

Domestic abuse toolkit for professionals working with children and young people



The South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse is co-ordinated and funded by South Gloucestershire Council to improve the lives of all South Gloucestershire residents.

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Introduction

This toolkit has been produced to assist professionals to support the children and young people they work with who may be affected by domestic abuse; helping them to have healthy relationships and to prevent them from living in silence if they are experiencing abuse in their lives.

Definition of domestic abuse

The South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse considers that:

"Domestic violence/abuse is the use, attempt, or threat of violence-whether physical, emotional, sexual, mental or economic, within an intimate or family relationship. Domestic violence/abuse forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour."

Domestic violence/abuse occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. Research shows however, that the majority of this behaviour consists mainly of violence by men against women and it is not necessary for partners to have cohabited.

Why is awareness of domestic abuse so important?

Organisations that work with children and young people are in a privileged position to identify those who may be experiencing domestic violence/abuse, both at home and within their own relationships. They are key to raising the issue of domestic abuse in a safe and structured environment. In particular they should:

- Be able to identify the signs of abuse
- Support children and young people to seek help and safety
- Model and promote healthy, non-violent relationships
- Challenge the myths that perpetuate domestic abuse including the variety of behaviours involved
- Safeguard children and young people from the harm caused by domestic violence/abuse (Children Act 2004).

The effects on children and young people

Children and young people who live with domestic abuse can be at risk of behavioural problems, emotional and physical trauma, which could have long lasting effects.

What you may observe if a child or young person is living with domestic abuse

Pre-School Children (0-4)

- Have an anxious attachment with primary care giver
- Show emotional distress
- Be in a constant state of anxiety
- Might not go to adults for help
- Seem distracted and struggle to concentrate
- Display emotional and angry behaviour
- Have poor nursery attendance
- Have problems socialising with other children
- Cry excessively
- Have speech delay
- Be regressive in their behaviours
- Be soiling
- Blaming themselves for the home situation
- Be withdrawn
- Be over tired and not sleeping

School aged children (5-16)

- Be engaging in risk-taking behaviours
- Be withdrawn
- Have increased impulsive & aggressive behaviours
- Be exhausted and having sleep difficulties
- Be experiencing sadness, depression and mood swings
- Have a decline in school performance
- Have high non-attendance
- Not be doing their homework
- Have problems with concentration & attention
- Be anxious to leave a parent at home
- Being bullied or bullying
- Have low self esteem and therefore the risk associated with this (self harm, substance misuse etc.)
- Have no hopes or ambitions
- Be isolated; not many friends
- Be throwing themselves into school work as an escape from home life
- Not be allowed to attend clubs or local groups
- Be unable to have school friends visit them at home

- Have limited money for food/schools items

Many young people may also display behaviours that cause concern from abuse occurring within their own intimate relationships.

The warning signs of domestic abuse are varied depending on the child or young person and the situation. Not all children and young people will display challenging behaviour and it is important for them not to be labelled if they do.

Some of the behaviours listed may be signs of other issues but it is important to always be aware of the possibility of domestic abuse. The behaviours listed are not an exhaustive list and you may therefore observe other behaviours which cause concern.

Professionals working with children and young people are crucial in identifying those experiencing domestic abuse. They are the people who have regular contact and established relationships with children and young people and can therefore identify even subtle personality or behavioural changes.

What you can do if you are worried about a child or young person

If you have identified behaviours which may indicate that a child or young person is experiencing domestic abuse at home in their relationship you should discuss your concerns with an appropriate senior manager or your agency's safeguarding lead to agree an appropriate response.

If a child or young person has disclosed domestic abuse to you, try not to appear shocked, listen to what they tell you and explain that you will have to share information to keep them safe but you will tell them what is going to happen and ensure they understand everything fully.

If you have immediate safeguarding concerns or are worried someone is likely to be harmed, call the police on 999 and/or contact First Point: 01454 866000.

Schools/agencies/practitioners should use their professional judgement in discussing issues of domestic abuse with children and young people. These discussions should be conducted in an appropriate manner and in line with school/agency protocols on confidentiality.

You should avoid asking open and non-directive questions to ensure you do not interfere with any formal investigations. Instead try to assess the immediate risks and safeguarding concerns, e.g. is it safe for them to go home?

Document any key information shared with you (including dates and times) and what action you took – including who you shared the information with, what referrals you made.

Be clear when talking to a child or young person that they know they are being believed, that they understand that the abuse isn't their fault and that they are aware of who they can go to for support.

Professionals are advised if they have further concerns about a child or young person, which are not immediate safeguarding concerns, they should contact the relevant social care team or initiate a Single Assessment for Early Help (SAFeh) in order to appropriately identify and respond to their needs.

Supporting a child or young person

Various types of support can be offered to children and young people, much of which can be very straight forward, simple to put in place and can be invaluable to a child or young person experiencing domestic abuse

There may be practical support options that can be put in place, such as:

- contacting outside agencies to offer support
- consider peer support
- look into ways to support with the cost of uniforms etc.

- finding a safe place for them to eat lunch, complete homework
- ensure they do not feel isolated or left out
- ensure that any support offered is discreet and does not further isolate them
- ask the child or young person what they feel will help them in terms of support, or any changes to their school day that may help

Other considerations

When considering domestic abuse around children and young people it may also be important to consider issues such as:

Forced Marriage

Forced Marriage “A marriage without the consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor.”

Duress is: “[when] the mind of the applicant has been overborne, howsoever that was caused.”

Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

An arranged marriage is very different from a forced marriage. An arranged marriage is entered into freely by both people, although their families take a leading role in the choice of partner.

If you are concerned that a child or young person may be forced to marry, you should discuss this with your safeguarding lead. You can also contact the Forced Marriage Unit (national Home Office number 020 7008 0151) for advice and support. Please also ensure you contact the police (101) and First Point: 01454 866000.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal and a form of child abuse; if you suspect a child may be at risk of this practice or has already undergone FGM you must take action immediately and discuss with your safeguarding lead. You should also contact FirstPoint: 01454 866000 or the police on 101.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a criminal act that has a devastating impact upon children and young people and has an increasing profile following significant investigations that have led to prosecutions.

Whilst CSE can take a number of forms, three areas have been identified by Barnardo's:

- Inappropriate relationships involving a lone perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person, whether physical (including domestic abuse), emotional or economic. There is likely to be a significant age gap between the perpetrator and victim. The young person may believe that they are in a loving, equal relationship.
- The "boyfriend" model of exploitation and peer exploitation - the perpetrator befriends and

grooms a young person into a "relationship" and subsequently coerces them to have sex with friends or associates. This includes gang exploitation and peer on peer exploitation.

- Elements of organised/net worked sexual exploitation or trafficking – young people (often connected) are passed through networks possibly over geographical distances between towns and cities, where they may be forced/coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties', and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of young people by perpetrators.

Barnardos: Puppet on a String 2011

[View our CSE Strategy](#)

Making your agency Domestic Abuse Aware

Developing a 'Whole Agency/Whole School' approach to Domestic Abuse is key to ensuring that professionals working with children and young people, and the agency as a whole can:

- recognise the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse
- implement relevant policies to ensure that clear guidance is provided to professionals working with children and young people in how to respond to domestic abuse
- implement relevant policies to address the effects of domestic abuse on children and young people, and also employees
- ensure training is provided to all employees to heighten awareness and knowledge
- identify a lead for domestic abuse within your agency that can develop more specialised knowledge and become a single point of contact for concerns

Facilitating disclosures of domestic abuse

Where you have concerns about domestic abuse either from the young person or the parent, you may wish to ask some questions to enable the person to feel able to disclose domestic abuse to you. These questions may include:

Questions to ask the young person:

- How are things with your boy/girl friend?
- How safe do you feel around your boy/girl friend?
- How is your boy/girlfriend treating you?
- Are you getting the support you need at the moment from your boy/girlfriend/family/friends?
- Is there anything worrying you at the moment?
- You don't seem yourself lately, is anything on your mind that you'd like to talk about?

If a young person is not accepting that they are experiencing domestic abuse it is often helpful to reflect on how they would feel/respond if the same things were happening to a friend.

Questions to ask parents you believe maybe experiencing domestic abuse:

- Is everything alright at home?
- Do you feel safe (at home)?
- Do you ever feel threatened at home?
- How are arguments resolved?
- Do you feel you need some extra support?
- Are you being looked after properly at home?
- Does your family member etc. ever threaten you?
- Does your family member etc. put you down?
- Do you feel you are in an abusive relationship?
- Does your partner get very jealous/angry?

Teenage relationship abuse

Domestic abuse is very prevalent in teenage intimate relationships and sexist attitudes still exist with 1 in 2 boys and 1 in 3 girls thinking it is okay to sometimes hit a woman or force her to have sex.[\[1\]](#) Please remember that teen-to-teen abuse is a child protection issue.

Some recent statistics highlighted that:

- 1 in 4 girls experience some form of physical partner violence
- 33% of girls and 16% of boys reported some form of sexual abuse.
- 25% of girls (the same proportion as adult women) and 18% of boys reported some form of physical relationship abuse
- 75% of girls and 50% of boys reported some form of emotional relationship abuse[\[2\]](#)

In a survey, three-quarters of girls, who had a partner at least two years older than themselves, said they had experienced some form of physical violence[\[3\]](#)

There are proven links between domestic abuse and teenage pregnancy with young women who are being or have been abused being 4 to 6 times more likely than their non-abused peers to become pregnant during their teenage years[\[4\]](#)

Some of the signs and symptoms may be similar to those displayed by adults within abusive relationships such as:

- Falling out with friends or family
- Unexplained injuries
- Low self esteem
- Depression, mood swings, self-harm
- On edge, jumpy
- Always being with their boyfriend/girlfriend
- Receiving constant text messages/emails/calls
- Afraid of making partner angry
- Frequent pregnancies
- Being unreliable
- Worrying about spending money
- Using alcohol and drugs to cope
- A change in personality
- Being asked to do things sexually they are not comfortable with
- Fearful of the consequences of sharing their experiences
- Be protective of the abusive partner
- Risk taking behaviours
- Minimisation or normalisation of their experiences

Young people may experience additional barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, such as:

- Peer pressure to have a boy/girlfriend
- They will lose their friends

- Not knowing who to speak to or where to get help.
- Not knowing the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship to look out for.
- Thinking that what they are experiencing is normal or okay.
- The perpetrator being in their environment, for example, at school or college.
- Fear of repercussion or revenge, especially online. This could include passing on indecent images they have of their boy/girlfriend.
- They may have limited funds and so maybe unable to attend support appointments easily or leave the relationship (if they were living with their boy/girlfriend) if they chose to.

How to support young people:

- Work in a multi-agency way to support the young person by liaising with support services and social care for example.
- Draw on a variety of different techniques that improve engagement.
- Be very clear about what you are doing/when, for example if needing to talk to Social Care or other agencies
- Ensure the young person knows trusted adults they can confide in and a safe person at school
- Be prepared to spend time exploring what abuse is. The young people you work with may not identify their own experiences as abuse.
- Validate the seriousness of young people's relationships.
- Offer face-to-face and new technologies communication, rather than telephone contact alone.
- Be flexible on appointment length: be led by the Young Person's wishes and consider sending reminders for meetings
- Assure children that they will not be judged for accessing specialist services
- Encourage an open relationship between the young person you have concerns about and the adult they relate best to
- Don't be afraid to ask them how they're doing – they might just be waiting for you to do this
- Use language they relate to – so 'relationship abuse' for young people rather than 'domestic abuse'
- Encourage and support participation in supervised extra-curricular activities
- Model and promote healthy, non-violent relationships
- Create spaces to openly talk about healthy/unhealthy relationships and incorporate into sessions / curriculum

Don't:

- Assume that the experience of abuse is less harmful if it is perpetrated or experienced by a young person.
- Try and be 'cool': young people need genuine, professional support rather than a friend.

What you can do if you are worried about a child or young person

- Conduct a Safety Plan with the young person:

Wherever possible, safety planning should address or mitigate the risks identified.

Guidance can be found here:

http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/YP_safetyplan.pdf

Consider the complexities associated with teen relationship abuse. This client group may also be experiencing gang involvement, be at risk of sexual exploitation, be experiencing abuse perpetrated through new technologies and be at risk of 'honour'-based abuse and forced marriage.

- Refer the case to First Point by calling 01454 866000 and discuss your concerns with a social care professional
- Discuss specialist support options with the child or young person and suggest referral to Survive (0117 961 2999)
- Conduct a risk assessment:

SafeLives have developed a Young Person's risk identification checklist that can be used to assess the level of risk the Young Person may be at. This tool is designed to be used with children and Young people aged 13-18, and is a useful tool in gathering in depth information about their experiences.

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/YP%20RIC%20guidance%20FINAL.pdf>

Where the Child/Young Person is aged 13-15, the risk identification checklist (RIC) can be used to support a referral to First Point: 01454 866000.

Where the Young Person is aged 16+ the RIC can be used as above, but also to assess whether the Young Person meets thresholds to be referred in to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The MARAC is a multi-agency process that consider high-risk cases of domestic abuse, and looks to share information and implement risk management plans.

[For more information in MARAC thresholds and referral process, please visit our website.](#)

In addition, you can refer the Young Person to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service at Survive, who can provide specialist support to high risk victims of domestic abuse: 0117 961 2999.

Young people are protected by child protection legislation until their 18th birthday. Professionals need to follow their agency's safeguarding children procedures (which should comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's child protection procedures). A best practice response for a young client is likely to reflect an integrated response which combines child safeguarding and high risk domestic abuse expertise, tailored to each young person's needs. It is important to involve the client in the process as much as possible.

Training

Domestic abuse

Awareness of domestic violence e-module

Identifying and responding to families experiencing domestic abuse (1 day)

MARAC and DASH (1/2 day)

Enquiries and booking to: HRworkforcedevelopment@southglos.gov.uk

Domestic abuse awareness training for professionals

Training provided by Survive on either a whole day or half day basis, and can be tailored for specific needs upon request.

Enquiries and booking to: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999

Connect with Respect - preventative assemblies, workshops and 1.1 for children and young people

Provided by Survive to schools and can be tailored for specific needs upon request.

Enquiries and booking to: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999

Tailored domestic abuse awareness sessions

Provided by Survive and the Police

Enquiries and booking to: Survive: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk
Tel: 01454 868751

Child sexual exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation Training (1 day)

Enquiries and booking to: HRworkforcedevelopment@southglos.gov.uk

FGM

Home Office Resource Pack and E-Learning:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>

Intro to FGM, Forced Marriage, Spirit Possession and 'So-called Honour' Based Violence E-Learning

Enquiries and booking to: HRworkforcedevelopment@southglos.gov.uk

Forced Marriage

Home Office Information and Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>

Intro to FGM, Forced Marriage, Spirit Possession and 'So-called Honour' Based Violence E-Learning

Enquiries and booking to: HRworkforcedevelopment@southglos.gov.uk

[1] EVAW: <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/preventing-abuse>

[2] University of Bristol and NSPCC, 2009

[3] Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships 2009
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_wda68092.htm

[4] Saewyc, E., Magee, L. and Pettingell, S. (2004) Teenage Pregnancy and Associated Risk Behaviours among Sexually Abused Adolescents, Perspectives in Sexual and Reproductive Health 36(3):98-105

National advice and support

Women's Aid

The key national charity working to women and children.

Freephone 24 hour Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Email: info@womensaid.org.uk

The Hide Out

Women's Aid linked website that provides children and young people with information to understand domestic abuse and how they can take positive action if they are experiencing it.

Website: www.thehideout.org.uk

ManKind

The leading charity in the UK for male victims of domestic abuse.

National Helpline: 01823 334244

Website: www.mankind.org.uk

Forced Marriage Unit

Provides advice and support relating to possible forced marriage.

Tel: 020 7008 0151

Email: fmufco.gov.uk

Website: www.fco.gov.uk

Forced marriage helpline: 0800 5999 247

This is Abuse

Website for young people experiencing abuse within their own relationships which offers information and advice.

Website: <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>

Men's advice line

Advice and support for men in abusive relationships.

Freephone: 0808 801 0327

Email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Broken Rainbow

The leading charity for LGBT People experiencing domestic abuse.

Email: help@broken-rainbow.org.uk

Helpline: 0300 999 5428

Website: www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

Barnardo's

National charity that aims to transform the lives of vulnerable children, including those affected by domestic abuse.

Tel: 0208 550 8822

Website: www.barnardos.org.uk

Respect

National charity providing information for domestic abuse perpetrators, partners and practitioners.

Tel: 020 7549 0578

Email: info@respect.uk.net

Website: www.respect.uk.net

Teaching resources

Expect respect educational toolkit

A toolkit which provides lesson plans for each year group within schools from reception class to year 13 and is based on themes that have been found to be effective in tackling domestic abuse. The toolkit is mainly aimed at teachers, but can be used by other professionals working with children and young people. The toolkit is available on the Women's Aid website:

www.womensaid.org.uk

Spiralling DVD and toolkit

Educational toolkit and film to help prevent domestic abuse in the next generation, with activities for children and young people. The toolkit is available from the Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum website: www.bdaf.org.uk

Teacher's guide to violence and abuse in teenage relationships

Resource available for teachers to raise awareness and understanding of teenage relationship abuse. This resource may also be useful for other practitioners working with children and young people. Resource is available from the Home Office Website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Back on Track DVD

DVD produced by young people working with Survive's Back On Track programme for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. This can be used to support any specific session plans around domestic abuse. You can view the DVD on the Survive website: <http://survivedv.org.uk> Take out For a copy of the DVD, please contact: South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team: Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 868751

Bespoke lesson plans

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team and Survive can be contacted to assist in developing specific lesson plans or educational resources to suit the needs of your school or organisation. For further enquiries please contact: South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team: Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 868751

Survive: Email: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999 Website: www.survivedv.org.uk

The police can also be contacted to support school assemblies and work with your organisation to develop lesson plans

Local domestic abuse advice and support

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team

This team coordinates the South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse and the local MARAC and can therefore be contacted for any advice or support and to discuss any specific agency needs you may have.

Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 868751

Next Link

Bristol based charity that works with women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Their services often link to South Gloucestershire and they can be contacted for advice and support.

Email: enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk Tel: 0117 925 0680

Victim Support

Providing support and information to individuals and families and signposting on to their agencies.

Tel: 0845 45 66 099 (Monday - Friday: 8am-8pm, sat: 9am-5pm)

Email: southwest.vcu@victimsupport.org.uk Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Survive

Survive is a specialist charity in South Gloucestershire offering support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Services offered by

Survive include:

- Back on Track programme for children aged 7-11 years. Support group that allows children to talk about their experiences and have some fun with their peers. For information on the programme for 11-17 year olds, please contact Survive
- a dedicated 'Children and Young People's team', offering group programmes, 1:1 support and parenting support
- Connect with Respect is a preventative programme for schools, including staff training, assemblies and workshops for children and young people
- information sessions in the community and schools
- group support sessions for young people who have experienced domestic abuse
- Freedom Programmes providing group support for women aged 16 and over
- refuge supported accommodation
- educational work in schools including training for staff and educational sessions with young people
- male mentors for young boys or men to support them in their recovery from domestic abuse

Email: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999 Website: www.survivedv.org.uk

Useful documents

South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse has produced many useful documents that could help your agency in dealing with domestic abuse.

South Gloucestershire Best Practice Guidance for Identifying and Responding to Domestic Abuse

This guide has detailed advice and guidance on how to:

- Identify domestic abuse in terms of signs and symptoms and risk factors
- Respond to domestic abuse through the use of safety actions, onward referrals and practitioner's safety
- Complete the DASH risk assessment to determine the level of risk

[This document also provides useful guidance on safety planning, including safety planning with children and young people.](#)

South Gloucestershire MARAC Operating Protocol

[This provides a step by step guide to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference \(MARAC\) process for high risk victims of domestic abuse.](#) The

MARAC is a multi-agency meeting to share information and formulate a risk management plan for the highest risk victims of domestic abuse and their families. The protocol provides guidance on risk assessing, making referrals, information sharing and a guide to the meeting itself.

South Gloucestershire Joint Procedures for Sharing Information on Domestic Abuse with South Gloucestershire Schools

This protocol outlines the process for sharing personalised information in terms of police incident reports being shared with South Gloucestershire schools, and the information sharing process of schools linking into the MARAC process. This document provides clear guidance on the role and responsibility of schools in terms of dealing with domestic abuse. For a copy of this policy, please contact communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk or on 01454 868751

South Gloucestershire Directory of Domestic Abuse Services

[An electronic directory is available detailing all services in South Gloucestershire.](#) A small pocket-sized directory can also be requested in hard copy from the South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team.

South West Child Protection Procedures

This provides information on the statutory guidance for child protection for the whole of the South West for hard copy reference www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/

For a copy of any of the listed documents, or to request leaflets please contact:
South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:
Email:communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk Tel:01454 868751

Alternatively, please visit the South Gloucestershire Council website for more information:
www.southglos.gov.uk search for domestic abuse/violence

PSHE Association

[This is Abuse discussion guide](#) with new guidance on 'sexting', gangs and more.

Confidentiality is important, however please remember that Safeguarding overrides confidentiality, and you have a duty of care to share information and ensure the safety and wellbeing of those children and young people for whom you are responsible, in accordance with Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding service (2015) This duty also extends to sharing information for the prevention of crime, under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and may apply to adults e.g. parents.