



Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership 

Quick guide to ...

Domestic Abuse

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. This quick guide to Domestic Abuse will provide you with some key information and resources to aid you in your practice.

What is Domestic Abuse?

The Definition of “domestic abuse” in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is:

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.

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;

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Who is affected?

Every year, over two million people in the UK experience DA. Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone and 62% of

children in households where DVA is happening are also directly harmed. All agencies must ensure their staff, carers and volunteers completely understand the different types of abuse shown in the definition and are fully aware of the impact DA can have on victims and their children and how to safeguard them.

What are the indicators an adult is experiencing DA?

- frequent or reoccurring injuries with unlikely explanations and not seeking/over seeking medical attention.
- appearing frightened, ashamed and evasive
- stress or anxiety disorders; isolation from friends, family or colleagues; depression, panic attacks or other symptoms; alcohol and/or drug abuse; suicide attempts

These may be some of the indicators that are noticeable

What are the indicators that a child is living in a home where DA is happening?

16- and 17-year-olds have been recognised as domestic abuse victims since 2013. However, in April 2021, for the first time, the Domestic Abuse Act recognised that a child (under the age of 18 years) who sees or hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse.

Example Indicators:

- frequent or reoccurring injuries with unlikely or no explanations
- low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm
- behavioural issues, antisocial or criminal behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, absenteeism, or a reluctance to go home

All agencies must ensure their staff, carers and volunteers are fully aware of the impact and the effects DA can have on victims and their children and how to safeguard them.

What else should I consider?

Coercive control is at the heart of all domestic abuse. Coercive control can include violence, threats, intimidation, stalking, monitoring, emotional abuse and manipulation, interwoven with periods of seemingly 'caring' and 'indulgent' behaviour as part of the overall abuse.

In family relationships where there is domestic violence and abuse, children/young people witness about three-quarters of the abusive incidents. About half the children in such families have themselves been assaulted intentionally or accidentally. Sexual,

emotional, and financial abuses are also more likely to happen in these families. Even when children/young people have not witnessed incidents, they know what is happening. There will be changes in atmosphere in the home or maybe visible signs of injury on a parent.

Parents experiencing DA may also be experiencing other issues such as mental health problems and substance misuse. The 'multiplicative' impact of combinations of factors have been found to increase the risk of harm to children. Professionals need to be mindful of how these issues interlink and assess the impact of the issues both together and separately to ensure the interventions put in place are as effective as possible in promoting the safety and wellbeing of all members of a household.

What's my role?

If you work with the public, you are working with Domestic Abuse. Doing nothing is not an option!

Having a good understanding of the definition of DA and what the signs are for each element.

Know how to risk assess DA and develop/implement an immediate safety plan to keep the family safe.

Make sure you are familiar with the Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Policies and follow the reporting procedures.

If your concerns relate to a colleague – speak to your manager. Take the time to familiarise yourself with your own organisations internal Domestic Abuse Policy and the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership on Domestic Abuse – it gives information for the public and professionals and provides a directory of support services available locally and nationally.

***These lists are not exhaustive refer to the [CSCP DA policy](#)**

Reflection

- Do you understand what constitutes coercive control, violence, financial/economical, emotional, sexual and psychological abuses? In most cases there will be more than one abuse being experienced at the same time.
 - Are you confident that you could recognise signs of DA?
 - Do you know how to keep them safe?
 - Do you know who to report concerns to and how to do it?
-



No one should suffer domestic abuse. If you are at risk or experiencing abuse help and support is available.

To report: **Cumbria police non-emergency call 101 or online www.cumbria.police.uk, in an emergency always call 999**

Domestic Abuse Partnerships Emergency accommodation, in an emergency, please contact your local Borough Council:

Allerdale: 01900 702660 South Lakes: 01539 73333
Copeland: 01946 598300 Carlisle: 01228 817079
Barrow: 01229 876599 Eder: 01768 817617

LOCAL SERVICES

Gateway 4 Women (Carlisle)
t: 01228 212090
e: admin@cumbriagateway.co.uk

Women Out West (Whitehaven)
t: 01946 550103
e: contactus@womenoutwest.co.uk

Women Community Matters (Barrow)
t: 01229 311102
e: reception@womenscommunitymatters.org

Freedom Project (West Cumbria)
for women and men affected by Domestic Abuse
t: 01942 262270
e: hope@freedom-project-west-cumbria.org.uk

Springfield (South Lakeland)
refuge support takes referrals Nation Wide
t: 01539 726171
e: cs@springfieldsupport.org or refuge@springfieldsupport.org

CUMBRIA WIDE SERVICES

Cumbria Victim Support
t: 0300 3030 157 (local)
Monday - Friday 9.00am - 6.00pm
and 24/7 Support Line 0808 1689 111
e: Cumbria.Admin@victimsupport.org.uk

Safety Net
for women and men affected by Domestic Abuse - County Wide Service
t: 01228 515859
e: office@safetynet.org

NATIONAL SERVICES

National LGBT Domestic Abuse Victims
t: 0800 9995428

Mankind Initiative
t: 01823 334244 and Men's Advice Line 0808 8010327

24 Hour National Domestic Abuse Freephone helpline
t: 01942 262 270

National Child Line
t: 0800 1111



Links

<https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/domesticabuse/default.asp>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-recognise-the-signs/domestic-abuse-recognise-the-signs>

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/information-for-parents-and-carers/domestic-violence-and-abuse-effects-on-children>

[Safer Cumbria & Cumbria County Council - no one should suffer domestic abuse, if you are at risk or experiencing abuse help and support is available](#)