

Domestic Abuse Pathway

Domestic abuse is a single incident or a course of conduct involving physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; psychological, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 or over who are personally connected¹.

Controlling behaviour is: "a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant 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 behaviour."

Coercive behaviour is: "is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten a person."²

Assess

Assessment & proposal in Court

- Complete a SARA on all cases of Intimate Partner Abuse irrespective of gender or sexuality.
- Request police domestic abuse information wherever there is any evidence of domestic abuse, and prior to **any** proposals for Electronically Monitored Curfews ([DA & CSG Enquiry Guidance](#))
- Use the EPF³ ensure an accredited programme such as Building Choices is recommended for all perpetrators assessed as suitable and eligible
- Make use of restrictive requirements such as:
 - prohibited activity
 - residence
 - exclusion

Assessment is a continuous process

- Assess risk of serious harm with both OASys and SARA; identify risk factors to be addressed
- Identify those at risk & nature of that risk, include victim perspective throughout assessment.
- Refer to [Assessing DA OASys Guidance](#) and [Aide Memoire to Assessing and Managing DA](#)
- Refer to the [Controlling and Coercive Behaviour Desk Aid](#) to assess these behaviours
- Monitor risk factors, regularly seek information from others including police enquiries, in prison use the PPRC⁴ and HPPM⁵ from the [Prison Public Protection Policy Framework](#).
- Act on any new information, share and gather information from partnership agencies
- Flag the perpetrator on systems so colleagues are immediately aware of the risks

Plan

Build your Risk Management and Sentence Plans & implement them

- Create SMARTA objectives that protect victims and safeguard children
- Refer to the [DA Four Pillars of Risk Management Quick Guide](#) when formulating RMP
- Target interventions to address all needs without neglecting safeguarding concerns
- Use Accredited Programmes wherever the perpetrator is suitable
- Where unsuitable for Accredited Programmes, discuss the use of Structured Interventions and using [Safer Relationships Toolkit](#) with your local interventions team.
- Build contingency plans based on your assessment of individual risk factors
- Use the disclose developing relationships licence condition in **all** domestic abuse cases
- Consider victim protective conditions
- Liaise with Victim Liaison Officers or Domestic Abuse Safety Officers in all relevant cases
- Integrate social care child and adult safeguarding plans with your own, where appropriate and safe to do so (refer to the [Child Safeguarding Policy Framework](#))

Implement

- Ensure your risk management and sentence plan is **fully implemented**, completing necessary referrals and undertaking work in a timely fashion.
- Follow the [Home Visit Policy Framework](#) expectations; use them to inform assessments

Managing the disclose relationship licence condition

- Discuss condition as early as possible, explain expectations and implications
- This condition requires FULL disclosure of partner's details
- If the perpetrator withholds details, those details must be investigated and enforcement should be considered: discuss with your line manager and record your decision making

Child Safeguarding

- Always refer children at risk from domestic abuse to children's services
- Engage with any child protection or child in need plan
- Integrate that plan into your own risk management and sentence plans
- Be alert to the increased priority that should be applied to cases where domestic abuse, mental health problems and drugs are present in combination

Adult Safeguarding

- Be mindful of the risks to victims with care/support needs
- Consider referring victims to adult social care, community safety partnerships and domestic abuse or stalking support agencies
- Escalate to managers where needs are not being met

Key Themes in Managing Domestic Abuse Cases

Identification of domestic abuse **is ongoing throughout** all stages of case management and in all cases.

Be aware of the signs of **abuse, stalking, control and coercion**

Be professionally curious, seeking information from partners, checking **patterns**, verifying what you are told and share what you learn

Record **information, decisions, reasons** and **rationale**. Ensure that the record shows you have implemented your plans.

Follow-up on all referrals: just one email, or an enquiry, is **not sufficient**

Work with partner agencies to consider **disclosure** when the need to inform and protect potential victim(s) outweighs the perpetrator's right to privacy

¹ For full statutory definition see [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

² [Controlling or coercive behaviour - statutory guidance.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³ EPF is the Effective Proposal Framework

⁴ PPRC is the Persons Posing a Risk to Children Process in the Public Protection Manual

⁵ HPPM is the Harassment Public Protection Measures in the Public Protection Manual

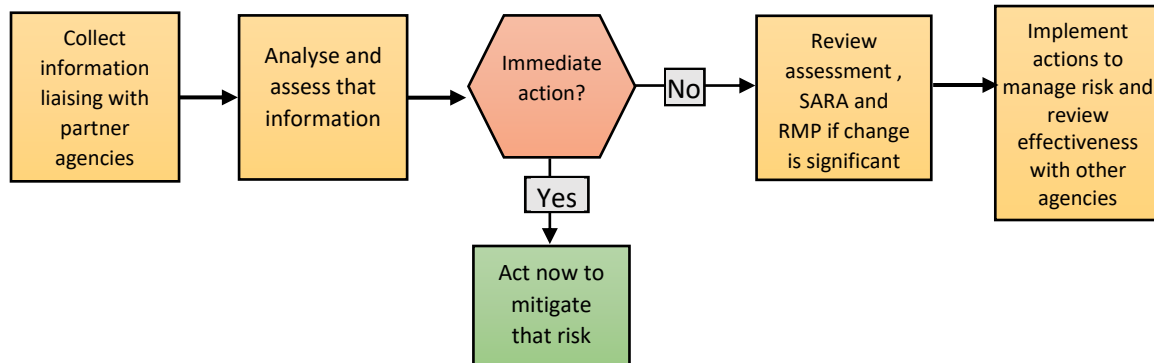
Review

A Non-Exhaustive List of Significant Events for Domestic Abuse

- Police call-outs or incident of abuse
- Victim/partner seeking to end relationship
- Evidence of stalking
- Pregnancy
- New relationship
- Any change (or perceived change) to child contact arrangements
- Breach of any restrictive order
- Threats or attempts at suicide
- Transition points such as release, move on from an Approved Premises or end of statutory contact
- Any change in potential risk factors

Where Risk Increases:

- Put measures in place to manage or reduce that risk
- Consider referral/re-referral to MAPPA/MARAC
- Review suitability of approved address
- Where not already MAPPA eligible, consider Cat 3 referral for complex/serial DA or stalking
- Activate your contingency plans
- Notify partner agencies
- Discuss with line manager
- Remember, withdrawal of an allegation may be driven by fear or coercion



Key Themes in Managing Domestic Abuse Cases

Serial domestic abuse and stalking are appropriate criteria for referral into category 3 MAPPA

You should consider referring all serial abusers to level 2 or 3 management; consider MAPPA referrals as a MARAC action

MARAC is a process of risk assessment, primarily focussed on safeguarding victims. Complete all your actions, and refer in when concerns are raised working with victims or perpetrators (see [MARAC Quick Guide](#)).

Where MARAC and MAPPA cross over, ensure partners are aware of this and include all relevant agencies involved with victim and perpetrator in ongoing multi-agency working under MAPPA

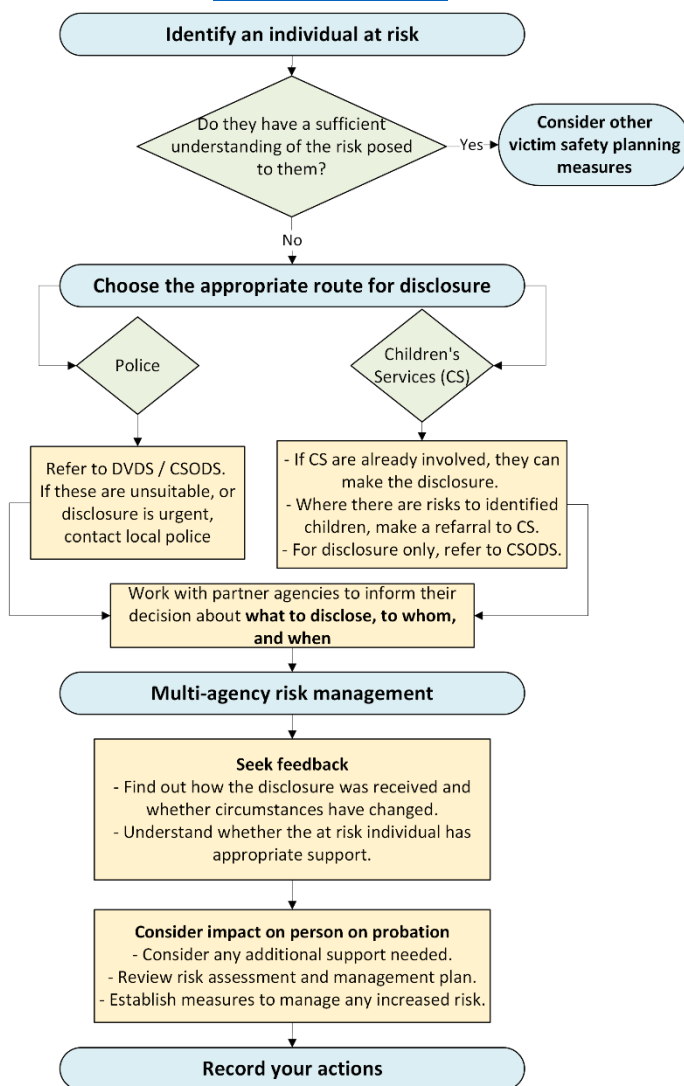
Your risk assessment should be **constantly reviewed** for validity

Don't try to manage risk alone. Share concerns with partnership agencies and discuss with your line manager

Be aware of your own biases and what might make it difficult for you to act

Consider disclosure in every case

Disclosure allows members of the public to make an informed decision about safeguarding themselves (or their children) from possible harm. Refer to [Disclosure Desk Aid](#).



Further Resources

[Assessing DA within OASys Guidance](#)

[Stalking Practitioner Guidance](#)

[Aide Memoire to Assessing and Managing DA](#)

[DA Four Pillars of Risk Management Desk Aid](#)

[DA & CSG Enquiry Staff Guidance](#)

[Controlling and Coercive Behaviour Desk Aid](#)