage or prevent the marriage being registered in British law ensuring that women are denied their legal rights in the event of a breakdown in the marriage. This along with an insecure immigration status of the victim can act as a powerful tool for coercion and control.
- Coerce or trick women into being part of a multiple marriage where the husband can have more than one wife at the same time.

66. A form of spiritual abuse may include the withholding of a religious divorce, as a threat to control and intimidate victims. In some cases, it will be accompanied by other manifestations of abuse within the marriage.

67. In Judaism this concerns the *Get*²⁹, and instances whereby a recalcitrant husband may refuse to give his wife a Jewish bill of divorce (or a wife may unreasonably refuse to accept a Jewish bill of divorce). Unreasonably preventing a religious Jewish marriage being dissolved often includes the imposition of such conditions.

68. The ability to refuse to give a *Get* provides abusive husbands with power and control and will be used often to exert leverage in relation to other aspects of the divorce. The refusal will have a significant impact on the wife's wider living conditions:³⁰ She will often be severely restricted in her social and personal life. It affects her ability to re-marry and directly affects the status of any children she may have in the future.

69. In Islam this can involve the refusal of a Muslim husband to grant his wife a religious divorce, *talaq*,³¹ which is the annulment of a *nikkah*,³² as a way of prolonging the process of divorce. The threat of *talaq* being uttered and the arbitrary use of this by perpetrators may also often be cited by some victims.

70. Whilst Islamic law enabled women can obtain a religious divorce of their own accord, they may be prevented from doing so through religious courts on which they are reliant.

71. Refusing to let a partner practise their religion may also constitute a form of spiritual abuse, for example, restricting access to worship and their religion.

²⁹ *Get* – a Jewish bill of divorce. Without such a document, a couple remain married religiously, even –if they have been divorced in the civil courts. Jewish couples have their marriages registered civilly at the time of their religious marriage. However, divorce is a twin track process, involving a civil divorce and a religious one (a '*Get*'). In Orthodox Judaism, a *Get* must be given and received with consent. If the husband does not consent, the wife is unable to remarry under Orthodox Jewish auspices and any children she has in a future relationship will face severe restrictions as to whom they are able to marry.

³⁰ *Aguna* . A woman denied a *Get* is known as an '*Aguna*' (chained woman). She is prohibited from having intimate relations with a man other than her husband and cannot remarry under Orthodox Jewish auspices. Any children of a future relationship she may have are affected with a status in Jewish law known as '*Mamzer*', meaning that they face severe restrictions as to whom they can marry. This situation can continue indefinitely through subsequent generations.

³¹ *Talaq* translated as "repudiation" or simply "divorce". Under Islamic law it refers to the husband's right to dissolve the marriage by simply announcing to his wife that he repudiates her.

³² *Nikkah* – under Islamic law, a contract of marriage between a man and woman.

Case Study

Deborah, a 24-year-old woman who was a convert to Judaism, married and settled in the UK after moving to the UK from overseas. Once married, she fully participated in Jewish community life. Her husband abused her from the start of their marriage – playing endless mind games and seeming to take pleasure in controlling her and making her life miserable. She was terrified that the abuse would escalate and sought help from a specialist service. A referral to legal support meant that a non-molestation order was granted with a power of arrest. Deborah left her husband after less than a year of marriage and was subsequently divorced in the civil courts. She was keen to obtain her Jewish divorce so that she could move on with her life, marry again and end the Jewish religious marriage. The courts finalised the decree of divorce but failed in their efforts to encourage her husband to give Deborah her Get. She was informed that he would give the Get only if she agreed to leave the UK and promise never to return, and he further coerced her to apply to have the injunction which was in place to protect her, discharged. She felt abused and controlled by him during both her marriage and after she was divorced in the courts, when he continued to exert power and control over her whilst she was trying to obtain her Get.

In another case, Hannah was made to wait more than 20 years following her civil decree absolute. Her husband consistently refused to give her a Get in spite of repeated requests from her – Hannah felt that he used it to leverage control over her, even though the marriage was over in her eyes and they were living apart. Eventually, her community found out about the persistent Get refusal and they campaigned for him to give her a Get. There was eventually a ruling from the Beth Din (Jewish court) that he was required to give the Get. Receiving it marked the end of many long years of struggle and abuse, and Hannah felt that it represented her freedom. She said that she would never be able to get back those long years when she was trapped by her abusive ex-husband in a marriage which had long ended.

So-called Honour-Based Abuse

72. 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 in response to individuals trying to break from constraining ‘norms’ of behaviour that their family or community is trying to impose.
73. HBA can cover emotional or psychological abuse and a range of other circumstances, not all of which represent domestic abuse under the 2021 Act, 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 in the 2021 Act.
74. Evidence has shown - see [Your choice: ‘honour’-based violence, forced marriage and domestic abuse](#) - that victims at risk of HBA who were accessing domestic abuse services were eight 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.

75. 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 minority communities, travelling communities or closed ethnic/religious communities and other particularly isolated social groups. Victims may be female or male and those at risk can include individuals who are LGBT.

Economic abuse

76. Section 1(3)(d) of the 2021 Act includes economic abuse in the definition of domestic abuse - subsection (4) provides that economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect³³ on an individual's ability to acquire, use or maintain³⁴ money or other property, or to obtain goods or services. This can include an individual's ability to acquire food, clothes, transportation and utilities. These behaviours can include an attempt to control through restriction, exploitation and/or sabotage.

77. Economic abuse³⁵ can also be a form of controlling or coercive behaviour, where it is done repeatedly or continuously. It can make the individual economically dependent on the abuser, and/or create economic instability, thereby limiting their ability to escape and access safety and can result in an individual staying with an abuser and experiencing more abuse and harm as a result.³⁶

78. Examples of economic abuse might include the following, 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;
- 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;

³³ 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.

³⁴ See Adams et al., Development of the Scale of Economic Abuse, Violence Against Women, 14: 564, 2008.

³⁵ Sharp, [The Economic Abuse Wheel](#), 2008.

³⁶ Earlywhite and Stohl, In Our Shoes: The Next Steps, Washington: State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2008.

- 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, or forcing someone to commit benefit fraud or misappropriating such benefits;
- Interfering with a victim's education, training, employment and career;
- Not allowing a victim access to mobile phone/car/utilities;
- Damaging property; and
- Not allowing a victim to buy pet food or access veterinary care for their pet.

79. The organisation Surviving Economic Abuse has created a [guide to understanding economic abuse for victims](#) to understanding economic abuse for victims.

Intersectionality and related considerations

80. Individuals can be the victims of multiple and different abusive behaviours because of the way different characteristics, such as immigration status, sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion or belief, socio-economic position, gender identity and sexual orientation intersect and overlap, particularly in relation to accessing services and support if they are not adequately designed to meet their needs.

81. It is important that commissioners, service providers and statutory agencies consider this intersectionality when developing their responses to both adult and child victims, 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. [Under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \('the Victims' Code'\)](#) all victims have the right to be offered support when they report a crime to the police and to be referred to services that support victims. 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. Please see the 'Impact on Children' section for more information on children's experiences.

82. There are many practical and psychological barriers that victims may face when accessing support 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.

83. 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 the 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 an abusive partner.³⁷

84. 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.

85. Other factors that can also create additional barriers to accessing support are listed below. The intersection of a victim's personal characteristics may increase the impact of these factors:

- Risk of escalation of abuse, threats and violence – the post-separation period carries a high-risk of violence for victims, including 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 or children's social care involvement based on threats from the perpetrator;
- Impact of coercive control and trauma – the abuse may make the victim feel isolated, 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 or if they have not been allowed to mix freely with wider society;
- Language - the victim may face specific challenges in communicating the abuse which may hinder them from accessing or seeking assistance;
- 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, as well as worrying about the upheaval to their children's lives;
- 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;

³⁷ [Femicide Census](#), 2018.

- Immigration status – if the victim has insecure immigration status, they may be fearful of seeking help from statutory agencies due to fear of being detained in immigration centres and being deported and/ or having their children removed from their care;
- Impact of alcohol, drugs, substance misuse and mental health problems – domestic abuse can lead to a number of health-related issues for the victim, including the development of mental health issues; and
- ‘Other considerations’ – or protected characteristics discussed below.

86. Other protected characteristics, such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation also create specific barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. Other considerations that need to be taken into account when supporting victims are discussed below.

Age

87. The definition of domestic abuse in the 2021 Act includes a minimum age for the victim and the perpetrator of 16 years. However, Crown Prosecution Service (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.

88. 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.³⁸

89. Assumptions around age and domestic abuse may result when accessing support. For instance, injuries or mental health issues may be seen as the result of a victim’s health and social care needs, without enquiries being made around domestic abuse.

90. Abuse can be experienced at any age. Whilst there is evidence to suggest that older women experience domestic abuse at similar rates to younger women³⁹, as the Crime Survey England and Wales does not currently collect data on adults over 74 we do not know the true prevalence of domestic abuse amongst this age group⁴⁰. Data from the

³⁸ SafeLives, [Older people and domestic abuse](#).

³⁹ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁴⁰ Once it is possible to return to the face-to-face mode of delivery for the CSEW, ONS will immediately remove the current upper age limit for respondents to the self-completion modules. It will then take 12 months of data collection to enable us to produce accurate estimates.

year ending March 2020 Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) shows that 4.4% of women aged 60-74 were victims of domestic abuse⁴¹.

91. Older victims are not being seen by specialist support services in the numbers that we would expect⁴² and can face significant barriers when asking for help or when trying to leave an abusive relationship. These barriers can be severe for victims who have been subject to years of prolonged abuse, are isolated within a particular community through language or culture, are experiencing long term health impacts or disabilities, or those who are reliant on their abuser for their care or money. It is crucial that older victims can get the support they need, and their experiences are supported.

Disability

92. Data from the year ending March 2020 CSEW shows that those with a disability were more likely to have been victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those without; this is true for both men (7.5% compared with 3.2%) and women (14.7% compared with 6.0%).⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

93. Deaf and disabled victims (this includes physical disabilities, mental health difficulties, learning difficulties, cognitive issues, long-term health conditions and neurodiversity) may face additional forms of abuse related to a disability.

94. 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),⁴⁵ 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 disability or deafness to control them.

95. Disabled victims face multiple barriers to seeking and receiving help to escape domestic abuse, for example, accessible accommodation and transport, the need for assistance with personal care or sign language interpreters, fear of losing their children, and possibly, for specialised emotional support, factors which impact their decision and ability to leave.⁴⁶ Professionals and services should be aware of these barriers, be proactive in exploring issues and help to ensure the right support is offered.

⁴¹ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁴² Women's Aid [The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The Annual Audit](#), 2019.

⁴³ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁴⁴ SafeLives, [Disabled Survivors Too: Disabled people and domestic abuse](#).

⁴⁵ The relationship between carers and the cared is not covered by the definition of domestic abuse in the 2021 Act unless there is also a personal connection between them.

⁴⁶ Nosek et al., The investigation of abuse and women with disabilities: Going beyond assumptions. *Violence Against Women*, 7 (4), 2001.

Deaf victims

96. It is important to highlight the experiences of Deaf victims, many of whom do not identify themselves as being part of a disability group. The Deaf community are a linguistic minority based on their language and many Deaf people experience personal and structural barriers in accessing help and reporting abuse. A Welsh Women's Aid survey highlighted dissatisfaction felt by disabled victims with the police response when reporting abuse, with 47% of responders concerned that nothing happened to the perpetrator of abuse after their disclosure.⁴⁷ There is a lack of understanding and awareness by professionals around forms of coercive control targeted at Deaf people as professionals may not know how to use appropriate communication methods, which can make Deaf people withdraw from seeking support.
97. The Deaf community experience issues similar to other minoritized groups, with additional barriers including language and communication, a distrust of police and a fear of rejection from the wider community. There is also likely to be under reporting of abuse by Deaf victims due to the barriers to communication and information. Professionals and service providers should be aware that Deaf and disabled victims need specialist support services who can understand their cultural and linguistic needs.
98. The lives of Deaf people cross multiple intersectional divides, and like many marginalised communities, can face systemic barriers which prevent them from easily accessing appropriate support services in times of need. Where possible, professionals working with Deaf and disabled victims should be expected to have some lived experience of the Deaf community, as having to relive their trauma time and again with new people (e.g. sign language interpreters) can be disruptive to their healing and may result in them disengaging from much needed support. This may also be relevant for those with a learning disability who may use an advocate or carer to support their process of talking about their experience.
99. Deaf people are often underrepresented in professional roles, which makes them a valuable resource when seeking out appropriate referral pathways - the ability to share a common language and culture ensures that Deaf people can control their own narrative and their perspectives and experiences are able to be fully understood by those who are supporting them. Following best practice, Deaf clients should always be signposted or referred on to a Deaf domestic abuse service (see Appendix A) or a Deaf-led specialist service in the first instance. In order to achieve optimum outcomes, professionals working with Deaf victims should be able to communicate fluently using sign language, without the need for third party communication support. Organisations and agencies should also consider collaborative working relationships with other specialist services, so that they are able to jointly meet the needs of their clients through the sharing of resources, knowledge and complementary skillsets.

⁴⁷[Welsh Women's Aid and Disability Wales](#), 2019.

Speech and Language

100. People facing communication barriers are also extremely vulnerable to domestic abuse, given the added difficulties they face in asking for help and accessing the support available. Local authorities should ensure that good practice includes the identification of, and appropriate support for, communication needs, including:

- the links between domestic abuse and speech;
- language and communication needs;
- the impact of witnessing domestic abuse on children’s speech, language and communication, and;
- the services available to support people with those needs, and their children.

101. Speech, language and communication services for children and young people are covered by joint commissioning arrangements set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice](#), which brings education, health and local authorities, and Youth Offending Teams together to assess needs and agree a local offer. Joint commissioning gives agencies the opportunity to consider the wider factors and interdependencies, such as domestic abuse, and design services accordingly. For more information on special education needs and disabilities, and the impact on children expressing their feelings, please see paragraph 190.

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

102. ONS data from the [2015/2016 CSEW](#) suggests that more than one in four gay men and lesbian women (29%) and more than one in three bisexual people (40%) report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16. While lesbian women report slightly higher rates of domestic abuse to those of heterosexual women (11.4% compared with 7.5%), bisexual women are more than twice as likely to disclose domestic abuse compared to heterosexual women (17.3% compared with 7.5%).⁴⁸ In the [National LGBT Survey 2017](#), 48% of transgender respondents had experienced a negative incident involving someone that they lived with due to being LGBT, or being thought to be LGBT, in the 12 months leading up to the survey.

103. There are many similarities between heterosexual and LGBT people’s experiences of domestic abuse. However, LGBT victims may also experience abuse of power and control closely associated with having their sexuality or gender identity used against them. This may include the following abusive behaviours:⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Office for National Statistics, [Women most at risk of experiencing partner abuse in England and Wales](#), 2018.

⁴⁹ From: Magić, J., & Kelley, P. [LGBT people’s experiences of domestic abuse: a report on Galop’s domestic abuse advocacy service](#), 2018.

- Threats of disclosure of sexual orientation and gender identity to family, friends, work colleagues, community and others;
- Disclosing gender identity history, sexual orientation or HIV status without consent;
- Limiting or controlling access to LGBT spaces or resources;
- Using immigration law to threaten with deportation to the country of origin, which might be unsafe due to e.g. anti-gay legislation; and
- so-called 'conversion therapy' practices, ranging from pseudo-psychological practices to, in extreme circumstances, violent physical or sexual acts, which can be motivated by a belief that there is a 'right' sexual orientation, and that a person can, be 'cured' if they have a different sexual orientation or gender identity.

104. It's important to note LGBT people are not a homogenous group. Abuse disclosed by lesbian women may be different to that of bisexual and trans women. Equally, gay men's experiences may be different to that of bisexual or trans men.

105. LGBT people experience distinct personal and structural barriers in accessing help and reporting abuse.⁵⁰ This may include services lacking quality referral pathways with LGBT specialist sector and low visibility and representation of LGBT 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 LGBT people.⁵¹

106. Most LGBT people feel that they would be more accepted at an LGBT specialist service. The existence of specialist 'by-and-for' LGBT domestic abuse services or developing LGBT inclusive response is crucial to ensuring a local area can appropriately meet the needs of LGBT victims.⁵²

Gender and Sex

107. 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 decisions.

108. 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 2020 women were around twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse as men. Research⁵³ also suggests that

⁵⁰ Dr Jasna Magic, Peter Kelley, Galop, : [Barriers to accessing services for LGBT victims and survivors](#), 2018.

⁵¹ Magić, J., & Kelley, P. [Recognise & Respond: Strengthening advocacy for LGBT survivors of domestic abuse](#), 2019.

⁵² Magić, J., & Kelley, P. [Recognise & Respond: Strengthening advocacy for LGBT survivors of domestic abuse](#), 2019.

⁵³ Myhill, [Measuring Coercive Control](#), 2015.

when controlling or coercive behaviour is taken into account, the differences between the experiences of male and female victims becomes more apparent, with the majority of victims being women.

109. 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.⁵⁴ [Figures from Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales show](#) that from the year ending March 2017 to the year ending March 2019, the majority of victims of domestic homicides were female (77%). 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, 11% were killed by a parent and 8% were killed by a child or other family relative, such as a brother or sister.⁵⁵
110. We recognise that men are also victims of domestic abuse. Whilst they experience many similar types of abuse as women, men can face specific barriers, including shame, fear of stigmatisation, concerns about being believed, not recognising that they are victims of domestic abuse and lack of promotion of services to support them. There remains within society a view that men cannot be victims of domestic abuse.
111. 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.⁵⁶ Research shows that male victims of partner abuse are over twice as likely not to tell anyone that they are a victim than female victims.⁵⁷ In addition, structural inequalities can discriminate or exclude, explicitly or implicitly, groups of victims such as gay, bisexual and transgender (GBT) men and boys.

Case Study

Sam’s former wife abused him, both physically and mentally, for over a decade. Their relationship began like any other. They were both teachers working at the same school, and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. At first she was caring but then things started to change.

She began to lock him out of their home or leave him on the side of the road, miles from home with no money. He was locked out of the house around 60 times over the course of almost 10 years. She sometimes would take his wallet and keys so he had no way of getting home. He found himself walking on eggshells, being coerced into situations he did not want to be in. He was often told he would never see his daughter again if he didn’t do what she wanted. He felt he could not leave the family home for the sake of their daughter.

⁵⁴ Walby and Towers, [Measuring violence to end violence: mainstreaming gender](#), 2017.

⁵⁵ [ONS data](#), year ending March 2020.

⁵⁶ Tsui, Cheung & Leung, Help-seeking among male victims of partner abuse: men’s hard times. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38(6), 769–780, 2010.

⁵⁷ [Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#).

Sam realised he had to take action after he suffered serious injury when his wife attacked him with a hair dryer. Colleagues at the school he worked at came to know about the issues he was facing and they were supportive towards him. After the attack, the school offered him paid time off to recover and paid for him to receive counselling. The school also provided him with further time off so that he could appear in court. This meant that he was able to give vital evidence of the abuse he had been suffering for nearly a decade. Sam feels that his situation shows that in coming forward male victims will be taken seriously and given the right support.

Pregnancy

112. 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.⁵⁸ Pregnancy does not cause abuse; however a perpetrator may escalate the abuse when a woman is pregnant. Research suggests around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy, while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy.⁵⁹

113. Domestic abuse experienced during pregnancy in utero and in the earliest years is harmful to birth outcomes and babies' early development. A mother's emotional state can have a direct influence on foetal development and ongoing stressors such as domestic abuse can disrupt babies' neurodevelopment. This can affect the cognitive functioning and emotional regulation of children, shaping behavioural and emotional outcomes.⁶⁰

114. Whilst pregnancy may increase risk of abuse, it should also be recognised that the interaction with health professionals may provide an opportunity for women to seek support, as well as for professionals to reach out to women who may be experiencing domestic abuse. Paragraph 255 in this guidance sets out further information about the role of health professionals including in exercising their professional curiosity and reaching out to pregnant women to offer support in relation to domestic abuse. Health and social care professionals should also be alert to the need to offer support and safeguarding to the child post-birth if necessary.

Race

115. Those from ethnic minority backgrounds may experience additional barriers to identifying, disclosing, seeking help or reporting abuse. This may include:

- A distrust of the police and other statutory agencies;

⁵⁸ Taft, [Violence against women in pregnancy and after childbirth](#), 2002.

⁵⁹ SafeLives, [A cry for help: Why we must invest in domestic abuse services in hospitals](#), 2016.

⁶⁰ Huth-Bocks, A. C., Levendosky, A. A. & Bogat, G. A. (2002). The effects of domestic violence during pregnancy on maternal and infant health. *Violence and victims* 17, 169.

- Hostility towards the police due to lack of perceived or real support for their community historically and/or currently;
- Concerns about racism and fear of racial stereotyping;
- Fears about immigration and/ or asylum status and risk of deportation;
- Language barriers;
- Being disproportionately impacted by certain forms of VAWG, including forced marriage, staying within an abusive marriage, so called “honour”-based abuse and female genital mutilation (FGM);
- Concerns about family finding out; and
- Fear of rejection by the wider community.

116. There is often under-reporting of domestic abuse by minority communities, with many victims reporting that stereotypes and 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.⁶¹ Professionals working with minority communities should be aware of barriers and actively seek to ensure the right support is made available to overcome them.

117. 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 ethnic minority backgrounds.

Immigration status and migrant victims

118. Victims who have entered the UK from overseas may face barriers when attempting to escape domestic abuse relating to their immigration status or lack thereof. Some victims may not have access to public services and funds which can lead to greater dependence on the partner or family if they have supported their being in the UK. 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. This may be exploited by partners or family members to exert control over victims. Examples of this include:

- threatening to inform immigration authorities;
- being separated from their children; or,
- threatening to no longer provide support for their stay in the UK.

⁶¹ Imkaan and the University of Warwick (SWELL) [Between the lines research briefing: service responses to Black and Minority Ethnic Women and Girls experiencing Sexual Violence](#).

119. Perpetrators may use the insecure immigration status of a victim to coerce and control them. A report illustrates how insecure immigration status can be a coercive control tool.⁶² Victims from overseas may be more reluctant to come forward and report abuse particularly if they are unaware of their immigration status or have been misled by their abuser.
120. The experiences of migrant victims who experience domestic abuse, and the impact of no recourse to public funds on children in migrant families has been widely documented by the specialist groups who support them. A Women's Aid report details the experiences of women and their children who face barriers in accessing a refuge space and found that children and young people who are unable to access refuge often live transient lives and many are exposed to financial hardship⁶³. The report also found that only 4% of refuge vacancies listed on Routes to Support are open to those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), and in practice acceptance may depend on the woman having funding in place from the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) or agreed funding from another statutory service.
121. There are a range of support mechanisms in place for migrant victims of domestic abuse, including specific support for asylum seekers, local authority support, a change of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) conditions, fee waivers, support for victims of trafficking and modern slavery through the National Referral Mechanism, and the Home Office Support for Migrant Victims Scheme.
122. A key barrier to migrant victims of domestic abuse accessing support is the difficulty organisations face in funding bed spaces and ancillary services in a refuge for victims with no recourse to public funds. The £1.5 million Support for Migrant Victims Scheme has been launched to address this issue. It provides accommodation and support for migrant victims of domestic abuse with NRPF, as well as building the evidence base required to inform subsequent policy decisions (see para 134).
123. Migrant victims on some spousal visas are eligible for the DDVC. This concession enables these victims to apply for leave to remain without the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition when their relationship has broken down because of domestic abuse, they are destitute, and intend to subsequently make an application for indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse. These victims can then apply to claim public funds (benefits) for up to three months while they make an application to settle in the UK. This helps migrant victims on spousal visas to fund a refuge space with the housing element of the benefits they can claim because their NRPF condition has been lifted.
124. The DDVC is only available to those on spousal visas because they have a clear, legitimate expectation of settlement. Had their relationship not broken down as a result of domestic abuse, they would have had a legitimate expectation of staying in the UK

⁶² Latin American Women's Rights Service report [The Right to Be Believed](#).

⁶³ [Nowhere to turn for children and young people](#). Women's Aid (2020).

permanently, having relocated on that basis. Should those on other immigration routes become the victim of domestic abuse, while the abuse is no less tragic, they would not necessarily have had a legitimate expectation of staying in the UK permanently had their relationship not broken down as a result of domestic abuse, as their ability to do so was contingent upon more than simply staying in their relationship.

125. 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. Professionals should be aware that the National Police Chief's Council have set [guidance for police officers on information sharing with the Home Office where a victim or witness of crime is a suspected immigration offender](#), setting a victim-first approach to handling the reporting of crime from victims or witnesses of crime that are suspected of an immigration offence. The Home Office supports this position and Immigration Enforcement will carefully consider an individual's personal circumstances when considering appropriate action following a referral from police.
126. Professionals should be aware that they can refer victims with insecure immigration status to specialist 'by-and-for' ethnic minority and migrant organisations as best practice. These organisations can provide holistic wraparound support and safeguard for migrant victims. A list of organisations is available at Annex A.

Case Study

Ms K reached out to the police and Southall Black Sisters (SBS) for help after experiencing domestic abuse upon relocating to the UK. She was able to access emergency accommodation, counselling and legal advice.

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 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.

Asylum Seekers

127. Asylum seekers and their dependants who would otherwise be destitute are provided with free, furnished accommodation and a weekly cash allowance to meet their essential living needs under the arrangements set out in section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 ('the 1999 Act'). This includes asylum seekers who are victims of domestic abuse. An asylum seeker is destitute if they lack adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it. The Asylum Support Regulations 2000 make clear that accommodation is not adequate if remaining in it exposes the individual to risk of domestic violence.
128. Whilst there have always been procedures in place to provide asylum seekers who fall victim to domestic abuse with immediate support and safe accommodation, this did not until recently extend to providing a place in a dedicated refuge where specialist support is available. Arrangements are now in place to use the asylum support budget to close a gap which prevented asylum seekers and their dependants supported under section 95 of the 1999 Act from accessing a refuge. The policy is designed to ensure asylum seekers who are victims of domestic abuse receive the specialist support they need. This statutory guidance applies to asylum seekers who are entitled to asylum support, which will be provided whether in supported accommodation or a specialist refuge.
129. Those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK have access to support provisions in the same way as anyone else residing in the UK with recourse to public funds. Asylum seekers can remain supported by the Home Office while their claim is being processed and recognised refugees have the right to work, access to benefits and can apply for housing.
130. Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question. If a victim of domestic abuse has children, local authorities may also be required to provide financial support and/or accommodation through section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard the welfare of those in need, regardless of their immigration status or that of their parents.

NRPF Change of Conditions

131. An application to lift the NRPF status is available for migrants on certain specified human rights routes to settlement, such as the five-year parent route or 10-year partner, parent or private life route. An applicant who has encountered a change in their circumstances and due to this will be destitute or imminently destitute, has a child whose particular additional and essential needs will not be met without access to public

funds, or is encountering exceptional financial circumstances, may qualify for their NRPf status to be lifted.

Fee Waivers

132. Fee waivers are available for certain specified in-country human rights applications where a migrant is exercising the right to remain in the UK based on family or private life, but cannot afford the fee, is destitute, at risk of imminent destitution, or has a child whose particular additional and essential needs will not be met if the fee is paid. These include applicants under the five-year parent route and the 10-year partner, parent or private life route.

Human Trafficking

133. The National Referral Mechanism can support victims in cases of modern slavery by identifying them and referring them to receive the appropriate support (see para 163 to 166).

Support for Migrant Victims Scheme

134. In June 2019, the Joint Committee on the draft Domestic Abuse Bill published its [Joint Committee on the draft Domestic Abuse Bill published its First Report](#). The Committee highlighted that some migrant victims of domestic abuse who have NRPf and do not qualify for the DDVC or other avenues of support may be faced with the choice of staying with a perpetrator of abuse or becoming homeless and destitute if they do not know how to access support.

135. The Government consequently reviewed its overall response to migrant victims of domestic abuse, working with 24 expert organisations and publishing [review findings in July 2020](#). A key barrier to migrant victims of domestic abuse accessing support is the difficulty organisations face in funding bed spaces and ancillary services in a refuge for victims with no recourse to public funds. That is why the Government launched the £1.5m Support for Migrant Victims Scheme which will be run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners. The Support for Migrant Victims scheme is designed to provide support to those individuals who fall through the gaps of other support mechanisms, such as the DDVC. It provides a safety net of support through provision of accommodation in a refuge or other relevant accommodation. Additionally, the scheme can provide wrap around provisions, including emotional support, and more practical support in forms such as immigration advice to aid victims in their recovery and navigation of advice and the options available to them to move on from that support. The support it provides can be tailored to the needs of individual victims.

Faith

136. Victims who follow a religion or are from faith backgrounds may experience additional barriers to receiving help or reporting abuse due to issues with accessing

support due to their religious identity and their faith community. Many will fear their faith being misunderstood and concerns around whether they will be believed.

137. Specialist services should seek to understand the varying manifestations of spiritual abuse and use of how each or a mix of culture, religious tradition and holy scripture can be used as tools of abuse by perpetrators.
138. Paragraphs 62 onwards provides further detail on spiritual abuse.
139. It is important that specialist services communicate their understanding of a victim's religion to ensure they feel emotionally safe and supported. Support services should be aware that a lack of understanding of these intersections can lead to silencing victims from faith backgrounds and reinforce barriers to receiving support from agencies such as the police, courts, social care, and housing.
140. Many victims from faith backgrounds can share concerns centred on their race, and sexuality. It is important to be mindful of intersectionality and associated considerations when looking to understand a victim's faith or religious background.

Alcohol, substance misuse and mental health

141. Alcohol and drug misuse increase the likelihood and severity of domestic abuse and although there is not a simple causal relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse, there is a frequent coexistence between them. Studies have shown that between 25% and 50% of those who perpetrate domestic violence have been drinking at the time of assault⁶⁴ and up to 60% of men in perpetrator programmes have alcohol and/or drug problems.⁶⁵ The presence of alcohol can lead to increased risk of violence, with the risk of rape twice as high for attacks involving drinking offenders.⁶⁶ Cases involving severe violence are twice as likely as others to include alcohol⁶⁷ and substance use was a factor in just over half of intimate partner homicides in a 2016 Home Office review.⁶⁸
142. Professionals working with victims must acknowledge that some victims may use alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism in response to abuse. Women who have experienced extensive physical and sexual violence are more than twice as likely to have a problem with alcohol than those who have little experience of being abused.⁶⁹ Alcohol can also be embedded in an abusive relationship, with perpetrators using

⁶⁴ Bennett and Bland (2008) [Substance abuse and intimate partner violence](#). National online recourse centre on violence against women.

⁶⁵ Home Office (2020) [Domestic abuse - draft statutory guidance framework](#).

⁶⁶ Brecklin and Ullman (2002) [The Roles of Victim and Offender Alcohol Use in Sexual Assaults: Results from the National Violence against Women Survey](#), Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, Volume 63: Issue 1.

⁶⁷ McKinney C. et al (2008) [Alcohol availability and intimate partner violence among US couples](#), Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, Volume 33: Issue 1, pp. 169–176.

⁶⁸ Home Office (2016) [Domestic Homicide Reviews: Key findings from analysis of domestic homicide reviews](#).

⁶⁹ Women's Aid, [the nature and impact of domestic abuse](#).

alcohol to control victims.⁷⁰ ONS figures show that around 10% of those accessing domestic abuse support services had an alcohol use need and around 40% had a mental health problem.⁷¹

143. Victims can be turned away from refuges due to their alcohol needs, with only 26% of refuges reporting that they “always” or “often” accept women who use alcohol or other drugs.⁷² Similarly, alcohol treatment services may not be sufficiently well-equipped to treat women who have experienced domestic abuse. Women-only provisions of substance use services are available in less than half of local authorities in England and Wales⁷³ and a lack of anonymity compounded with a lack of services that fit around childcare arrangements can also be a barrier to treatment.
144. Professionals should also recognise the consequence that alcohol-related abuse may have on children. Parental alcohol use was a documented factor in 37% of cases where a child was seriously hurt or killed between 2011 and 2014.⁷⁴
145. Lower socio-economic groups experience higher levels of alcohol-related harm than wealthier groups, despite drinking less on average. This holds true for alcohol-related violence, with the poorest groups being most affected by alcohol-related domestic abuse. The most deprived groups experience as much as 14 times as many incidents of alcohol-related domestic abuse every year, compared with the least deprived. The prevalence rate of alcohol-related domestic abuse is also five times higher among the most disadvantaged groups compared to the least disadvantaged.⁷⁵
146. Similarly, the co-occurrence of drug and alcohol use, homelessness, criminal justice system involvement and mental health will often mean that victims will face huge challenges when seeking support. It is paramount that statutory services take an intersectional approach that is mindful of the multiple barriers and layers of discrimination faced by these groups when planning and delivering services.
147. Domestic abuse can have a long-lasting effect on 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. Frontline professionals have a responsibility to safeguard and support victims of domestic abuse with these health-related problems and it is important that professionals identify and consider the issues of alcohol support, substance misuse and mental health needs of affected victims.

⁷⁰ The draft [statutory guidance](#) gives examples of ways substance use can exist within an abuse relationship, stating that responding agencies should understand these issues p.28.

⁷¹ Office for National Statistics (2018) [Table 63: Personal characteristics of clients accessing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor \(IDVA\) services that use SafeLives' Insights tool](#).

⁷² Against Violence and Abuse (2014) [Case by Case: Refuge provision in London for survivors of domestic violence who use alcohol and other drugs or have mental health problems](#), p.17.

⁷³ Agenda and AVA (2017) [Mapping the Maze: services for women experiencing multiple disadvantage in England and Wales](#).

⁷⁴ Department of Education (2016) [Pathways to harm, pathways to protection: a triennial analysis of serious case reviews 2011 to 2014](#).

⁷⁵ Institute of Alcohol Studies (2020). [Inequalities in victimisation: alcohol, violence and anti-social behaviour](#).

148. Local authorities should assess the accommodation-based support needs of all domestic abuse victims and their children as stated in section 57 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This includes ensuring there is support specifically for victims with unique and/or complex needs, such as mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, as well as signposting accordingly. Local authorities should also ensure that the appropriate and adequate support within safe accommodation meets the needs of all victims including those with multiple complex needs and whose support needs may not be able to be met within generic domestic abuse safe accommodation, such as victims with mental health and/or substance misuse needs. For more detail, please see paragraph 287.

Harassment or Stalking

149. There is no statutory definition of harassment, but it includes repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person. It is generally acknowledged to cover behaviour that is intended to cause a person alarm or distress or to cause them to fear violence when the perpetrator knows or ought to know that their conduct amounts to harassment. Where there is evidence to show that such conduct has occurred on more than one occasion, the perpetrator could be prosecuted.

150. The perpetrator's behaviour towards someone, might be the same on each occasion – for example, they may send several texts which the recipient finds alarming, distressing or cause them to fear violence. Alternatively, the perpetrator'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.

151. Similarly, there is no definition of stalking, which is a form of harassment, although examples of the type of behaviour considered to be stalking are set out in section 2A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (the 1997 Act). This list is not exhaustive, nor does the offence require a personal connection, which means it is wider and differs from domestic abuse. The police and CPS have also adopted the following description, which appears in the guidance on Stalking Protection Order: stalking is 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.

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

153. 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—
 - i. relating or purporting to relate to a person, or
 - ii. purporting to originate from a person;
- Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication;
- 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.

154. 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 are 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.

155. Stalking is often a characteristic of domestic abuse, particularly once a 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.⁷⁶ Stalking behaviour can be carried out online, therefore potentially combining online and offline behaviours. It is important to note that men and children can also be victims, and women can be perpetrators of stalking.

156. 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.

157. Read the [guidance on stalking on GOV.UK](#).

⁷⁶ Monckton-Smith et al., [Exploring the Relationship between Stalking and Homicide](#), 2017.

Forced Marriage

158. Forced marriage involves the use of violence, threats or any other form of coercion against a person with the intention or belief that the conduct may cause a person to enter into a marriage without consent. In the case of a person lacking capacity to consent to the marriage, a marriage can be a forced marriage as a result of any conduct that causes a person to enter a marriage (notwithstanding that there is no conduct that amounts to the use of violence, threats or any other form of coercion). It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic abuse- if carried out by someone with a personal connection to the victim- or child abuse, and a serious abuse of human rights.
159. 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.
160. Forced marriage is a criminal offence under section 121 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. A person who is at risk of or who has undergone forced marriage, a local authority, and any other party with the permission of the court, can apply to the Family Court for a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) to be issued, in order to protect that person. [Guidance on forced marriage can be found on GOV.UK](#). In addition, section 63A of the Family Law Act 1996 makes provision for a court to make a FMPO to prevent a person from being forced into a marriage or from any attempt to be forced into a marriage. More [information on how to apply for an FMPO has been published by the HM Courts & Tribunal Service](#).
161. Those being forced into marriage who are under the age of 18 are also victims of forced marriage. In relation to children and young people the [multi-agency practice guidance on forced marriage](#) has specific sections for children’s social care professionals and teachers, providing clear advice to practitioners to help inform an effective response to safeguard children who may be at risk of forced marriage. This guidance is referenced [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\)](#).

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

162. FGM is a form of violence against women and girls which is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality.⁷⁷ 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

⁷⁷ [World Health Organization, Violence prevention: the evidence, 2010.](#)

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. Further information can be found in the [statutory guidance on FGM](#).

Modern Slavery

163. Modern slavery takes many different forms, both within and outside personal relationships and can encompass human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Where there is evidence of this type of exploitation, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 provides the appropriate means to prosecute offenders. In some cases, where there is a personal connection, the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 may also apply.
164. Children can be victims of modern slavery, or at risk of being a victim. Whatever form it takes, modern slavery is abuse. Child victims may be identified in a range of contexts. The characteristics and issues for child victims of modern slavery may be different to adult victims, including their added vulnerability; developmental stage; and possible grooming by the perpetrator. Potential child and adult victims of modern slavery will often not disclose on the first presentation but may after a relationship of trust is developed. Relevant child protection procedures in line with the guidance set out in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2018) must be followed if modern slavery is suspected.
165. [Statutory guidance on how to identify and support victims of modern slavery](#) includes indicators of modern slavery in Chapter 3 and indicators specific to child victims in Annex A.
166. Victims of modern slavery can receive appropriate support through [the National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#). An online referral system is used for referrals into the NRM and also referrals made under the Duty to Notify (DtN) which applies to specified public authorities. Individuals who are recognised as potential victims of modern slavery through the NRM can have access to specialist tailored support for a period of at least 45 days while their case is considered, this may include: access to relevant legal advice, accommodation, protection and independent emotional and practical help.

Perpetrator tactics

167. 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 learned and replicated behaviour as a result of 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 the service users of one perpetrator programme⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹ As we cannot fully determine in many cases why an individual becomes an abuser, there remains a limited understanding of perpetrators, and their motivation therefore should not be limited to the reasons listed above.

168. However, there is never any 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. Some perpetrators do not recognise that their behaviour constitutes domestic abuse, however all perpetrators are responsible for their behaviour and should be held accountable for it.

169. An abuser may manipulate their victim or those around them to make their abuse invisible, even to their victims. 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:

- Disguised compliance, missing or cancelling appointments, non-attendance, playing different professionals off against one another.
- Making false or vexatious allegations against victims and convincing professionals that their controlling tactics are for the victim's own safety and/ or for the safety of their children.
- 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.
- Exploiting interpretations of religion or faith to maintain control of victims and perpetuate harm.
- Using children as a form of control – e.g. access visits, seeking to manipulate children's feelings towards ex-partner (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, or issues with substance abuse.

⁷⁸ [Drive Project](#) developed, by Respect, SafeLives and Social Finance, out of a need to address perpetrators repeatedly offending with either the same or new victims.

⁷⁹ [Evaluation of Year 2 of the Drive Project](#).

- Threatening to 'out' the victim as a form of coercive control, telling the victim that they will not be believed because they identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans, or manipulating the victim's knowledge of what support is available for LGBT people and using myths and stereotypes around LGBT domestic abuse to make professionals believe that abuse between same-sex couples doesn't exist.⁸⁰
- Exploiting the communication needs of the victims or 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.
- 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.

170. 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 programmes have problems with alcohol and/or drugs.⁸¹ However, there is not a causal relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse. Substances can act as a disinhibitor, rather than a cause of violence and abuse. Many people believe that alcohol and/or drugs increase aggression and physical violence and therefore perpetrators are likely to use this as an excuse for their abusive behaviour.

171. 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.⁸² 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';

⁸⁰ [Myths and Stereotypes About Partner Abuse Among LGBT People](#).

⁸¹ 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.

⁸² [Stella Project Toolkit](#).

- 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.

172. 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.

Chapter 3 – Impact on Victims

Impact on the Victim

173. 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. 11% of male victims of partner abuse have tried to kill themselves.⁸³ It is estimated that around three women a week take their own lives as a result of domestic abuse⁸⁴ and that women who experience domestic abuse are twice as likely to experience depression.⁸⁵ 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, who may present as chaotic or difficult to engage, particularly victims with disabilities, cognitive issues, mental ill health and/or issues with substance misuse. The impact of trauma may, similarly, be overlooked in children and young people. Similarly, prior experiences of physical or psychological trauma, as a result of bullying, discrimination and hate crime, may make victims of domestic abuse less likely to seek help.
174. Professionals should be aware that many parent victims may be wary of the involvement of children’s social care as they may equate this with possible action to remove children from their care. This may provide a barrier to victims seeking or accepting help. Chapter 4 provides further information on the children’s social care response and emphasises the importance of professionals building trusting relationships with the parent victim to seek to overcome this fear and ensure the right support is offered for both adult and child victims. See [further resources for practitioners working with families affected by domestic abuse](#).
175. There are strong links between women’s experience of domestic abuse and coercive relationships, and their offending. Relationships are women’s most prevalent ‘criminogenic need’,⁸⁶ almost 60% of female offenders have experienced domestic abuse.⁸⁷ This means that women are often trapped in a vicious cycle of victimisation and criminal activity.
176. 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

⁸³ [Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#).

⁸⁴ Walby, [The Cost of Domestic Violence](#), 2004.

⁸⁵ WHO, [Violence Against Women: Health Consequences](#).

⁸⁶ Lord Farmer: [The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders’ Family and other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime](#) 2019.

⁸⁷ [Ministry of Justice Female Offender Strategy](#), 2018.

should the victim have children). Research⁸⁸ 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 studies⁸⁹ been found to be a response to experience of abuse from partners, whilst alcohol is also used by male victims as a coping mechanism. For more information on alcohol and substance misuse, please see paragraph 140.

177. Many victims can also be made homeless by domestic abuse. [Annual statutory homelessness statistics for 2019-2020](#) show that 1 in 11 households (8.7%) recorded 'domestic abuse' as their main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness. The majority of women who experience homelessness have been abused.⁹⁰ 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 sex work to raise money for accommodation.⁹¹ Evidence also indicates that 13% of men sleeping rough have experienced domestic abuse from a partner.⁹²
178. 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.
179. Victims may also suffer from the effects of economic abuse; these effects can be unemployment, diminished employment prospects, or poverty. Such abuse can limit a victim's choices and cause severe and long-term debt and poor credit ratings which can negatively impact the victim for decades.⁹³
180. As set out throughout this guidance, victims with multiple and/or complex needs can face additional barriers to identifying abuse, seeking help or accessing support services. This underlines the need for an understanding of intersectionality by professionals in order to ensure the needs of victims are understood and an appropriate response provided (see Chapter 2 – Understanding Domestic Abuse).

Impact on Children

181. The 2021 Act recognises children as victims of domestic abuse for the purposes of the Act if the child sees, hears, or experiences the effects of the abuse, and is related to either the victim or perpetrator (section 3). Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people of all ages (0-18 years old). Children and young people are deemed to be victims under the 2021 Act as a result of seeing, hearing or

⁸⁸ Northern Rock Foundation, [Who Does What To Whom](#), 2009.

⁸⁹ Humphreys et al., [Domestic Violence and Substance Use: Tackling Complexity](#), British Journal of Social Work, 2005.

⁹⁰ Mayock et al., [Women, Homelessness and Service Provision](#), 2015.

⁹¹ Crisis, [Homeless Women: Still Being Failed but Striving To Survive](#), 2006.

⁹² Crisis, [Nations Apart? Experiences of single homeless people across England and Wales](#), 2014.

⁹³ Surviving Economic Abuse, ["Economic abuse is your past, present and future"](#) 2018.

otherwise experiencing domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to at least one of them whether that be the victim or perpetrator. A child might therefore be considered to be a victim of domestic abuse under the 2021 Act where one parent was abusing another parent, or where a parent was abusing, or being abused by, a partner.

182. The 2021 Act does not create a new offence of domestic abuse, and frontline responders should continue to consider the full range of existing legislation and safeguards to protect children. Legislation to be considered could include common assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, causing or allowing death or serious harm, or child cruelty, neglect and violence. This last offence, under section 1 of the Children and Young Person Act 1933 was amended in 2015, to include causing a child emotional or psychological suffering, including through exposure to domestic abuse. Additionally, for the purposes of s.31 the Children Act 1989 “harm” includes any impairment of the child’s health or development as a result of seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. “Development” means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; “ill treatment” includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical, such as domestic abuse that involves coercive control or emotional or psychological abuse.
183. Data on the prevalence of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse involving a relative is limited due to domestic abuse often being a hidden crime. The Children’s Commissioner estimates that 3 million children under the age of 17 live in a household where an adult has experienced domestic abuse, and one in five children see or hear what happened in cases of partner abuse.⁹⁴ Prevalence in existing datasets also points to the endemic nature of domestic abuse and the impact on children and young people. For example, data shows that domestic abuse is the most common factor in social worker assessments of children in need.⁹⁵ Additionally, in their 2020 annual report, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel found that domestic abuse was featured in 42.6% of incidents involving serious harm and 41% of fatal incidents.⁹⁶ For the most high-risk cases of domestic abuse that are referred locally to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), there were an estimated 13 children for every 10 cases (2019-20), further highlighting the prevalence of children and young people affected by domestic abuse.⁹⁷ It should be noted that evidence suggests many children who experience domestic abuse are not identified, and may therefore miss out on support.
184. Research highlights the effects of non-physical forms of domestic abuse on children⁹⁸ and that coercive control without physical violence has similarly harmful effects on children - professionals focused on physical acts of violence may fail to

⁹⁴ Victim’s Commissioner, [Sewing the Seeds: children’s experiences of domestic abuse and criminality](#), 2020.

⁹⁵ Department for Education, [Characteristics of Children in Need](#), 2019 to 2020.

⁹⁶ [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: annual report 2020](#).

⁹⁷ SafeLives, [National MARAC dataset](#), 2019-2020.

⁹⁸ See [Ofsted JTAI, 2017](#) and [DfE Triennial Serious Case Review Analysis, 2016](#).

understand the daily lived experience of victims and children, how it is affecting them, and the level of risk posed by perpetrators.

185. We know that experiencing domestic abuse involving a relative can have devastating consequences for children. Domestic abuse can impact children in a range of different ways, and there are a range of factors that may determine the nature of their experience, including age, gender, disability, race and socio-economic context. Experience of domestic abuse is also recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). Other ACEs include maltreatment such as physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, or household dysfunction such as having incarcerated relatives or relatives experiencing substance abuse or mental illness. Research suggests that ACEs can often overlap, occurring in clusters.⁹⁹ A variety of factors will contribute to a child's lived experience, may create additional barriers to seeking help or identification of abuse and may exacerbate the impact that domestic abuse has in the immediate and longer-term. A child's relationship with a trusted adult who has capacity to support them, wider family networks, friendship groups, and the type and frequency of the abuse are also important factors. Each child should be seen as an individual and assessed as such so that a bespoke support plan can be developed.

186. Broadly, some of the effects can include:¹⁰⁰

- Feeling anxious or depressed;
- Having difficulty sleeping, nightmares;
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches or bed wetting;
- Reduction in school attainment, truancy;
- Increased application to activities outside the home, including academia or sports, as a distraction;
- 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.

187. Professionals should be mindful that every child's experience of domestic abuse will be unique to them and should develop an individual response for every child and young person affected, including for siblings.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Early Intervention Foundation, [Adverse childhood experiences: What we know, what we don't know, and what should happen next.](#)

¹⁰⁰ NSPCC, [Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse.](#)

¹⁰¹ The Young People's Family Justice Board have produced some [top tips for professionals working with children and young people who have experience of and been affected by domestic abuse.](#)

188. Children who are cared for by family members other than their parents and looked after children may also have additional needs that professionals should consider.
189. Children and young people of difference ages may respond in different ways to domestic abuse, depending on their stage of development. Babies and young children may be particularly vulnerable when living with domestic abuse, with protective factors often minimal for this age group (unable to seek help or remove themselves from danger, often 'out of sight' of regular contact with professionals etc). Babies experiencing domestic abuse may be more likely to have difficulty sleeping, have higher levels of excess crying and disrupted attachment. Children of pre-school age tend to show the most behavioural disturbance such as bed wetting, sleep disturbances and eating difficulties and are particularly vulnerable to blaming themselves for the adult violence. Older children may be more likely to show the effects of the disruption in their lives through under performance at school, poorly developed social networks, self-harm, running away and engagement in anti-social behaviour.¹⁰²
190. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it difficult to express their feelings or may express them in different ways. This is especially true if the child has a sensory impairment, autism, a learning disability or has complex or profound difficulties and are, for example, non-verbal. Distress could be presented in different ways, including through challenging behaviour, becoming more withdrawn, difficulties concentrating or other changes to their usual behaviours or ways of communicating. 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. This may include drawing on multi-agency approaches, working with educational psychologists and should draw on the knowledge of those who know the child best, such as their teacher or any therapists currently involved in their support. The [SEND Code of Practice](#) provides statutory guidance for working with and supporting children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities, including for those with behavioural problems. All areas also have a Local Offer which provides information on local SEND support for children and young people and what they can expect from a range of local agencies including education, health and social care. For more information on communication needs, please see paragraph 100.
191. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation can impact children's wellbeing and development. Living with adversity and trauma, such as domestic abuse, can 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.¹⁰³ 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 living with domestic

¹⁰² Cafcass Cymru, [Impact on Children of Experiencing Domestic Abuse](#).

¹⁰³ SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse](#).

abuse experienced behavioural problems and 52% experienced problems with social development and relationships.¹⁰⁴

192. [Research from Children's Insights, England and Wales dataset 2015-18](#) shows that a trauma informed approach, including receiving help from specialist children's services reduces the impact of domestic abuse on these children and young people and improves their safety and health outcomes. Their role in early intervention and prevention can be particularly crucial; evidence suggests that abusive behaviour in children living with or experiencing domestic abuse dropped from 24% to 7% after receiving appropriate support.
193. Research¹⁰⁵ 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. Perpetrators can also use contact with children as a form of abuse. [Research from 2017/18](#) also shows that domestic abuse was a feature in over two-thirds of child contact applications in the family courts. For children of separated parents where domestic abuse is a factor, the impact of the abuse may intensify after separation. Therefore, providing support to both children and the non-abusive parent is essential and the child's voice should always be considered. 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 non-abusive parent-child relationship. This should also include appropriate access to relevant services for the perpetrator alongside clear accountability that the perpetrator is responsible for the harm caused.
194. Young people can also experience abuse in their own relationships (see Teenage Relationship Abuse – paragraph 18). Experiencing abuse in their own intimate relationships can be hugely damaging for young people and abuse in teenage relationships should be taken just as seriously as in adult relationships.
195. We know that domestic abuse affects different children in different ways and that children who have experienced significant trauma may need long-term support. Children and young people 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.

¹⁰⁴ SafeLives, [Children's Insights England and Wales dataset 2015-18](#).

¹⁰⁵ Radford et al., [Meeting the needs of children living with domestic violence in London](#), London: NSPCC/Refuge/City Bridge Trust, 2011.

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

196. This chapter outlines the role of individual agencies responding to domestic abuse. However, it is crucial that the agencies involved take a multi-agency approach to identifying and supporting the victim and responding to the perpetrator. For guidance on multi-agency working, see Chapter 5.
197. Agencies involved in the identification of, or response to, domestic abuse should consider the Government’s national strategies on Violence Against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse, to be published later this year. This guidance will be updated to reference the strategies following publication.
198. 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.
199. Further to this, victims of domestic abuse with protected characteristics (as defined by section 4 of the Equality Act 2010) may face additional barriers to accessing support. See, for example, paragraphs 87 to 117. Children and young people may also face different or additional barriers to disclosing their abuse – see paragraph 185.
200. Given that only one in five victims report their abuse to the police,¹⁰⁶ 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.
201. As set out in the [Government’s Female Offender Strategy](#), many women however do come into contact with the criminal justice system as ‘offenders’ and that there is extensive evidence on the links between women’s criminalised behaviour and being victims of domestic abuse themselves. Therefore, it is crucial that statutory services, particularly police and the wider criminal justice system are able to understand these links, are trained to make routine enquiries and respond in an appropriate, gender- and trauma-informed way. More information on women and girls in contact with the criminal justice system as offenders is seen at paragraphs 293 – 296.

¹⁰⁶ [Crime in England and Wales: Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales](#): year ending March 2018 Table 4.12.

202. It is essential that agencies are able to identify and respond to all forms of abuse and all victims. This includes intimate partner abuse between adults – including where children are present and experience the abuse; inter-familial domestic abuse; and children and young people experiencing or perpetrating abuse, either in their own relationships or towards a family member.
203. Given the complex nature of domestic abuse, a multi-agency response is critical to identify victims and their families at an early stage and before reaching crisis point. Multi-agency working enables professionals to get a better understanding of all the risks and needs of the victims, including children and young people, 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.
204. In relation to children and young people (0-18 years), the statutory guidance document, [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2018) sets out what professionals and organisations need to do, individually and in partnership with other agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The guidance is clear that children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their own family and from individuals outside their family and that these threats include domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour and teenage relationship abuse. Working Together also highlights that everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe and that multi-agency working and information sharing is essential to ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time. The importance of early help in promoting the welfare of children is emphasised.
205. The guidance also sets out key roles for individual organisations and agencies to deliver effective arrangements for safeguarding and places an equal and shared duty on the three safeguarding partners (the local authority, health and police) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. In relation to children in need (section 17, Children Act 1989) and child protection enquiries (section 47, Children Act 1989), the guidance sets out the specific roles and responsibilities of the local authority and its social workers in leading statutory assessments. Working Together makes clear that in all welfare and safeguarding enquiries, a child-centred approach should be adopted by practitioners to ensure that the best interests of the child are considered at all times.
206. Professionals can use risk assessment tools such as 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. Professionals should be aware that the DASH risk tool is not a definitive assessment of risk and professionals using this, or other risk assessment tools, should be alert to the risk to children as well as adults.

207. Risk assessment should holistically encompass specialist professional judgement, survivor perceptions of risk, along with additional indicators relevant to minority groups.¹⁰⁷
208. At Annex A 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 young people, and ensure that they receive support and protection tailored to their particular needs.

Early Years and Childcare

209. Early years providers can play a key role in preventing and detecting domestic abuse. Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework.
210. Early years providers must have regard to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', which states that early years providers must ensure that they are alert to any issues of concern in the child's life and that they have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children. This must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The policy must also cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting, that staff complete safeguarding training that enables them to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.
211. Early years providers must ensure that they have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who must liaise with local statutory children's services as appropriate. This lead must also complete child protection training.

Schools and colleges

212. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a unique position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating.
213. Schools and colleges must have regard to [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) —statutory safeguarding guidance.¹⁰⁸ The guidance sets out that all schools and colleges should have an effective child protection policy. The guidance is also clear that schools and colleges should ensure that all staff receive regularly updated

¹⁰⁷ For example, [ROAR LGBT risk assessment tool](#).

¹⁰⁸ In Wales, refer to [Keeping Learners Safe](#) guidance.

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 for staff on specific types of harm and abuse, including identifying and responding to domestic abuse.

214. KCSIE 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. Training could include a full exploration of domestic abuse, including the dynamics of inequality, power and control, which underpin domestic abuse, as well as the different forms it may take. This could cover both domestic abuse within family settings as well as abuse perpetrated between children and young people – either in their own intimate relationships or towards their family.
215. 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](#). When considering the needs of children affected by domestic abuse, schools and colleges may also want to consider their duties in regard to children with special educational needs, including those with behavioural problems, and refer to the [SEND Code of Practice](#).
216. There is also [guidance available on child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools and colleges](#).
217. The organisation Operation Encompass has set up an information sharing protocol between police forces and schools so that police can alert designated safeguarding leads of domestic abuse incidents involving a child, before the start of the next school day so that teachers are aware of the child's situation and immediate, emotional support can be offered when the child comes into school. More information on Operation Encompass is included in Chapter 5 (paragraph 420). Further information about [Operation Encompass can be found on their website](#), and we encourage all schools to sign up to the scheme.
218. Concerns about obtaining a school placement for their children may be a barrier to victims escaping domestic abuse mid-way through the school year and seeking refuge or safe accommodation, particularly if it means leaving the area. However, parents can apply for a place for their child at any school at any time; and where there are places available, the child must be admitted. Last year, the Department for Education consulted on a package of changes to the School Admissions Code to improve the in-year admissions process and to minimise gaps in children's education. Additionally, they have proposed to include children living in a refuge or safe/relevant

accommodation as an eligible category for placement via local Fair Access Protocols where parents have difficulty securing a school place through the regular in-year admissions procedure. The draft Code was laid ahead of Parliament on 20 April and, subject to approval, will come into force on 1 September 2021.

219. We have placed understanding of healthy relationships at the centre of a child's education through the introduction of compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). The topic 'Being Safe' supports children to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe and covers the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. We are supporting teachers to deliver high quality, age-appropriate teaching on the subject and build an awareness of all forms of abuse through [teacher training modules available on GOV.UK](#).

Case Study

A school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) received an Operation Encompass call related to one of their pupils. There had been an incident between the child's mother and her partner the previous evening.

The DSL spoke to the child's class teacher who was then prepared for the young reception child to behave differently from his usual self and was ready to offer support, whether silent or overt, according to the child's wishes.

The child arrived at the classroom with his mother and his teddy bear. His class teacher would normally have either asked him to put the teddy in a safe place in the classroom or asked him if he wanted mum to take teddy home so that he would be safe. She did neither, recognising that his teddy had been brought for a reason. The child hugged his teddy all day and even brought him to his speech therapy in school. His class teacher quietly supported him all day, working next to him and letting him know she was there.

In being informed at the earliest opportunity about the child's experience of domestic abuse, the teacher and the school had been ready to react and support the child's individual needs.

Higher education

220. The government continues to work closely with Universities UK (UUK) on implementing its Changing the Culture framework which seeks to tackle violence against women, harassment and hate crime. Underreporting of abuse and domestic violence is common and it is important that providers break down barriers to reporting and that students feel safe and able to report incidents of all abuse, harassment and violence.

221. All higher education (HE) providers should discharge their responsibilities fully and have robust policies and procedures in place to address harassment, making sure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone. We would expect providers to ensure that students continue to have access to support services, and complaints processes, to ensure they are able to report any issues. UUK has produced [guidance for universities on responding to such abuse in higher education communities during the pandemic](#). The guidance provides recommendations for being proactive in recognising and addressing domestic violence and abuse as well as signposting where further information is available to providers.
222. The government expects providers to take their responsibilities to students seriously and to have in place appropriate policies and procedures to tackle harassment, report incidents and make complaints. Any student who feels that their complaint has not been dealt with appropriately or satisfactorily can escalate their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Children's Social Care

223. 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, supporting a safeguarding response to teenage victims or perpetrators of intimate partner abuse, 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, statutory and non-statutory, such as the police, schools and health to help protect children.

Identification

224. All social workers must meet Social Work England's (SWE) professional standards for registration (and initial training must prepare new social workers to meet these standards). [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,¹⁰⁹ as well as co-occurrence with other factors including adult mental ill-health and substance use.¹¹⁰ It is important that social workers continue to develop their knowledge and skills through continuing professional development; this should include an understanding of the different forms of domestic abuse. All social workers

¹⁰⁹ Harrykisson 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.

¹¹⁰ Humphreys et al., [Domestic Violence and Substance Use: Tackling Complexity](#), British Journal of Social Work 35: 1303–20, 2005.

are required to undertake development and training and upload a record of this in order to maintain their registration with SWE. Training should be bespoke and specifically address experiences and needs of children and young people with diverse identities and backgrounds.

225. Once children and family social workers are qualified there are clear expectations in Post Qualifying Standards (PQS) under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The 'Post-Qualifying Standard: Knowledge and Skills Statement for Children and Family Practitioners' sets out, for example, the expectation that child and family social workers have the knowledge and skills to identify the impact of domestic abuse and work with other professionals to ensure vulnerable adults are safeguarded and children are protected.
226. 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. They should also be alive to the ways in which perpetrators might seek to manipulate them or other professionals. This stigma may be compounded by intersecting factors which may create further barriers in disclosure. 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.
227. Statutory guidance, [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) is clear that practitioners should take a child-centred approach at all times, keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families. Practitioners should see and speak to children, listen to them and take their views seriously, working with them and their families in deciding how to support their needs. Special provision should be put in place to support dialogue with children who have communication difficulties and/or language barriers.
228. 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.
229. Effective social work practice will build on an understanding that a full disclosure – from an adult or child victim – can take time and trust. Practitioners should not focus wholly on disclosure and recognise that its absence doesn't necessarily mean that abuse is not occurring. This includes understanding the different effects domestic abuse can have on children and how these effects present in their behaviour (set out in Chapter 3).
230. 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, including any children living outside the home, to help them to be safe and recover. Social workers should view every family member as one

part of a complex picture. However, careful consideration should be given to the safety of the victim and non-abusive parent, and it may not always be appropriate or safe for services to engage the perpetrator at the same time. Services should also ensure an appropriate balance of responsibility on protecting the child involved and should be clear that accountability for the harm caused lies with the perpetrator. 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.¹¹¹

231. Social workers should also be aware of the ways in which perpetrators may attempt to use the relationship between the non-abusive parent and child as a tool of coercive control. They may also seek to manipulate the relationship between the child and the non-abusive parent.
232. Agencies should recognise and be responsive to children and young people who are victims of intimate partner abuse in their own relationships, as well as children and young people who are perpetrating abusive behaviour towards intimate partners or family.
233. 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](#), 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.

Response

234. If children and families are to receive help at the right time, practitioners who come into contact with them have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. 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 *Working Together*, the arrangements put a statutory duty on police, health and local authorities to work together on local safeguarding arrangements. They are jointly responsible for coordinating safeguarding services to keep children safe and are accountable for how well local agencies work together to protect children from abuse and neglect. 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.
235. 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.

¹¹¹ Children's Social Care Innovation Unit, Learning from the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, 2017.

236. 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 for 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.
237. 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, 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.
238. 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.
239. 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.
240. 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 features of effective practice, including using a strengths-based and systemic approach, doing skilled direct work and reflective supervision and practice within their organisation, such as group case discussions.
241. 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 reoffending.

242. 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.¹¹²

Responding to teenage relationship abuse

243. 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.¹¹³

244. Services designed for adult victims of domestic abuse are not always appropriate for young people who have experienced abuse in their own relationships. Where possible, specialist services should be commissioned for teenage victims of domestic abuse and those using harm in their own relationships.

245. For example, Young Person's Violence Advisors are specialists in working with young people experiencing domestic abuse. They provide safety planning and advocacy support for young people in a way that is adapted to the needs of young people. For example, they may meet with the young person in a place they feel most comfortable, which could include education settings, cafes, or even in a car. YPVAs provide holistic support to the young person, taking into account other risk factors including other forms of child exploitation or abuse.

246. However, it is important that efforts are made to liaise with adult victims' domestic abuse service if YPVA provision is not available in the local area, although we encourage all areas to have specific provisions for young people. Further, where generic youth provision does not have this expertise, it will also be important for social workers to seek advice from specialist 'by-and-for' organisations for better identification of risk and support for children with intersecting and marginalised identities.

¹¹² Children's Social Care Innovation Unit, Learning from the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, 2017.

¹¹³ SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young People and Domestic Abuse](#).

247. 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 such as YPVAs should be involved in the multi-agency response.

248. Above all, social workers should follow the principles of the Children Act 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.

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](#).

Adult Social Care

249. 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.

250. Health, care and support needs will vary for each individual. It is now well accepted that abuse (both in childhood and in adult life) can be a main factor in the development of depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders, and may lead to sleep disturbances, self-harm, suicide and attempted suicide, eating disorders and substance misuse.

251. The Care Act 2014¹¹⁴ 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.¹¹⁵

252. 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 adult 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 coordinate 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.

253. 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.

254. It is crucial that adult social workers receive regular updated domestic abuse training.

¹¹⁴ In Wales, refer to the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

¹¹⁵ See paragraph 14.2 of the [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#).

Health Professionals

255. Domestic abuse causes serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems. Physical and mental health symptoms of domestic abuse include broken bones, gastrointestinal conditions, chronic pain, fatigue, sexually transmitted infections, depression, suicidal ideation, sleeping and eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among others.¹¹⁶
256. Research has shown that women who have experienced domestic abuse are three times more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health problem than women who have not.¹¹⁷ For this reason, responding to domestic abuse should be a strategic priority of the National Health Service England and Wales and should be recognised as the responsibility of all health professionals, including health professionals working in public health services such as health visiting and school nursing. Local health and public health partners produce a needs assessment that should include consideration of domestic abuse victims. This ensures local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (in England) or Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy (in Wales), and commissioning of relevant health and public health services meet the needs of the local population. Furthermore, it is important that we maintain alignment between English and Welsh health and public health responses to domestic abuse to ensure consistency in support for victims and their children.
257. Health professionals have a significant role to play in responding to domestic abuse. 80% of women experiencing domestic abuse will seek help from health services and they are often a woman's first, or only, point of contact.¹¹⁸ For the half a million victims who will seek support from health services each year, it is vital health professionals are supported, via specialist training and partnership work with specialist organisations, to respond effectively and ensure victims have an effective non-criminal justice based support option available to them.
258. Health professionals not only interact with victims of abuse regularly, but they are also one of the only statutory groups of professionals who regularly interact with every member of a household including children. They are trusted professionals who can often have access to patients on their own during moments of crisis which can result in high volumes of disclosures of abuse. As a result, health professionals are ideally placed to respond to the needs of victims, perpetrators and their children and must be supported appropriately to do so.
259. Almost all victims 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 cite health professionals as those with

¹¹⁶ WHO (2012) Understanding and addressing violence against women - health consequences.

¹¹⁷ Chandan, J.S et al. (2019). 'Female survivors of intimate partner violence and risk of depression, anxiety and serious mental illness,' The British Journal of Psychiatry, 7:1-6. doi: 10.1192/bjp.2019.124.

¹¹⁸ Department of Health (2010) Responding to Violence against women and children – the role of the NHS.

the best chance of taking action, and [analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews](#) has shown the significant role that health professionals play.

260. The NHS has a key role in providing care and support to victims of domestic abuse, their children and babies 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, specialist domestic abuse services, and/or the local Sexual Assault and Abuse Services Pathway for cases where domestic abuse has included sexual violence.
261. Working together across agencies helps to provide holistic support for the victims. The 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' arrangements help to strengthen this multi-agency approach of partnership and collaborative working. This may include attending local domestic abuse/VAWG strategic group meetings, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and engaging with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and may also include early help arrangements, not just those who reach safeguarding or high-risk MARAC thresholds, to enable earlier intervention and prevention of further harm. 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. Read [NHS England's Information on safeguarding](#).
262. Health services should be encouraged and supported to set up robust partnerships with local domestic abuse specialist services and building referral pathways that are clear and easily accessible to ensure staff feel confident to respond to survivors.
263. A whole-health model response to domestic abuse goes beyond training and stand-alone interventions. It requires a change in the culture of health services, partnership working with specialist domestic abuse services and a strategic, funded commitment to implement the necessary structural changes to embed this work. Key to implementing these changes is monitoring and accountability. A coordinated and systemic approach lies at the heart of this work and is critical in ensuring sustainability and a safer and more effective response to domestic abuse.
264. Working together across agencies is important, but different departments working together within the health service is also crucial. Care in the health service is often fragmented and patients may not have continuity of care (e.g. seeing a different GP for each consultation, seeing a different midwife for each pregnancy). Working together across agencies is important, but different departments working together within the health service is also crucial. In England, new Integrated Care Systems (in place from April 2022) will see NHS organisations, in partnership with Local Authorities and other partners, take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering care, and improving the health of the population they serve. This will offer a real opportunity to improve the join-up between different services to provide truly integrated care.

265. 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 who are living with/experiencing domestic abuse. NICE also covers Wales,¹¹⁹ however, in this context NICE is interacting with a devolved health service that is under differing legislative duties and this needs to be considered by professionals.
266. Tiered and mandatory specialist training around domestic abuse should be set up in all health services. Training should include specialist content on how to identify, respond to and refer both survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse in acute, mental health, primary care and public health settings. Specialist workers, employed by and managed by specialist, third sector providers should be embedded within health settings. 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.
267. Health and social care service managers and professionals should ensure trained staff in antenatal, postnatal, reproductive care, sexual health, alcohol or drug misuse, mental health, children's and vulnerable adults' services ask service users whether they have experienced domestic abuse. This should be a routine part of good clinical practice, even where there are no indicators of such abuse.
268. Furthermore, it is critical that all health professionals understand their responsibility to enquire about domestic abuse if they are concerned that a patient may be experiencing or perpetrating it. There is a need for public authorities to ensure frontline staff in our public services are making trained enquiries into domestic abuse to ensure they are Making Every Contact Count.¹²⁰ NICE guidelines state that being trained to respond to disclosure (Level 1) and how to ask about domestic abuse (Level 2) is essential for safe enquiry about experiences of domestic abuse and a consistent and appropriate response. Findings from the Pathfinder Project highlighted that health professionals feel better able to enquire about domestic abuse if their service funds a Health Based IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) to follow up with any disclosures of abuse and if they are aware of local referral pathways and specialist services to which they can refer patients.
269. Healthcare professionals should seek to create opportunities to speak to patients without the presence of others to facilitate the opportunity to disclose and use professional interpreters where needed. Health professionals who rely on family members or partners for interpretation services when enquiring about domestic abuse must be aware of the significant risk that people experiencing domestic abuse may be

¹¹⁹ [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\) guidelines.](#)

¹²⁰ [Ask and Take Action](#), August 2019.

less likely to disclose abuse with someone they know in the room. It may increase the risk to the victim if they disclose abuse in front of the perpetrator or someone who could share that information with the perpetrator. Furthermore, this practice may endanger migrant women who are already more vulnerable for a multitude of reasons such as having no recourse to public funds and/or no domestic abuse services that provide support in their language. Health professionals are often the only professionals with an optimal opportunity to speak privately and safely with survivors of domestic abuse and therefore should ensure that where possible, only professional and independent interpreters are used.

270. Health professionals should record and share information about suspected and actual abuse accurately and robustly to enable other health professionals to spot the signs of abuse, enquire appropriately about abuse, and/or provide suitable care and referrals. Recording and sharing information also enables better working across agencies/services (e.g. health service and social care). However, poor information-recording and inadequate information sharing within the health service and between health and other agencies/services are recurring themes in multi-agency reviews of death and/or serious harm, e.g. domestic homicide reviews (DHRs). A multitude of factors hinder good recording and sharing—such as lack of training, lack of time, and concerns about perpetrators seeing the information. The [Pathfinder consortium commissioned a report on recording and sharing information](#): the recommendations produced from this work aim to improve practice, are pragmatic, and target health professionals working in primary and secondary care. The recommendations can be found in the published report along with the research that informed these recommendations.
271. It is important to recognise that living with domestic abuse will have a direct impact on a child’s physical and mental health.¹²¹ A large body of evidence shows that the impact of a perpetrator’s coercive control on the non-abusive parent has an equally devastating effect on children within the family.¹²² Whether present in the house during particular incidents of domestic abuse or not, children and young people will be experiencing the effects of the perpetrator’s everyday patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour. The isolation from family and friends, the tension and fear within the home and lack of access to financial independence for the non-abusive parent will all directly impact on the child/children’s development and quality of life. The work of [Safe and Together](#), a programme led by David Mandel in the US, reminds us to analyse all of this in the context of the perpetrator making a “parenting choice”.
272. Health professionals should refer to the [Pathfinder toolkit](#) as good practice, taking an integrated healthcare response to domestic abuse, and a systemic approach to transforming the health sector’s response to domestic abuse. The toolkit combines all elements of evidence-based good practice including partnership working across health and specialist services, specialist interventions such as the IRIS programme in general

¹²¹ NSPCC, [Domestic abuse](#).

¹²² SafeLives, [SafeLives Insights national briefing on children living with domestic abuse](#).

practices and IDVAs in acute and mental health settings, sustainable specialist training, policies and procedures and accurate data collection and information sharing. The model works across acute, mental health and general practice settings, so that all survivors have access to the support they need, and further harm can be prevented. Early qualitative findings from the independent evaluation of Pathfinder¹²³ underscored the value of the whole-health model in creating the opportunities and pathways needed so that survivors could find safety.

273. The Inter-Collegiate and Agency Domestic Violence Abuse (INCADVA) forum is a policy forum which brings together the expertise and knowledge of national health and social care bodies, medical royal colleges and the domestic abuse sector. INCADVA have recommended a list of actions to highlight the vital role of the healthcare system in responding to domestic abuse, including:

- Implementing the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) Programme. IRIS is an evidence-based intervention to improve the general practice response to domestic abuse through training, support to practice teams and having a DA specialist embedded in practices. It is nationally recognised as best practice and has informed NICE guidance.
- The co-location of specialist Health IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) within health settings. A SafeLives report [A Cry for Health](#) provides extensive evidence around the benefits of this intervention in acute hospitals and other studies find similar results when specialists are located in mental health settings.
- The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Coordinator and the implementation of a Domestic Abuse Champions Network. These have been core elements of the good practice that has emerged as part of the national project Pathfinder.
- Ensuring that victims have priority and timely access to specialist mental health support services, which are adequately and consistently funded, and available across the country to all survivors, regardless of their immigration status.
- Long-term public health messaging to challenge public attitudes to domestic abuse.
- Representation from mental health services on advisory panels, in addition to the wider health service representation.

¹²³ Pathfinder was a 3-year fixed-term pilot project that brought together expertise and funding for specialist domestic abuse interventions to embed a 'Whole Health' approach to domestic abuse in 8 sites across England. The project ended in March 2020 and was led by Standing Together in partnership with four expert partners Against Violence and Abuse (AVA), Imkaan, IRISi and SafeLives.

Housing

274. Alternative housing options – whether refuges, social housing or private accommodation - are key to ensuring victims are able to escape domestic abuse, and factor strongly in 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 reporting perpetrators where appropriate. Some local authorities offer sanctuary schemes and support for victims to stay in their own home where it is safe to do so. Housing services may consider re-housing the perpetrator in certain circumstances rather than the victim.
275. It is vital that housing providers are able to recognise and respond to the signs of domestic abuse. A report by SafeLives identified the risk of misdiagnosing the effects of domestic abuse as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).¹²⁴ Housing providers should employ professional curiosity when faced with all cases, even if domestic abuse isn’t immediately suspected. Abuse may manifest as multiple moves in quick succession; a refusal to let housing officers into the property; neighbour complaints or damage to property. Housing officers should recognise the impact of wrongly criminalising victims in such instances and consider safety planning and specialist support for the victim if action is taken against the perpetrator.
276. 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. The [Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance has produced a toolkit](#) which sets out the steps that housing providers should take in order to become accredited.
277. 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). The programme aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse within all housing sectors and improve outcomes for victims so they can achieve stable housing and live safely. It 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, to identify how they can be part of an effective response.

Homelessness and domestic abuse victims’ priority need for accommodation

278. Many victims of domestic abuse have to leave their homes and the area where they live for safety or due to the location of the right support in available safe accommodation. [The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#)¹²⁵ states

¹²⁴ SafeLives, [Safe at Home: The case for a response to domestic abuse by housing providers](#).

¹²⁵ In Wales, refer to Part 2 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

that in formulating their homelessness strategies, housing authorities should consider the particular needs that victims of domestic abuse have for safe accommodation, including single sex accommodation.

279. Victims who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse have priority need for homelessness assistance. This means all local housing authorities have a duty to accommodate victims of domestic abuse if they are homeless through no fault of their own and eligible for assistance ('the main homelessness duty'). Local authorities can discharge this duty in the social or private rented sector. The local authority also has a duty to provide temporary accommodation in the interim.
280. Tier One authorities will also have a duty (under part 4 of the Act) to provide support within safe accommodation for domestic abuse victims and their children. The type of accommodation and support needed will need to be individually assessed for each victim, which will entail tier one and two local authorities working closely together in two tier areas. If a victim does not require support in safe accommodation, then local housing authorities will need to continue to comply with their duties under homelessness legislation in line with [Chapter 21 of the Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#).
281. Housing authorities should also consider the needs of the street homeless and hidden homeless in formulating their approach to housing domestic abuse victims. Annual statutory homelessness statistics for 2019-2020 show that 1 in 11 households (8.7%) recorded 'domestic abuse' as their main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness.¹²⁶ Once rough sleeping, the risk of further abuse on the streets is significant.

Housing response

282. Housing providers should have policies in place to identify and respond to domestic abuse. The [White Paper on Social Housing](#) sets out that the Regulator of Social Housing will make clear that landlords should have a policy setting out how they tackle issues surrounding domestic abuse, working with other agencies as appropriate.
283. Victims can experience many incidents of abuse before calling the police or reporting it to another agency. Housing providers may be able to identify abuse at earlier stages and should consider how they can best provide support to their residents. By understanding the indicators of domestic abuse through training and professional development, housing officers can increase their confidence to speak to people experiencing abuse, risk assess and safety plan alongside them.
284. Housing providers should carefully consider the nature and effects of domestic abuse with regards to the needs of victims, including tactics used by a perpetrator which have financial and safety implications for victims. For example, research identified impacts related to the fact that where a victim and perpetrator have a joint

¹²⁶ MHCLG, [Statutory Homelessness in England: financial year 2019 – 2020](#)

tenancy or mortgage they will be jointly and severally responsible for any liabilities. This may result in victims being liable for arrears or repairs when the perpetrator refuses to pay – a form of economic abuse - or fearing for their safety if unable to change locks without prior agreement from a landlord, letting agent or mortgage provider.¹²⁷

285. Safety should be at the core of the housing response to domestic abuse. Housing authorities and housing providers should also be alert to the wider role they play in ensuring victim safety. Procedures should be in place to keep all information on victims safe and secure. In many cases, particularly where extended family members or multiple perpetrators may be involved, perpetrators go to great lengths to seek information on victims. The housing authority and providers must be alert to the possibility of employees being, or having links to, perpetrators. Housing authorities should not disclose information about an applicant to anybody outside the organisation without consent, and should be particularly alert to the need to maintain confidentiality wherever domestic abuse is involved. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to restrict access to cases where abuse is disclosed to only named members of staff.
286. Housing authorities should work co-operatively with other local authorities and commissioners to provide services to tackle domestic abuse. Housing officers and homelessness commissioners should be involved in multi-agency working, including by being part of local safeguarding arrangements such as MASH or MARACs.

Safe Accommodation

287. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 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 Councils outside London, 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, and developing and monitoring local strategies.
288. Tier One authorities will also be required to effectively commission services based on a local strategy informed by 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 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 Councils in areas with a County Council, and London Boroughs) to co-operate with the lead Tier One authority.
289. Under the duty, local authorities should consider the specific needs of all victims within safe accommodation, including those with particular characteristics and/or

¹²⁷ [Policy Evidence Summary 4: Justice, housing and domestic abuse, the experiences of homeowners and private renters](#). Walker, S-J. and Hester, M. for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (2019).

multiple complex needs. Separate [guidance for local authorities relating to the exercise of their functions under Part 4 of the 2021 Act](#) has been published in draft.

290. Refuge services are a core component of the housing response to domestic abuse which provide a crucial form of provision for victims, including children, who are no longer safe at home. However some victims may not want to take up this option and some, often the most marginalised, can face challenges in accessing support. These may include victims experiencing homelessness and with multiple complex needs related to mental health, substance abuse and having a disability. Those from minority communities can also face challenges; research has identified issues such as re-victimisation, institutional failures and discrimination in the way cases are handled.¹²⁸ Commissioners and providers should take an intersectional approach that is mindful of multiple barriers and layers of discrimination faced by these groups when planning and delivering services.
291. 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. Data from 2017 found that over two thirds of women in refuges were from a different local authority area.¹²⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has [published draft statutory guidance relating to Part 4 of the 2021 Act](#) that makes clear that tier one local authorities must meet the needs of all victims including those who present from outside of the locality. 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. In two tier areas, tier one local authorities who hold these support duties will need to work very closely with the housing authority who will retain the housing duties. Homelessness legislation also makes clear that local housing authorities should not refer a victim of domestic abuse to a local authority where they have a local connection if the victim is at risk of violence or domestic abuse in that area.
292. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government have also produced [guidance on improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse who are in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation](#). The guidance makes clear that housing authorities are expected not to apply residency tests for victims who have fled to another district and sets out how they can ensure victims are given appropriate priority for social housing. It also encourages housing authorities to use their existing powers to support victims to remain safely in their homes if they choose to do so.

¹²⁸ [A Roof, Not a Home: The Housing Experiences of Black and minoritised women survivors of gender-based violence in London](#), Latin American Women's Project, 2019.

¹²⁹ [Survival and beyond: The Domestic Abuse report 2017](#), Women's Aid.

Criminal Justice System and Women

293. Female offenders in the criminal justice system are often likely to have been victims of serious crimes themselves, including domestic, childhood and sexual abuse, from single and multiple perpetrators. In his 2019 report on female offenders' relationships, Lord Farmer made clear the effect that experience of domestic abuse has on a woman's likelihood of offending and reoffending, as well as recommending that domestic abuse services should be joined up with other support available for women in the criminal justice system.¹³⁰ It is therefore important for criminal justice services to make the connections between the abuse and trauma they have faced, and their offending:

- More than half (57%) of women in prison report having suffered domestic violence, and women in prison are more than twice as likely as men to say they have committed offences to support someone else's drug use as well as their own.¹³¹
- 53% of women in prison report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood.¹³²
- Women can become trapped in a vicious cycle of victimisation and criminal activity. Their situation is often worsened by poverty, substance dependency or poor mental health.¹³³
- Women and girls who have lived in care and Black and minority ethnic women and girls are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Approximately 17% of women prisoners are from ethnic minorities, compared to 14% of the general population.¹³⁴
- Research has shown the strong correlation between women and girls' experiences of violence and abuse and other forms of disadvantage which are associated with being at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system – for example, a third of women with experience of extensive violence have a common mental health condition, and a third have an alcohol problem.¹³⁵
- Further evidence about domestic abuse as a driver to women's offending include highlighting the devastating impact of coercive relationships and the lack of protection for survivors of domestic abuse who are driven to offend and kill their abuser.¹³⁶

294. Whilst the prevalence of domestic abuse is high amongst women and girls of all ages, young women experience risk and vulnerability associated with this in ways

¹³⁰ [The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders' Family and other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime.](#)

¹³¹ Prison Reform Trust, "[There's a reason we're in trouble](#)" 2017.

¹³² Women In Prison, [Key Facts.](#)

¹³³ Prison Reform Trust, [Domestic Abuse Bill proposals summary.](#)

¹³⁴ Agenda and Women in Prison, [Double Disadvantage.](#)

¹³⁵ Agenda, [Hidden Hurt.](#)

¹³⁶ Centre for Women's Justice, [Domestic Abuse Bill.](#)

which are informed by and specific to their age. Studies involving young women in contact with the criminal justice system have found:

- Between three quarters and 90% of girls (under 18) may have experienced abuse from a family member or someone they trusted.¹³⁷
- 63% of girls and young women (16–24) in the community have experienced rape or domestic abuse in their own intimate partner relationships.¹³⁸
- Girls and young women are more frequently identified as experiencing peer-on-peer abuse,¹³⁹ with young people who have experienced abuse in a familial context also more vulnerable to this.¹⁴⁰
- Often associated with exploitation by intimate partners, criminal exploitation of young women appears to have increased during the coronavirus crisis.¹⁴¹
- Almost half of young women (18–25) involved in violent offences identified the victim as their partner, just over a quarter as a sibling, and just under a quarter as a friend. The relational context of young women’s violence suggests that this is often a response to their own victimisation.¹⁴²

295. Young adult women who have experienced violence and abuse which has driven them into the system are often approached by systems and services first and foremost as ‘perpetrators’ of crime, rather than as young women facing vulnerabilities in need of support – criminalised and punished for survival strategies and their responses to trauma. For example, girls and young women report being pressured by male partners (or those connected to them) to participate in criminal activity, such as carrying or store weapons and drugs, fearful of the consequences of saying ‘no’.¹⁴³ Likewise, research finds that girls and young women experiencing other forms of violence and abuse (for example, sexual exploitation) are ‘routinely criminalised’, often for offences which stem from the abuse they have experienced.¹⁴⁴

296. Where professionals identify that girls and young women in contact with the criminal justice system have experienced/are at risk of domestic abuse, all efforts should be made to identify support which is both age-appropriate and gender-sensitive. Where specialist provision for girls and young women is not locally available, statutory services working with girls and young women should work closely with both specialist services for adult victims and local youth services. Joint-working of this kind should be supported by local commissioners who must ensure the right local connections are in

¹³⁷ Ministry of Justice (2019) [Race and the criminal justice system statistics 2018](#), Ch 6, Table 6.01.

¹³⁸ Bateman, T. and Hazel, N. (2014) [Resettlement of girls and young women: research report](#), Beyond Youth Custody.

¹³⁹ ‘Peer-on-peer abuse’ can be defined as abuse which ‘features physical, sexual and emotional abuse between young people, and may occur within their friendship groups or intimate relationships’. Firmin, C. et al. (2016) [Towards a contextual response to peer-on-peer abuse: Research and resources from MsUNderstood local site work – 2013-2016](#).

¹⁴⁰ Firmin, C. and Curtis, G. [‘Practitioner Briefing #1: What is peer-on-peer abuse?’](#), 2015.

¹⁴¹ National Youth Agency [Hidden in Plain Sight: Gangs and Exploitation – A youth work response to COVID-19, 2020](#).

¹⁴² Beyond Youth Custody. House of Commons [Resettlement of girls and young women: research report](#), 2014. Justice Committee [Young adults in the criminal justice system. Eighth Report of Session 2017–19](#).

¹⁴³ Centre for Social Justice [Girls and Gangs, 2016](#). Jury-Dada, S. [Girls, gangs and their abusive relationships, 2019](#).

¹⁴⁴ The Howard League for Penal Reform [Out of place: The policing and criminalisation of sexually exploited girls and young women](#), 2012.

place to allow children and individuals with complex needs the opportunity to access specialist domestic and sexual violence support, as per the [Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations](#). For further discussion of what age-appropriate, gender- and trauma-informed responses to girls and young women at risk of domestic abuse whilst in contact with the criminal justice system entails (including examples of good practice) please refer to the [Young Women's Justice Project Literature Review](#).

Jobcentre Plus

297. Department for Work and Pensions (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.

298. 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 from paragraph 118);
- Advance payments;
- Exception within the policy to support a maximum of two children;
- Housing Benefit paid to a Universal Credit claimant (such as for domestic abuse survivors living in a refuge) 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 housing cost support for two properties if the survivor intends to return to their usual home for a defined period;
- Removal of the spare-room subsidy not applying to victims staying in exempt accommodation;
- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) - The DHP Guidance Manual highlights individuals or families fleeing domestic abuse are as a priority group for DHPs;
- Support to make a new claim for Universal Credit if there isn't one in place, or to split an existing joint claim if the survivor has left the perpetrator;
- 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.

299. Jobcentre 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

300. 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.¹⁴⁵ 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.¹⁴⁶
301. Incidents of domestic abuse should not be seen in isolation; by its nature domestic abuse involves repeat victimisation. Officers should consider the history and any patterns of behaviour to understand any incident within its wider context.
302. The police response to domestic abuse can affect attrition rates as victims may withdraw their support for prosecution if they experience a lack of communication, sympathy and support, as well as for a range of other reasons.¹⁴⁷ HMICFRS has noted a huge variation between forces in the proportion of cases discontinued on the grounds that “victim does not support” ranging from 15% to 58%.¹⁴⁸ The quality of the policing response therefore plays a significant part in victim engagement in domestic abuse cases and directly impacts charge and conviction rates.
303. The College of Policing has developed guidance – [Authorised Professional Practice](#) – which sets out principles and standards for officers on investigating domestic abuse. The guidance outlines the duty of officers to take positive action in all stages of the police response to domestic abuse to ensure that victims, including children are protected; criminal proceedings are pursued where appropriate; and that there is effective perpetrator management where criminal proceedings are not possible or suitable.
304. Relevant [CPS guidance on domestic abuse](#) and associated offences is referenced in paragraph 330 below. Topics related to police investigation are covered such as evidence gathering and case building and is therefore applicable to officers as well as other professionals working on domestic abuse within the criminal justice system.
305. 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

¹⁴⁵ HMICFRS, [Everyone's Business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse](#), 2014.

¹⁴⁶ SafeLives, [Insights Idva England and Wales dataset 2017-18](#).

¹⁴⁷ HMICFRS, [The police response to domestic abuse: An update report](#), Feb 2019.

¹⁴⁸ HMICFRS, [The police response to domestic abuse: An update report](#), Feb 2019.

where the requirements of the offence are set out. Further information can be found in the [statutory guidance issued to police and criminal justice agencies under section 77 of that Act](#) about investigations of this offence. This guidance should be considered when investigating the offence.

306. The police should adopt a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive approach and take into account the following when supporting victims of domestic abuse:

- An awareness of how race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, other protected characteristics (as set out in section 4 of 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 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;
- Recognise the impact ‘first responders’ may have on children who see, hear or experience the abuse in a domestic abuse incident, ensuring premises are consistently checked for the presence of children (whether or not in the room during an incident) and children are actively listened to. Responders should also be 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 there are concerns about a child’s welfare;
- 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 (as well as the perpetrator’s history with other victims) 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 abuse;¹⁴⁹
- Record any crimes and any previous incidents and place a domestic abuse flag on them, following National Crime Recording Standards. Consider that behaviours such as harassment and stalking may form part of the abuse but be recorded as separate offences;
- Consider whether an application under the ‘Right to Know’ route of the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) needs to be made;
- Provide the victim with information about the criminal justice process and their rights under the [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.¹⁵⁰ In the event that a victim of abuse is reported as being a domestic abuser by a perpetrator, it is important that the victim should still be given support as a victim.
- Ensure victims of domestic abuse have an interpreter (including BSL for Deaf victims) where required;
- Where appropriate provide an intermediary or someone to sit with the victim during police interviews. This person should not be the child of the victim or perpetrator or a member of the community where there is risk that they may disclose information shared by the victim with the perpetrator; and
- Consider and follow your force’s positive action policy.

Link between victimisation and offending

307. Police and other criminal justice agencies should recognise the part domestic abuse can play in offending behaviour; this link is highlighted in the Ministry of Justice’s [Female Offender Strategy](#). The response from criminal justice agencies to those

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, AVA’s research [Domestic Abuse and Change Resistant Drinkers](#).

¹⁵⁰ For further information, see for example [Respect’s Toolkit for Work with Male Victims of Domestic Abuse](#).

affected can be pivotal in identifying domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity, offering support and helping to break the cycle of victimisation and offending.

308. A range of offences may result from a victim's experience of abuse, including: handling stolen goods under threat of violence from a partner; possession of a controlled substance belonging to an abusive partner; use of force against an abusive partner or ex-partner; failure to ensure school attendance for fear of meeting an abusive partner or ex-partner.¹⁵¹ Agencies should always consider the possible context of domestic abuse in female offending to ensure informed decision making.

Victims with insecure immigration status

309. Perpetrators of domestic violence can use insecure immigration status as a way to inflict abuse on the victim, for example by way of threatening to tell the police. When dealing with victims with insecure immigration status, police should treat all individuals who report domestic abuse as victims first. See from paragraph 118 for guidance as to what support victims with insecure immigration status may be able to access.

Tools Available for the Police

Bail

310. Bail conditions are an important means of supporting the positive action of arrest. They offer protection for alleged 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.

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. If it is not necessary and proportionate to release on bail the suspect must either be 'Released Under Investigation' or released with 'No Further Action' taken. If released on bail, appropriate bail conditions if it is necessary the circumstances, for instance to protect the suspect interfering with witnesses.¹⁵²
- In domestic abuse cases, as for most other crimes, the starting point is that suspects are entitled to be released on pre-charge bail and subject to bail

¹⁵¹ [Further information on identifying perpetrators as victims.](#)

¹⁵² The Government undertook a consultation on reforming pre-charge bail in 2020. 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 Government responded to the consultation on 14 January 2021 and [a copy of the pre-charge bail consultation response can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

conditions, unless there is a good reason for considering otherwise, such as repeat offending or likelihood of witness intimidation. Police should consider that suspects Released Under Investigation will not be subject to any conditions which can lead victims to feel unprotected, particularly if the alleged victim lives with the suspect and he/she is able to return home. Such circumstances can increase the likelihood of victims fleeing their homes or withdrawing their support for investigations. These potential outcomes should be balanced against the impact of bail conditions on the suspect.

- A suspect who breaches pre-charge bail conditions can be arrested and released again on the same bail conditions. Notices and Orders can also be used. See below for further details. Police should also consult with and update victims on bail conditions (and extensions), including before a suspect's release from the police station.¹⁵³ The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will change the law around pre-charge bail and includes provisions to better protect vulnerable victims and witnesses.
- **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

311. A Voluntary Attendance (VA) Interview can also be used for progressing investigations. It should be noted that no conditions can be placed on a perpetrator when they attend a voluntary interview. Interviews may hinder the effectiveness of investigations in providing suspects with prior notice and the opportunity to destroy evidence (for example on digital devices) or speak to witnesses in advance. As such, VA should only be used when appropriate as it may not afford enough protection for the victim in cases of domestic abuse. Read [further information on Voluntary Attendance Interviews](#).

Protective Notices and Orders

312. **Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPN/DVPO)** (governed by ss. 24 to 33 of the Crime and Security Act 2010) 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 aged 18 or over. 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, or where there has been repeated flouting of pre-charge bail conditions. However, they should not be used

¹⁵³ College of Policing, [Post-arrest management of suspect and casefile](#).

in place of investigation and prosecution where these are an option; in these circumstances the suspect can be arrested and bail conditions imposed. They can also be used without the support of a victim (for instance where they do not support the issue of a DVPN or the making of a DVPO or are unwilling to provide a statement) if an officer believes that the issue of a DVPN is necessary to protect them. Breach of DVPO is not a criminal offence but enforcement action can be taken in a magistrates' court as a contempt of court. The breach has to be proved at the civil standard and the court can order imprisonment of a period of up to two months or a fine not exceeding £5,000.

313. 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 and police and housing authorities should work together to ensure perpetrators are appropriately and safely accommodated to manage the risk of returning to the property and harm to 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 before a magistrate. The DVPN is followed up with an application for a DVPO in a magistrates' court within 48 hours of service of the notice (not including Sundays, bank holidays, Christmas Day or Good Friday). The resulting DVPO, if granted, lasts for between 14 and 28 days. [Read the guidance on Domestic Violence Protection Orders.](#)
314. The 2021 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 DAPNs and DAPOs will be published ahead of the pilot. DAPNs and DAPOs will be piloted in a small number of areas before being rolled out nationally; the existing DVPN/DVPO will continue to apply in the non-pilot areas until DAPOs are rolled out fully on a national basis. When DAPNs/DAPOs are rolled out fully on a national basis, the existing provisions in the Crime and Security Act 2010 relating to DVPN/DVPO will be repealed – DVPNs/DVPOs and the guidance which underpins them will become obsolete.
315. **Restraining Orders**¹⁵⁴ 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, even where the offender receives a custodial sentence (recognising that harassment can occur from within prison or following release). Restraining orders generally prohibit suspects from contacting victims and place restrictions on them doing anything

¹⁵⁴ Section 413 and Schedule 28 to the Sentencing Act 2020 and Section 5A, Protection from Harassment Act 1997. [CPS guidance on Restraining Orders](#) is available.

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 which is a criminal offence punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment.

316. **Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs)** issued under the Stalking Protection Act 2019 allow for early police intervention pre-conviction in stalking cases before stalking behaviours become entrenched or escalate in severity. However, it should be noted that they should not be an alternative to investigation and prosecution where a criminal offence of stalking appears to have been committed. 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.
317. 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).
318. There is no restriction as to the stage of the criminal justice process at which an order may be made, and indeed an order may be applied for even if there is not to be a criminal justice process, although where the threshold to commence criminal proceedings is met, an SPO is not an alternative to prosecution. It is sufficient for the Court to be satisfied that the three criteria set out in section 2(1) of the Stalking Protection Act 2019 are met. Read the [statutory guidance for the police on the Stalking Protection Act 2019](#) and [CPS guidance on Stalking Protection Orders](#).
319. **Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs)** made 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 local authority or any other person with the permission of the court (including police).
320. **FGM Protection Orders (FGMPOs)** made under s.5A of and Schedule 2 to 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).
321. FMPOs and FGMPOs are made by a court and contain legally binding conditions and directions designed to change the behaviour of a person or persons who has forced someone into marriage or is trying to do so or has subjected, or has arranged or planned for a girl or woman to be subjected to FGM. The aim of these orders is to protect the person who has been, or is being, forced into marriage or FGM. The court

can make an order in an emergency so that protection is in place straightaway. Read [further information on Forced Marriage Protection Orders](#) and [further information on FGM Protection Orders](#). Breach of these orders is a criminal offence, punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.

322. **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. Breach of a non-molestation order is an offence (punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment, or a fine or both). Police should not require victims to apply for non-molestation orders or occupation where bail conditions can be imposed. Further information on these orders can be found from paragraph 347.

323. Repeat, especially persistent, breaches of orders can create a fresh offence of harassment and stalking, and police should take action to arrest and prosecute for this.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

324. 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 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.

325. 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.

326. Section 77(1) of the 2021 Act places a duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance to chief officers of police about DVDS. Section 77(2) imposes a duty on chief officers of police to have regard to guidance issued under section 77(1). Placing a statutory duty on the police to have regard to the guidance, which means they must have a good, clear 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. [Read the existing non-statutory guidance on the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#).

Criminal Justice System – CPS

327. 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 makes its decisions independently of the police and Government. The CPS decides which cases should be prosecuted using the Full Code Test, determines the appropriate charges in more serious or complex cases and advises the police during the early stages of investigations, prepares cases and presents them at court. The CPS prosecutes criminal cases in England and Wales on behalf of the state against a defendant. The CPS works with partners to inform, support and serve victims and witnesses to help secure / deliver justice. The Attorney General superintends the CPS, but the CPS is operationally independent. The relationship between the police and CPS in relation to prosecution decisions is set out in the [Director's Guidance on Charging](#).

328. 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?
 - 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.
329. 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.
330. [CPS guidance and training to prosecutors on handling cases of domestic abuse](#) 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 comprise coercive and controlling behaviour and can be psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional. Wider CPS guidance on offences including [coercive and controlling behaviour](#); stalking and harassment; [social media offending and cybercrime](#); and [so-called honour based abuse and forced marriage](#) can also be relevant to domestic abuse cases.
331. 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.

Victim's Right to Review scheme

332. Both the police and CPS operate a Victims Right of Review (VRR) making it easier for people to seek a review of a decision not to bring charges or to terminate proceedings in eligible cases. The right to review police decisions is an entitlement under the Victim's Code and the police should make victims aware of this right when providing an explanation for a police decision not to charge.
333. For both VRR schemes there is a three-month time limit to make a request. Reviews will be considered by a person independent of the original investigation and decision. The police VRR involves one review stage, conducted by an officer at least one rank higher than the original decision maker. The CPS VRR can include two stages comprising a local resolution stage and, if necessary, review by the national Appeals and Review Unit.
334. Read [further national guidance on the police Victim Right to Review](#); details can also be found on individual force websites. Further guidance on the CPS VRR is available: [Victims Right to Review scheme](#) and [Victims' Right to Review guidance](#).

Criminal and Civil Justice System – Criminal, Civil, and Family Courts

335. Domestic abuse is dealt with under both the criminal and civil law. The two systems are separate and are largely administered by separate courts.

Criminal courts

336. Criminal courts primarily deal with offenders who have committed a criminal offence, from common assault to more serious crimes such as murder. The criminal courts will take necessary steps to ensure that victims and witnesses are able to give their best evidence in such proceedings, for example provide screens to ensure they are not visible to the perpetrator and/or enable their evidence to be given remotely via video link for example.

Civil courts

337. The civil courts resolve disputes mainly between individuals or organisations. They do not have a separate category of offence for domestic abuse, however, cases before these courts involve a wide-ranging category from debt to those involving housing rights, compensation and contractual disputes. However, as in the other court jurisdictions there is recognition that perpetrators sometimes use the courts to continue their abuse, often bringing victims back to court repeatedly, which can in itself be a traumatising process.

338. Currently, judges in the civil courts can use their powers to safeguard vulnerable witnesses (which will include victims of domestic abuse). The 2021 Act strengthens this by requiring the Civil Procedure Rules 1998 to provide for victims or alleged victims of specified offences to be eligible for special measures (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link or behind a screen). It also requires the Civil Procedure Rules to provide for those who are or who are ‘at risk’ of being a victim of domestic violence to avail of special measures in the civil courts. Courts will consider whether special measures are ultimately provided in a particular case and this will still depend on whether the court considers that they would assist the quality of the witness’s evidence in such cases. This brings the civil provisions in line with the provisions in family courts.
339. The 2021 Act also prohibits perpetrators from cross-examining their victims in person in civil proceedings in England and Wales. Such cross-examination in person can serve to re-traumatise victims and prevent them giving their best evidence in court. This will apply where a party is a victim of a specified offence or there is a relevant injunction in place, and the 2021 Act will also allow domestic abuse victims to introduce evidence (such as a letter from a doctor or an employer) of domestic abuse perpetrated by a party to the proceedings towards a witness (or vice versa) in order to qualify for this ban.

Family Courts – children cases

340. The family court routinely hears cases involving alleged or admitted domestic abuse in both public law - usually disputes between parents and the state, and private law - typically disputes between parents over child arrangements. Estimates indicate that allegations or findings of domestic abuse are present in between 49% and 62% of child arrangement / contact cases.¹⁵⁵
341. Cafcass provide expert advice and recommendations to the court on the interests of the child in both public law cases as well as in private law cases where there are safeguarding risks, including those related to domestic abuse.
342. [Practice Direction 12J](#) sets out what the family court is required to do in child arrangements cases where domestic abuse is alleged or admitted, or there is other reason to believe that the child or a party is at risk of domestic abuse. Where domestic abuse is admitted or proven, any child arrangements order should protect the safety and wellbeing of the child and the parent with whom the child is living and should not expose either the child or parent to risk of further harm.
343. The 2020 Ministry of Justice report [Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases](#) raised concerns about the experience of domestic abuse survivors and their children in the family court. In response, the Government published an [Implementation Plan](#) setting out commitments to improve the experience of domestic abuse survivors and their children in private law proceedings. This plan includes the

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Justice, [Domestic Abuse and Private Law Children Cases, a literature review](#) Table 4.1.

changes to the Civil Procedure Rules and ban on cross-examination by perpetrators outlined in the Civil Law section above.

344. There is recognition that perpetrators sometimes use the family court as a way to continue their abuse, often bringing victims back to court repeatedly, which can in itself be a traumatising process. An order under section 91(14) of the Children Act (also known as a barring order), can be made by the court when satisfied that the making of a further application for an order under that Act, would put the child concerned, or another individual, at risk of harm.

Protective Orders

345. 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. Applications for injunctions – either non-molestation or occupation orders - can be made to the family court and emergency injunctions can be ordered at the judge's discretion, without the abuser's knowledge.

346. Courts can make protective orders of their own volition, to protect a victim or person at risk, where statute provides for this.

347. 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; and
- Instructing or encouraging others to do the above on their behalf.

348. 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 with a maximum sentence of five years.¹⁵⁶ Police should act on breaches with the history of past abuse in mind and understand the cumulative effect. 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.

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

- Suspending their rights to occupy or visit;

¹⁵⁶ [Sentencing Council Definitive Guidelines on Breach Offences.](#)

- Evicting the abuser from the home;
- Preventing them from returning home; and
- Preventing them from coming within a specified distance of the home.

350. 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.

351. A full summary table of protective orders for victims of domestic abuse is below.

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Jurisdiction	Name	Purpose	Process	Relevant Legislation	Is a breach a Criminal Offence?	Sanction for breach
Civil proceedings (magistrates')	Domestic Violence Protection Orders	Intended to provide immediate and short-term cessation of contact between perpetrator and victim.	Separate from criminal proceedings (if any). Police make an application to the magistrates' court.	Crime and Security Act 2010	No	Max 2 years imprisonment (for civil contempt)
Civil proceedings (magistrates')	Violent Offender Orders	For those convicted of specified serious violent offences to protect the public from the risk of serious violent harm.	Post-conviction	Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008	Yes	5 years imprisonment max
Civil proceedings (magistrates')	Sexual Risk Order	Protection from harm where risk from person shown to have carried out certain sexual behaviour.	Not dependent on conviction.	Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	Yes	5 years imprisonment max
Civil proceedings (magistrates')	Notification order	Makes a sexual offender who has been convicted or cautioned abroad subject to the notification requirements. Used where necessary to prevent sexual harm.	Post foreign conviction. Police make an application.	Sexual Offences Act 2003	Yes	5 years imprisonment max

Jurisdiction	Name	Purpose	Process	Relevant Legislation	Is a breach a Criminal Offence?	Sanction for breach
Civil proceedings (magistrates')	Stalking Protection Order	Early intervention to prevent escalation of stalking behaviour. Can be used where there is proof to a criminal standard of stalking behaviour (but not necessarily conviction) before a charge is brought.	Not dependent on criminal proceedings. Police make an application.	Stalking Protection Act 2019	Yes	5 years imprisonment max
Civil proceedings (magistrates')	Injunction	To be used if victims are not legally associated to their abuser (e.g. marriage, sharing parental responsibilities, living together), provides for a restraining order and the victim can claim damages.	Victim brings civil proceedings.	Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (s.3)	Yes	Contempt 2 years imprisonment max; or conviction 5 years
Criminal proceedings (Magistrates or Crown court)	Restraining Orders	To allow a court to protect a victim from an offender/defendant.	Prosecutor applies to criminal court on conviction or acquittal for any offence.	Protection from Harassment Act 1997	Yes	5 years imprisonment max
Criminal proceedings (Magistrates or Crown court)	Sexual Harm Prevention Order	To protect the public from sexual harm from an offender.	Post-conviction. Prosecutor applies to criminal court on conviction.	Sexual Offences Act 2003	Yes	5 years imprisonment max

Jurisdiction	Name	Purpose	Process	Relevant Legislation	Is a breach a Criminal Offence?	Sanction for breach
Criminal proceedings (Magistrates or Crown court)	Criminal Behaviour Orders	Can be used to prevent further incidents of domestic abuse.	Prosecutor applies to the criminal court on conviction.	Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	Yes	5 years imprisonment max
Family proceedings	Occupation Orders	Determines who can and/or cannot occupy particular premises for a period of time.	Victim makes application to the family court.	Family Law Act 1996	No	n/a
Family proceedings	Forced Marriage Protection Order	Can be used where person has been subjected to or is at risk of forced marriage.	Not dependent on criminal proceedings. Person to be protected or representative applies to family court.	Family Law Act 1996	Yes	Contempt 2 years imprisonment max; or conviction 5 years
Family proceedings or civil proceedings	Non-molestation orders	To prohibit a person from molesting another person.	By a court of its own volition if a child involved otherwise on application. Victim or representative applies to Family Court.	Family Law Act 1996	Yes	5 years imprisonment max

Jurisdiction	Name	Purpose	Process	Relevant Legislation	Is a breach a Criminal Offence?	Sanction for breach
Family proceedings or criminal proceedings	FGM Protection Order	Can be used where person has been subjected to or is at risk of FGM.	Not dependent on criminal proceedings. Person to be protected or representative applies to Family or High Court (or can be made by criminal court in criminal proceedings for an FGM offence).	FGM Act 2003	Yes	Contempt 2 years imprisonment max; or conviction 5 years

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Special Measures in the Criminal Courts

352. The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (YJCEA) 1999 introduced a range of measures that can be used to facilitate the gathering and giving of evidence by vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. These measures are known collectively as ‘special measures’ and can include the following:

- a. Screens to shield the witness from the defendant
- b. Evidence given by witnesses through live link
- c. Evidence given in private
- d. Removal of wigs and gowns by judges and barristers
- e. Visual recorded interview
- f. Pre-trial visual recorded cross-examination or re-examination
- g. Examination of witness through an intermediary
- h. Aids to communication

Read [further guidance on special measures](#).

353. The 2021 Act provides for automatic eligibility for complainants of offences relating to domestic abuse to be considered for special measures in criminal proceedings. It directly amends the relevant provisions in the YJCEA 1999. This change provides that complainants are automatically eligible for special measures as intimidated witnesses (under section 17(4) of the YJCEA). This means that they do not have to demonstrate fear or distress to be eligible for special measures. Special measures apply to prosecution and defence witnesses, but not to the defendant and must be made through an application to the court. Witnesses can choose what special measure(s) they would like the application to be made to the court for, however granting special measure applications is always a judicial decision.

Special Measures in the Family Courts

354. The 2021 Act provides for special measures in family proceedings. It mandates an amendment to the existing Family Procedure Rules at Part 3A, to automatically deem as “vulnerable” victims of domestic abuse for the purposes of determining whether a participation direction should be ordered. Specifically, it requires that rules of court must provide that where a party or witness in family proceedings is, or is at risk of being, a victim of domestic abuse carried out by a party, a relative of a party, or a witness, it is to be assumed that the quality of their evidence, and their participation in the proceedings are likely to be diminished by reason of vulnerability. An exception may be included in rules to cover instances where a person does not wish to be deemed eligible for a special measures’ direction.

Special Measures in the Civil Courts: victims of specified offences

355. The 2021 Act provides a requirement that rules of court must make provision enabling the court to make a special measures direction in respect of victims, or alleged victims, of a specified offence. The purpose of the provision is to ensure that rules are made setting out when and how special measures directions should be made in such cases. The Lord Chancellor will also make regulations specifying which offences are relevant for the purposes of these rules. Whether any special measures are ultimately provided in a particular civil case will depend on whether the court considers they would likely improve the quality of the witness's evidence, or a party's participation in the proceedings. Special measures might only be appropriate in certain civil cases and not others, but the new rules require the court to consider whether a special measure direction should be granted.

Criminal Justice System – Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework for Courts

356. 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.

357. The framework has identified common components including:

- A clear multi-agency/community approach which addresses risk management and safeguarding procedures. Multi-agency 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.

358. Following the testing of the Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework (DA BPF) in three test sites, all 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.

359. 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

360. 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 reoffending. 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, including children.
361. The [HMPPS Domestic Abuse Policy Framework](#) sets out the organisation's commitment to reducing domestic abuse-related reoffending, the risk of serious harm associated with it and to provide interventions to support rehabilitation. It ensures that staff at all levels understand what is expected of them and take action to safeguard adults and children at risk. It encourages staff to approach the issue with professional curiosity in every case and sets out the principles of good practice in relation to working with domestic abuse.
362. The Policy Framework sets out the arrangements for working with people whose behaviours include domestic abuse, as well as those with convictions. The identification of domestic abuse is not a one-off activity that occurs only at the start of the sentence. Throughout the sentence, all staff need to use an investigative approach, being vigilant and inquisitive in seeking out information from a wide range of sources to inform an ongoing assessment of whether domestic abuse features in current or previous relationships. Risk assessment requires an analysis of all available sources of information and takes into account prior known incidents of domestic abuse (e.g. police call-out information) as well as convictions. Risk Management Plans must address all the identified risk factors and set out actions to safeguard identified individuals assessed to be at risk of serious harm.
363. HMPPS work closely with a variety of other agencies to manage the risks perpetrators pose. Sharing information in relation to risk is already an expected element of all staff's practice. The Policy Framework details the expectations of multi-agency working in the context of domestic abuse, highlighting the range of arrangements under which multi-agency working is governed and individual cases discussed. Staff will need to be familiar with local arrangements for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), child safeguarding case conferences, Integrated Offender Management (IOM) as well as familiarising themselves with specialist voluntary

sector domestic abuse agencies. Probation practitioners and their managers should expect to work with a variety of other agencies, to manage the risks perpetrators pose and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of victims and children. The involvement of other agencies and the need to share information should form part of a Risk Management Plan and staff will need to consider which multi-agency arrangements are likely to be the most effective mechanism for each plan.

364. Where appropriate, perpetrators should be offered the opportunity to engage with an offending behaviour programme and those who are eligible for HMPPS accredited programmes should be referred. Those who are not suitable for an accredited programme will be able to access alternative rehabilitative activities designed to reduce reoffending.
365. Abuse can continue from within prison through phone calls, letters, face to face meetings, or through family members. Prison Offender Managers should assess whether a prisoner presents a continuing risk while in custody and prepare plans to manage and address the risks identified. A perpetrator's release from prison can also be a risky period for victims and Offender Managers should ensure that issues arising in custody are fed into release planning. Ensuring all necessary information has been obtained to inform and assess the suitability of the address and adequate accommodation planning is also key to ensure perpetrators do not immediately return to victims, including children or other vulnerable adults.
366. Victim safety in the context of domestic abuse covers both past victims and identified adults at risk of becoming victims in the future. Given the prevalence of domestic abuse, HMPPS recognises that some of the people they supervise will themselves be victims of domestic abuse. As part of sentence planning and risk management, staff will work together with local agencies, domestic abuse services and specialist services to ensure the most effective way of achieving the safety of those affected by domestic abuse.
367. Victims of perpetrators who have been convicted of a specified sexual or violent offence and sentenced to 12 months or more in custody have a statutory right to participate in the HMPPS Victim Contact Scheme. If victims have opted into the Victim Contact Scheme, the expectations of the Victim Liaison Officer and case managers are set out in the Policy Framework; the role of the Victim Liaison Officer includes informing the victim about key developments in the offender's sentence such as if the offender is due to be released from prison or, for indeterminate prisoners, updates on Parole Board hearings. The probation practitioner should include the arrangements for informing the victim of an offender's release from custody as part of the victim safety element of their risk management plan including in circumstances where an offender poses a high risk of harm to a victim who does not fall into the scheme.

Criminal Justice System – Local Criminal Justice Boards

368. 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.
369. Local criminal justice boards (LCJBs) are responsible for joining up local criminal justice agencies to achieve common aims and objectives including reducing crime, bringing more offenders to justice and increasing public confidence. LCJBs could be used by senior officers to monitor criminal justice responses to domestic abuse within agencies that sit on the boards.

Employers

370. Employers have an important role to play in helping victims of domestic abuse to remain in work, in the workplace itself, and to help victims access the support they need through signposting to specialist services. Employers can also play a role in raising awareness about domestic abuse. Employers continue to have a pivotal role as new ways of working in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including home-working and hybrid working, are established. For those experiencing abuse, the workplace often offers a safe space and a respite away from their abuser. Colleagues and managers can often be the only other people outside the home that victims talk to each day and are therefore uniquely placed to help spot signs of abuse.
371. Many employers are likely to have some employees affected by domestic abuse, either as victims, carers, witnesses to abuse, or as perpetrators. These individuals may be found any position within an organisation.
372. Domestic abuse can impact on victims' ability to access work and career prospects. In addition, domestic abuse has considerable costs for businesses, with an estimated £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity because of domestic abuse.
373. Employers have a duty of care to their employees. Legally, this means that they need to abide by relevant health and safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care. Employers should also take practical and reasonable steps to ensure their employees' mental and physical health are a priority, and as such, employers should consider the impact of domestic abuse on their employees as part of their duty of care.
374. As best practice, employers should develop policies to set out their approach to domestic abuse within their workforce including, for example, signposting to specialist organisations, roles and responsibilities within the organisation, any education and training available, the practical support they can offer to victims in their workforce and their approach to perpetrators in the workplace. This support offer may include access to paid leave which can be helpful to victims in certain situations. Employers should consult with staff, trade unions, employee representatives or domestic abuse charities to develop, implement and maintain a domestic abuse policy.

375. In 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy undertook a [review to examine how victims of domestic abuse can be supported in the workplace](#) to examine how victims of domestic abuse can be supported in the workplace and how to give employers the confidence and knowledge to support victims better. The report sets out the need to tackle domestic abuse as a workplace issue and the positive role that employers can play in supporting victims. Read further information about the [report on workplace support for victims of domestic abuse](#).
376. There is a range of up-to-date practical guidance which employers can access. Employers should note the [Employers' Initiative for Domestic Abuse \(EIDA\)](#), which is a business network which empowers employers to take action against domestic abuse, for their staff, and their sectors. The EIDA bring together the experience, expertise and best practice of their members and partners to tackle abuse and raise awareness. Membership is free to any employer wanting to act. The network provides practical guidance, up to date tools and materials, as well as signposting to support services. For example, their new handbook is a single reference guide, with a raft of practical steps for employers to take to establish and maintain a domestic abuse policy and support employees who make a disclosure. The guidance has been assembled with the help of EIDA's partners, founders, and Beacon members and is available to download for members of the network. They also have a free to download employer toolkit which has recently been updated to reflect post-covid working. The EIDA also work with government, charities, and opinion formers to stop domestic abuse and to get help to victims.
377. Employers should also note the Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC), a commitment by businesses to support women affected by abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace. Employers are invited to sign the Covenant and identify workplace skills and opportunities for women seeking sustainable employment opportunities. The ultimate aims of the initiative are to harness real and meaningful social change, create inclusive and positive opportunities, develop long term, sustainable solutions for victims of abuse to build their confidence, resilience, skills and access to the workplace. The EDAC has been rolled out across England from June 2021 and is a collaboration between the Sharan Project and the Department for Work and Pensions, as well as the Home Office and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
378. Employers should also refer to the [PHE BITC Domestic Abuse Employer Toolkit](#). This toolkit helps employers of all sizes and sectors make a commitment to respond to the risk of domestic abuse and build an approach that ensures all employees feel supported and empowered by their workplace to deal with domestic abuse. The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development have also published a [guide for employers on managing and supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse](#), which outlines what a framework of support may look like. UNISON has also produced a [model workplace agreement on domestic violence and abuse](#).

379. Employers may access Hestia's [Respond to Abuse Employer's Advice Line and digital tool](#), which is available to any business or organisation in the United Kingdom who would like free guidance and information regarding how to support employees enduring domestic abuse in the workplace. The Advice Line is free to contact and is run by fully qualified domestic abuse specialists who are able to assess the risk of the situation and to advise appropriately. You can contact the Advice Line on 0203 8793695 or email Adviceline.EB@hestia.org between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. More information is available on [Hestia's website](#) and is listed further down in the guidance at Annex A under 'Support Available to Victims'.

Financial services

380. 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.

381. In 2015, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which regulates the financial services industry in the UK and helps protect consumers, published research¹⁵⁷ 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 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.

382. 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 financial or economic abuse. The Code aims to bring increased awareness and better understanding of what financial/ economic 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.

383. 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.

¹⁵⁷ FCA, [Occasional Paper No. 8: Consumer Vulnerability](#), 2015.

Links with the voluntary sector

384. The voluntary sector plays a key role in providing specialist support for victims, their families and perpetrators. Many areas have voluntary support services providing support in the community, such as refuge accommodation, recovery programmes for victims, including children, and behaviour change programmes for perpetrators.
385. 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. The Government also funds the only specialist LGBT domestic abuse helpline, run by Galop, an LGBT anti-violence charity. There is also helpline support for perpetrators through the Respect Phoneline (0808 8024 040). These helplines and a list of other specialist domestic abuse support can be found at Annex A.
386. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (“IDVAs”) are specialist trained practitioners that act as a victims’ point of contact to support victims at high risk of harm from perpetrators. 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.¹⁵⁸
387. For multi-agency working to be effective it is vital that the state works closely with the voluntary sector to ensure full and proper combination of expertise to provide holistic support. For instance, specialist domestic abuse support workers are highly trained to support families affected by domestic abuse and contribute valuably to discussions and risk assessments involved in Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (“MASHs”) or Child in Need and Child Protection plans, including attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences.

¹⁵⁸ SafeLives, [National Definition for IDVA work](#), 2014.

Chapter 5 – Working Together to Tackle Domestic Abuse

388. The response to domestic abuse is a complex one that spans a number of statutory and non-statutory agencies, including but not limited to local authorities, community-based agencies, children's services, housing, health (including mental health), drug and alcohol services, specialist domestic abuse agencies, the police and the criminal justice system. Schools and other education bodies also have a central role. In order to support victims, including children, and respond to perpetrators, each agency has a responsibility to work effectively together.
389. 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. Working together is essential for early identification and response to domestic abuse to reduce the risk of escalation. It is vital to appropriately safeguard victims, including children, regardless of the level of risk.
390. An effective multi-agency response means that all frontline agencies consider domestic abuse and are trained to understand both the dynamics and the signs of domestic abuse. Specialist domestic abuse organisations offer a range of training for professionals working in multi-agency safeguarding contexts. This training should take into account the intersecting forms of oppression and abuse that some victims face and the ways in which this can prevent them from accessing support and services, and reiterate the need for specialist 'by-and-for' services to form part of all multi-agency working practices.
391. Agencies must work together and share information to ensure they are able to draw on all the available information held within each agency to build a full picture of the victims, including children, and perpetrators. This includes looking holistically at an individual's case and circumstances in order to identify appropriate multi-agency support.
392. Multi-agency work to respond to domestic abuse should involve all relevant frontline agencies. This should include specialist domestic abuse services with expertise in supporting victims, and where they exist, specialist 'by-and-for' services. All agencies have a duty to assess whether a safeguarding response is required before referring an incident to a multi-agency partnership. 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. Co-location can be particularly effective in supporting young people who have experienced domestic abuse, where there may be a stigma around accessing services.

393. Standing Together have produced [In Search of Excellence](#), a guide for facilitating Coordinated Community Response (CCR) partnerships that reiterates the importance of coordination work amongst frontline provision.

394. Multi-agency working should be embedded from the start and should offer a range of intervention and support, from early intervention to support for high-risk cases through formalised safeguarding arrangements. These responses can include but are not limited to:

- Advice and guidance;
- Advocacy;
- Onward referrals or signposting to other agencies or services;
- Housing support;
- 1-1 or group counselling;
- Respite care;
- Child protection plans;
- Safety and support plans;
- Support through a criminal justice process, or civil court case;
- Drug and alcohol support; and
- Perpetrator behaviour change programmes.

395. There is a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. Many local organisations and agencies have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. The responsibility for this join-up locally rests with the three safeguarding partners (local authority, health and the police) who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. The three safeguarding partners should agree on ways to coordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

396. A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is one way of coordinating activity around safeguarding referrals, assessment and joined-up response. Other local areas may call multi-agency safeguarding partnerships something different. These bring 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.¹⁵⁹ This may lead to an

¹⁵⁹ SafeLives, [Seeing the Whole Picture: An evaluation of SafeLives' One Front Door](#).

assessment by children's social care, early help or a response from universal services. Where local areas do not have MASH arrangements in place, alternative multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should be in place which deliver the broad principles set out below. SafeLives have published [Seeing the Whole Picture: an Evaluation of SafeLives' One Front Door](#) which sets out what an effective model should look like.

397. Local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families. Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up early help services based on a clear understanding of local needs. This requires all practitioners, including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other practitioners to support early identification and assessment.
398. Effective multi-agency working (for example a MASH):
- Needs to see and respond to the whole picture;
 - Should consider the needs of victims;
 - Should have a clear strategic focus;
 - Requires active partners participating in meaningful joint working;
 - Needs specialist skills;
 - Requires safe and effective information sharing;
 - Addresses the behaviour of the perpetrator; and
 - Values and employs staff with the right values.
399. These best practice principles of effective multi-agency working are discussed in greater detail below and should be considered when developing a response to all victims of domestic abuse, including children.

Seeing and responding to the whole picture

400. It is essential that services work together to identify and respond to the whole picture. This principle should frame the multi-agency response to victims, including children. Agencies should:

- **Develop a collaborative approach built around coordinating 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.

- **Be aware of the intersection of other harms, taking into consideration other safeguarding functions when considering the needs of victims, alongside pathways for intervention for perpetrators.** Many harms and adverse experiences intersect with one another to either drive abusive behaviour, or to exacerbate vulnerabilities in those who have experienced abuse. For example, where there is a suspected risk of radicalisation, the Prevent programme may be relevant. Prevent safeguards individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gangs, drug abuse, and physical and sexual abuse. It deals with all forms of extremism and seeks to protect those who are targeted by terrorist recruiters.¹⁶⁰ Where there may be a suspected risk of radicalisation when assessing the case of a victim, their experience and safety must always be a priority. A Prevent referral should be handled sensitively and advice from a Local Authority Prevent Coordinator, or a Policing Prevent Coordinator should always be sought.
- **Use an evidence-based assessment process** to ensure there is a shared understanding of the risk and a shared plan to address risk. The assessment should involve 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 should not) 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.
- **Develop processes and pathways** that ensure that once needs and risks are identified, family members get the most appropriate support as soon as possible.

¹⁶⁰ [The ACT website](#) explains signs to look out for.

Case Study

Hounslow Domestic and Sexual Violence Outreach Service is a London Borough of Hounslow VAWG service for all victims of gender-based violence. Victims 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, ethnic minority 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.

Designing around the needs of victims

401. The voice and needs of victims, including children, needs to be embedded in a multi-agency response. Services designed around the needs of victims and grounded in victim experience mean victims are more likely to stay engaged in the process.¹⁶¹ Agencies should:

- **Consider the needs of all local communities** using local demographic data to understand the make-up of the area and making appropriate provision for those who face additional barriers to seeking and engaging with the support available such as language, mobility, physical disability, learning difficulties or social attitudes. This could include, for example, building sustainable and trusting relationships across faith and cultural allies in the community to ensure the needs of marginalised victims are represented – see [The Safety Across Faith and Ethnic \(SAFE\) Communities project](#) from domestic abuse charity Standing Together as an example of good practice in this area. 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.** This process should be embedded in the multi-agency response and should consider how best to reach marginalised victims, including children and young

¹⁶¹ Standing Together, [In Search of Excellence](#), 2020.

people who may face additional barriers accessing services or making their voice heard. 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 recognising that different groups of professionals need different levels of training and awareness based on their level of contact with children and families.
- **Have embedded, or have readily available, input from specialist agencies and 'by-and-for' services** that have a proven track record of supporting victims of domestic abuse and who are aware and experienced in working with male and female victims with protected characteristics, including being from an ethnic minority, being disabled, LGBTQ+ or from a particular religion or faith.
- **Fully inform victims about the purpose and aims of the multi-agency safeguarding team where such a team is in place.** 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, that they will be blamed for the abuse and that they may lose their children. Agencies should be trained to understand coercive, controlling and violent behaviour and the impact it has on male and female 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 a 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.
- **Embed reflective practice throughout the service** centred on feedback from victims (both adults and children). Consult them regularly and use this to reassess situations where necessary, considering new information, informing continuous development and improvement of the collaborative work of the agencies.
- **Consider the role of victims throughout the process** from service development to commissioning, delivery and evaluation. There should be an

ongoing process of victim engagement throughout the lifecycle of any multi-agency arrangement.

- **Consider the burden on the victim throughout the process**, while it is sometimes appropriate for actions to be focused on the victim or non-abusive parent, this also places additional burdens on the victim when the person responsible for the situation is the perpetrator.

A clear strategic focus

402. For multi-agency working to be effective all agencies must work with a clear and common focus. For this to be achieved partnerships should:

- **Have an integrated governance and operational structure**, so that agencies are regularly meeting at strategic, operational and decision-making level. Accountability and leadership are clear and effective and are appropriately linked to local bodies such as the Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Partners 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 received from service users and specialist organisations. A key element of the monitoring process should involve scrutiny around whether the data collected reflect any disproportionality in terms of decisions or practice for particular groups e.g. ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+, disabled victims, or victims belonging to a particular faith. 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-agency partners are clear about the role, responsibility, authority and accountability of the multi-agency safeguarding team coordinator/manager; there is a clear, multi-agency safeguarding escalation process for any concerns.

- **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

403. In addition to having a common strategic focus, multi-agency partnerships should also ensure the right people and organisations are at meetings and that a whole family approach is taken in order to ensure meaningful work is achieved. Agencies should:

- **Engage the core agencies whose collaborative working will be needed** to improve outcomes for victims, including 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). This could also involve undergoing training in other safeguarding procedures to maintain a full understanding of how different harms and vulnerabilities intersect with one another.
- **Seek to undergo training in other safeguarding procedures** to maintain a full understanding of how different harms and vulnerabilities intersect with one another. Good practice might consist of teams undertaking training in one another's safeguarding procedures, to improve the response and support given to victims.
- **Demonstrate both in policy and practice that agencies consider the safeguarding need of all family members**, i.e. 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 someone might be facing. This should include professional expertise on supporting children experiencing or perpetrating

domestic abuse, including in a family setting or in their own intimate relationships.

- **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, be part of information sharing agreements, 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).
- **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

404. Effective and meaningful multi-agency work relies heavily on timely and appropriate information sharing, ensuring all agencies have the necessary information to participate materially in meetings and make informed decisions. Agencies should:

- **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), and data protection legislation (UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018). Training should be informed by service user feedback and learning from local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, national reviews published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- **Develop links and information sharing protocols that place the safety of the victims, including children, at the centre** with multi-agency safeguarding structures including MAPPAs (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), Operation Encompass, CSE (child sexual exploitation) operational groups, Prevent, the Community Safety Partnership and Troubled Families.
- **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 consented, 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. Where necessary

agencies should redact information or consider splitting meetings where it is thought that doing so could reduce the risk to the victims, including children.

- **Document these decisions** to demonstrate data protection compliance.
- **Record all relevant data**, information sharing is only as good as the quality of the information being shared, and the level of detail can be crucial to accurate risk assessment. For example, simply recording “there is a history of domestic abuse” does not give other professionals the level of detail needed to be able to risk assess.

Addressing the behaviour of the perpetrator

405. Addressing perpetrator behaviour is as important as safeguarding and supporting victims. Often, the most straightforward courses of action are aimed at the victims and non-abusive parents, which places an additional burden on them. Tackling perpetrator behaviour and placing the onus on them should be a key consideration for partnership work. Agencies should:

406. **Take the earliest opportunity available** to consider how the behaviour of the perpetrator can be disrupted or constrained, putting the emphasis for change on that individual. The response to the perpetrator must be appropriate for the unique context and needs of the victim. For instance, victims subject to “honour”-based abuse may be experiencing a spectrum of behaviours from multiple perpetrators.

407. Where HMPPS statutory interventions are not available, 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 Co-ordinating (MATAC), Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (DAPPs), safeguarding, housing, DWP and the full range of quality assured perpetrator programmes.

- **Ensure multi-agency safeguarding team staff receive mandatory training** on:
 - the full range of behaviours that can be abusive, coercive or controlling;
 - recognising the key risk and vulnerability factors and intersectional power relationships;
 - understanding the dynamics of domestic abuse and the basic typologies of different perpetrators, including dynamics of denial and minimisation and how to appropriately weigh up the credibility of different versions of events - staff should know that key perpetrator tactics often involve trying to manipulate frontline services making those professionals more likely to identify and be confident to competently address coercive, controlling, and manipulative behaviours;

- recognising the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people, including the impact of being exposed to domestic abuse, and being used by the perpetrator to inflict abuse on the target victim; and
- skills to form alliances with victims and early engagement with perpetrators aimed at behaviour change.

This will make 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 child sexual exploitation themselves or a woman may be perpetrating abuse within a forced marriage context but may also be experiencing domestic abuse herself.

Valuing and employing staff with the right values

408. The work performed by agencies is heavily reliant on the ability of staff to carry out the work, and agencies should ensure that staff are adequately supported. This can be done by:

- **Demonstrating 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;
- **Demonstrating professional curiosity** when engaging service users. Often, victims will make contact with a range of services before disclosing their abuse. These contacts represent opportunities for early intervention, so it is crucial that all staff are trained to recognise domestic abuse and ask the right questions;
- **Creating opportunities for staff to have sight of any positive outcomes,** such as case studies or local stories, and being able to link back to families that they had initial contact with, to understand the impact of their work;
- **Recognising 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
- **Having a domestic abuse policy in place,** complementing the policies held by each individual agency, which addresses the potential for staff to themselves be victims, survivors or perpetrators, or experiencing vicarious trauma, which they action and own.

409. There are a number of different existing initiatives and processes beyond MASHs (or equivalent) that agencies should be feeding into. Some of these initiatives and processes will be more or less appropriate depending on the level of risk and the stage

at which agencies are intervening, e.g. early intervention or a well-established case. These include but are not limited to:

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

410. A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a non-statutory process that brings together statutory and voluntary agencies to jointly support adult and child victims of domestic abuse 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.
411. 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 victims, including 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. Agencies should ensure that they are regularly communicating with each other between MARAC meetings – this is a crucial part of the MARAC process and ensures there is a coordinated response to domestic abuse. Communication around cases should not wait for MARAC meetings to take place.
412. The IDVA is a specialist practitioner who works in partnership with other agencies to implement the action plan, mobilising resources on behalf of the victims, including children to increase their safety. Whilst they are not a statutory requirement for MARACs they crucially 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 which shows the impact a well-run MARAC can have.¹⁶²
413. The victims, including 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, this should be considered in proportion to the risks present. 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 and/or in order to protect the vital interests of the third party. If the victim is at significant risk of harm then this would be in the public interest. The process must be compliant with the UK 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. You

¹⁶² SafeLives, [A Place of Greater Safety](#), 2012.

can read the [Practical Guidance on the application of the Caldicott Guardian Principles to Domestic Violence and MARACs](#). 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. You can read [advice on data sharing for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#).

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

414. [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 deal with sexual, violent or other dangerous offenders 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 (co-terminous 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). MAPPA is for convicted offenders and is particularly effective in domestic abuse cases when dealing with serial perpetrators or other offenders who pose a high risk of serious harm where there is need for a formal multi-agency plan to be kept under review. IDVAS and other victim representatives should be included within MAPPA partnerships.

Perpetrator Panels

415. All local areas should have a forum for discussion that is focused on the perpetrator; this may be as part of a focused discussion at a MARAC or elsewhere. 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 programme¹⁶³ 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.

416. The following principles will help agencies deliver effective multi-agency perpetrator forums:

¹⁶³ The Drive partnership works with high risk perpetrators to challenge behaviour and prevent abuse.

- a. **Identification** – Panel agencies have the tools to recognise and assess the level of risk and harm posed by perpetrators of domestic abuse, including serial offenders. Individuals convicted on an offence under schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, who are subject to Notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (commonly known as the Sex Offender Register), or are sentenced to more than 12 months' imprisonment are automatically eligible for MAPPA management. For other convicted perpetrators who pose a high risk of harm consideration should always be given to referring into MAPPA on a discretionary basis.
- b. **Multi-Agency Engagement** – Agencies involved in offender management, safeguarding, disruption and behaviour change attend the Panel and are involved in governance as appropriate
- c. **Information Sharing** – Agencies share relevant and proportionate information, in line with the protocol and UK GDPR.
- d. **Disruption** – The Panel develops a multi-agency coordinated action plan to disrupt abuse and reduce reoffending, using the full range of tools and actions available.
- e. **Holding Cases** – The Panel provides oversight and ensures that actions are completed and followed up, that cases are held by the appropriate agency (avoiding duplication with other agencies and multi-agency initiatives such as MAPPA, IOM and MARAC) and are reheard when required.
- f. **Safeguarding and Victim Voice** – The Panel recognises victim and survivor voices, considers the impact of planned actions on risk to victims, including children and works with the relevant agencies to safeguard.
- g. **Case Volumes** – The Panel will have clear local criteria which ensures the appropriate volume of cases is heard.
- h. **Equality** – The Panel recognises the needs of both victims and perpetrators with protected characteristics.
- i. **Operational Support** – The Panel will have enough support and resources to ensure its effective functioning.
- j. **Governance** – There is a clear and accountable governance structure and strategic leadership from the relevant agencies. There should be links with the MAPPA Strategic Management Board.

417. Below is a case study on multi-agency working.

Angelou Partnership Case Study

The Angelou Partnership is the service delivery part of a [Coordinated Community Response](#) (CCR) which offers a comprehensive, inclusive and holistic approach to address domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG), by bringing statutory, voluntary and community agencies and organisations alongside specialist 'by-and-for' services to prevent, identify and respond to the multiple and intersecting needs of survivors and children who are subject to this oppression, while holding perpetrators to account.

How the partnership works in practice:

K described experiencing emotional abuse from her ex-partner throughout their three-year relationship and states that towards the end of the relationship there was a constant threat of physical violence and K felt that it was only a matter of time before he hit her. During the relationship, the perpetrator was very controlling and jealous. He would sometimes turn up unexpectedly when K was out with friends and always demanded to know what she was wearing, where she was going and who she was with. K described the perpetrator as sexually violent. He was very rough during sex. She did not consent to this and sometimes would cry afterwards – he did not care. The perpetrator had access to weapons and had experience in cyber security, so K was concerned that he may be tracking her or have access to her phone. K was very afraid of her ex-partner.

After they separated, K's ex-partner repeatedly contacted and harassed K and her friends and family. Initially, he contacted her every three to four days by phone. He also sent K unwanted messages and gifts on special occasions, despite K stating that she wished to have no further contact.

As a result of the abuse, K was diagnosed as having post-traumatic stress disorder. She had been accessing private counselling but could not afford to keep doing this.

K was referred to the Angelou Partnership¹⁶⁴'s lead, Advance, who immediately offered K support from an Advance IDVA. The IDVA began supporting K and helped her create a safety plan. The plan included a referral to Rape Crisis and the Angelou Partnership's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service, provided by Solace Women's Aid, to support K with her experience of sexual violence and abuse. The IDVA also seamlessly referred K to a Woman's Trust, another Angelou Partner, for specialist domestic abuse counselling that was free for K to access.

The Advance IDVA explained the different options available to K and supported K in the following ways (as chosen by K) in conjunction with external partners: *civil court* (e.g., obtaining an injunction with the help of a specialised law firm); *obtaining safer housing* via the local authority's Sanctuary Scheme to target harden her property including improved windows locks and doors; *working closely with the police to report the abuse*; *improving K's digital and technology safety*; and putting a *safety plan* in place with regards to the harassment and stalking.

The IDVA also provided K with emotional support and more in-depth support to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse.

¹⁶⁴ [Information on Advance is provided on the Angelou Partnership's website.](#)

After receiving specialist support for her intersecting experience of violence and abuse from three organisations within the Angelou partnership, K informed Advance that she felt less alone, her safety had increased, and she felt confident to know where she could access further support if she needed it. K said she felt very supported by the Angelou partnership, especially by the check in calls, and that the holistic support had been ‘fantastic’.

[Watch this video to learn more about the Angelou Partnership.](#)

Domestic Homicide Reviews

418. A Domestic Homicide Review (a “DHR”) under section 9(3) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (the “2004 Act”) is a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were in an intimate personal relationship, or by a member of the same household. Where a victim took their own life (suicide) and the circumstances give rise to concern, such as it emerging that there was coercive controlling behaviour in the relationship, a DHR should also be carried out. Such reviews are carried out by Community Safety Partnerships (made up of the bodies listed in s.9(4) of the 2004 Act) in local areas with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death, particularly regarding the way in which professionals and organisations work together to safeguard victims.

419. 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 ‘responsible authorities’ listed in s.5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which have the functions set out in s.6 of that Act in relation to a local government area (these are 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. A DHR must include representatives of one or more of the bodies and persons listed at section 9(4) of the DVCVA 2004 Act, depending on their relevance to a particular domestic homicide, who will also form part of the CSP. You can read [guidance on conducting DHRs](#).

Operation Encompass

420. [Operation Encompass](#) is a scheme 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 experienced a domestic abuse incident the previous day or evening. Appropriate and trained 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 the incident has been recorded as a crime. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. The [statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) sets out what staff in schools and colleges should do to safeguard children and young people and makes it clear that 'where there are safeguarding concerns about a child or young person, the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

421. All police forces In England and Wales now use Operation Encompass. We encourage all schools to sign up to the scheme.

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Chapter 6 – Commissioning Response to Domestic Abuse

422. 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, whilst exercising their functions, to have due regard to the need 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 'by-and-for' services, depending on their needs.
423. The National Statement of Expectations as explained below sets out what local areas are expected to put in place in their response to VAWG issues.
424. Part 4 of the 2021 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 2021 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, and mapping activities, ensuring representation of marginalised groups and those who are underrepresented in local services. A Board will be made up of members representing organisations who have a stake in this vital work.
425. 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 and should work with existing boards at local level, such as Community Safety Partnerships and adult safeguarding to ensure join up.
426. 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.
427. 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

428. The [Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations](#)¹⁶⁵

(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. The NSE will be refreshed later this year following the publication of the VAWG and Domestic Abuse strategies.

429. Local areas should set out strategies and services that:¹⁶⁶

- 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 such as ethnic minorities, LGBT, disabled, young (16-18) and older victims, male victims, those with insecure immigration status, offenders, and children exposed to DA;
- 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.

430. 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 all those 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, making best use of local data from specialist services and considering the lived experience of survivors;
- Identifying opportunities for joint commissioning – police and crime commissioners, public health and local authorities working together can lead to more joined-up services. Establishing a VAWG joint commissioning group is good practice; and

¹⁶⁵ In Wales, refer to the [Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV services in Wales](#).

¹⁶⁶ In Wales, refer to the [Guidance for Local Strategies](#).

- 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.

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

Perpetrator Programmes

432. It is also important that local areas commission safe, effective perpetrator programmes which are accompanied by support for any associated victims. There are several different accreditation schemes and standards operating in perpetrator work.

433. 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 Service Standards](#), [ManKind Initiative/Hestia Service Standards](#), [Commissioning for inclusion: Delivering services for LGBT survivors of domestic abuse](#) and [DAHA Accreditation](#).

434. The third sector expert organisation Respect has developed quality standards for services working with perpetrators. The [Respect Standard](#)¹⁶⁷ 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.

435. HMPPS have their own accreditation programmes for those convicted and sentenced by the courts. The Correctional Advice and Accreditation Panel (CSAAP), an independent committee of international experts, provides oversight of all accredited programmes and ensures that programmes:

- are based on the latest international evidence and thinking around what works to reduce reoffending;
- 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;

¹⁶⁷ In Wales, refer to the [Perpetrator Service Standards](#).

- are delivered as intended; and
- are subject to monitoring and review.

Behaviour Change interventions

436. Programmes such as that ran by Ahisma and Talk, Listen, Change aim to challenge and support perpetrators of abuse to make long term changes to their violent and abusive behaviour. Behaviour change interventions also consider additional needs such as alcohol and substance misuse and mental health difficulties.

437. Early intervention programmes such as the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) aim to help people who have been abusive towards their partners or ex-partners to change their behaviour and develop respectful, non-abusive relationships. In most cases, Cafcass will assess a person's suitability for the programme and its availability locally following a court order. Cafcass informs the court on the individual's risk after receiving feedback on progress and learning from the DAPP provider delivering the session. Other programmes aim to prevent abuse before it starts.¹⁶⁸

438. 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 and reduce reoffending. Findings of the two-year evaluation show reductions in reoffending across domestic abuse.

¹⁶⁸ For example, [Family Ties](#) aims to respond to parental conflict and support parents who want to work on their communication so that they reduce the impact of arguments on their children. The [Reducing Parental Conflict](#) (RPC) programme, which is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), deals with conflict between parents, whether together or separated, that falls below the threshold of domestic abuse.

Annex A – Support Available for Victims

- **Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Abuse helpline** – 0808 2000 247
- **Age UK** – an organisation that supports older people and victims of elder abuse.
- **Ask for ANI** – a codeword scheme for victims to access support from the safety of their local pharmacy.
- **Broken Rites** – a group offering mutual support and information to separated and divorced spouses and partners of clergy, ministers, and Church Army Officers.
- **Clinks** – an organisation that supports the voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system and their families. Clinks have a directory of services, although it is not exhaustive, and are experienced in supporting women who have suffered domestic abuse.
- **Dogs Trust Freedom Project** – a specialist dog fostering service for victims fleeing domestic abuse.
- **Hestia Respond to Abuse Advice Line** – a specialist advice line supporting employers to help staff experiencing domestic abuse on 0203 879 3695 or via email Adviceline.EB@hestia.org 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
- **Hourglass** – a specialist organisation aiming to end the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK. Their helpline can be accessed by phone on 0808 808 8141, text on 07860 052906 or email helpline@wearehourglass.org.
- **Galop** – a specialist organisation and LGBT anti-violence charity offering support to LGBT victims.
- **Imkaan** - a women’s organisation providing dedicated support for black and minority ethnic women.
- **Jewish Women’s Aid** – a specialist organisation supporting Jewish women and children affected by domestic abuse. Their helpline is 0808 801 0500 and is open Mondays-Thursdays from 9.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. (excluding Jewish holidays and bank holidays).
- **Karma Nirvana HBA helpline** – a specialist organisation supporting victims of “honour”-based abuse and forced marriage. Their helpline is 0800 599 9247 and is open 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

- **ManKind Initiative** – a specialist organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- **Men’s Advice Line** – 0808 801 0327 open Monday to Friday 9am- 8pm or email info@mensadviceline.org.uk
- **Muslim Women’s Network** - a specialist organisation supporting Muslim women and girls.
- **National LGBT Domestic Abuse helpline** – 0800 999 5428 Monday to Friday 10am-5pm.
- **National Stalking helpline** – 0808 802 0300 9.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday.
- **NSPCC** – The UK’s leading children’s charity working to prevent abuse, rebuild children’s lives and support families.
- **NSPCC FGM helpline** – 0800 028 3550 or email fgm.help@nspcc.org.uk.
- **Paladin** – an organisation that provides support for victims of stalking.
- **Refuge** – an organisation that provides support for all victims of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.
- **Respect** – an organisation that works with male victims of domestic abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators.
- **Restored** – a specialist organisation working to tackle domestic abuse by partnering with churches and Christian organisations
- **Revenge Porn helpline** – open between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. 0345 600 0459 or help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk
- **Sign Health Domestic Abuse Service** – a specialist domestic abuse service to support the health and wellbeing of Deaf people.
- **Solace Women’s Aid** – an organisation supporting all victims of violence against women and girls.
- **Southall Black Sisters** – an organisation providing support for ethnic minority victims and migrant women.
- **Stay Safe East** – a specialist organisation providing support for disabled and Deaf victims of domestic abuse.
- **Surviving Economic Abuse** – a specialist organisation dedicated to supporting victims of economic abuse.
- **UK Forced Marriage Unit** – 020 7008 0151

- **Victim Support** – a specialist service helping anyone affected by any types of crime, not only those who experience it directly, but also their friends, family and any other people involved.
- **Women’s Aid** – an organisation supporting women affected by domestic abuse.

Wales specific organisations:

- **Live Fear Free helpline** – 0808 801 0800 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Dyn Wales helpline** – an organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse. 0808 801 0321 or email support@dynwales.org (support for male victims)
- **Welsh Women’s Aid** – an organisation supporting Welsh women affected by domestic abuse.
- **BAWSO** – a specialist organisation dedicated to supporting ethnic minority communities.

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Annex B – Glossary of Acronyms

- **ACE** – Adverse Childhood Experience
- **APVA** – Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse
- **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
- **DVPNs** – Domestic Violence Protection Notices
- **DVPOs** – 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
- **INCADVA** - Inter-Collegiate and Agency Domestic Violence Abuse

- **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
- **NRPF** – No Recourse to Public Funds
- **NSE** – National Statement of Expectations
- **NWTA** – No Woman Turned Away
- **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

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 Abuse Toolkit for Employers

<https://www.bitc.org.uk/toolkit/domestic-abuse-toolkit/>

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

Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland

[Modern slavery: statutory guidance for England and Wales \(under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015\) and non-statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612121/Modern_slavery_statutory_guidance_for_England_and_Wales_(under_s49_of_the_Modern_Slavery_Act_2015)_and_non-statutory_guidance_for_Scotland_and_Northern_Ireland_(publishing.service.gov.uk))

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>

Pathfinder Toolkit <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/blog-3/pathfinder-toolkit>

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](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 <https://www.respect.uk.net/pages/64-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>

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

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

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

<https://1q7dqy2unor827bqjls0c4rn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Shared-Standards-Whole-Document-Final-30.11.2016.pdf>

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>