

Sunderland Multi-Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Referral Pathway

Enabling disclosure

- There are many reasons why victims won't, or feel they can't, make a disclosure so it's important to build trust to enable a possible future disclosure.
- Always be alert to the possibility that an individual is experiencing domestic abuse and be prepared to offer support or signposting. Keep the local 0800 066 5555 helpline number in your phone.
- Be aware of signs that could indicate abuse is taking place, such as physical injury (eg. inconsistent explanations for injuries, frequent bruises, covering up injuries), controlling behaviour (eg. partner always present during appointments, won't allow person to talk for themselves, person has limited access to money) and environmental indicators (eg. holes in doors/walls, broken furniture, tense atmosphere in the home).
- If you need to use interpreters, ensure they are professional interpreters. Never use family members, children or friends where abuse is known or suspected.
- Only ask questions about domestic abuse when victims are **on their own and in private**.

This guidance is **applicable to all victims of domestic abuse**. Domestic abuse is predominantly perpetrated against women by men, however it can be perpetrated within same sex relationships, by women against men, and by other family members such as older children against their parents or the extended family/community as in cases of honour based violence. Domestic abuse impacts upon children and/or vulnerable adults in the household whether they are abused directly by the perpetrator and by hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents.

Remember: domestic abuse commonly escalates and increases in severity over time. **Separation does not ensure safety; it often increases the risk. If the victim wishes to separate, ALWAYS** consult domestic abuse specialist agencies (e.g. Wearside Women in Need – WWIN - 0800 066 5555) for safety planning advice.

Deal with any immediate risks, including risks to others and yourself. Check records for risk information or warnings. Contact emergency services if required.

Never assume that someone else will take care of the domestic abuse issues. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**. Seek confirmation that other professionals/agencies have acted in a way you'd expect. You may be the victim's first and only contact. Remember, victims can deny abuse is happening and minimise the risk/harm due

Case meets MARAC Criteria (People aged 16 or over)	Case meets safeguarding adults criteria	Case does not meet MARAC or safeguarding adults criteria	Cases where children are involved (people aged under 18)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clear with the victim about confidentiality and the RIC and MARAC procedures. 2. Complete the DASH RIC with the victim where possible (14 or more ticks on RIC, meets MARAC criteria) 3. Complete MARAC referral form. 4. Forward MARAC referral form to your agency's single point of contact (SPOC) for MARAC 5. SPOC will then forward your referral to the MARAC coordinator <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>For RIC, referral forms, SPOC lists see: http://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/Sunderland_SCB/files/MARAC_procedure.pdf Your agency SPOC is: Name Tel Email If no agency SPOC, email it to sunderland.marac@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or Tel: 101 ext. 45461</p> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. You must also refer the victim to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA): Tel: 0191 565 88 77 or email idva.team@wwin.cjsm.net for their referral form 7. IDVA will contact the victim if high risk 8. MARAC meeting takes place and victim's views are presented by IDVA 9. Action Plan is developed. Agencies to flag /tag their systems <p>Where the case is visibly high risk (14 or more ticks) or based on your professional judgement where you have serious concerns about a victim's situation you MUST make a referral into MARAC via your SPOC.</p>	<p>Domestic abuse is a form of abuse covered by multi-agency safeguarding adult's policy and procedures. A victim of domestic abuse is an Adult at Risk (Care Act 2014) if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); • are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect; and • as a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect. <p>Raising a safeguarding alert must be considered for all those persons meeting the above criteria where the MARAC route is not being followed.</p> <p>To make a safeguarding adults alert you should complete the Safeguarding Enquiry Referral Form (SERF) downloadable at: http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7644</p> <p>If you have any queries or want advice on whether safeguarding procedures need to be invoked then Tel: 0191 520 5552 (anytime)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Your Agency Adults Safeguarding Lead is: Name Tel: Email For more info see http://sunderlandadults.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_dom_violence.html</p> </div>	<p>You still need to take action and support the victim.</p> <p>Short term involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider immediate and long term risks and their needs. 2. Risk can fluctuate so regularly review any levels of risk/decision-making in relation to domestic abuse or safeguarding adults. 3. Discuss basic safety plan with alleged victim 4. Ensure they know where to go for help if they need it. Signpost/refer to domestic abuse support services (see overleaf), if needed. 5. Share information with other relevant agencies with victim's consent. 6. Consider whether case needs allocating to a longer term worker to keep victim engaged. 7. Ensure recording is clear for future workers who may become involved. <p>Long term involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider immediate and long term risks and if case needs referring to a longer term worker. 2. Work with the victim to assess their readiness for change. 3. Signpost/refer the victim to domestic abuse support services – WWIN (0800 066 5555) (and see overleaf) 4. Share information with other relevant agencies with victim's consent. 5. Help the victim access other support (eg. housing, benefits advice, legal advice etc). 6. Continue to work with the victim to address their needs and help strengthen their protective factors and resilience 7. Risk fluctuates and can escalate over time - regularly revisit level of risk in terms of MARAC and safeguarding action and always assess the history not just each incident in isolation. 	<p>Remember that children are always impacted by domestic abuse. They are at risk of significant harm by direct abuse and from hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents. This will be dealt with under multi-agency safeguarding children procedures. If you have a concern that a child has been affected by domestic abuse:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telephone Children's Safeguarding on 0191 520 5560 (office hours) or 0191 520 5552 (out of hours). 2. Or visit http://www.sunderlandscb.com/reporting_concerns.html to download the Child Protection/Child in Need Referral Form. 3. For advice, speak to your agency's lead for children's safeguarding. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Your Agency's Children's Safeguarding Lead is: Name Tel: Email More info http://www.sunderlandscb.com/reporting_concerns.html</p> </div> <p>In all circumstances (adults and children)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document decision-making, actions taken to manage risk and rationale for sharing or not sharing information. • Be aware of your professional role and consult with other partners to: clarify their roles and responsibilities, share information and seek advice e.g. Police, health, housing, domestic abuse specialists. • Follow up any referrals. • When signposting to other agencies always consider risks associated with the perpetrator finding leaflets/letters etc.

Domestic abuse and other support services In an emergency always call 999

Northumbria Police 999 (emergency) or for advice and support call 101
Wearside Women in Need (WWIN) (refuge accommodation, confidential helpline, outreach & floating support and IDVA service). Support for ALL victims
Tel: 0800 066 5555 (24/7).

Safeguarding Advice 0191 520 5560 or 0191 520 5552 (out of hours).

Victims First Northumbria (independent victim referral service) 0800 011 3116 or email enquiries@victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk

Women's Aid (national 24 hr domestic abuse helpline) 0808 2000 247.

MALE (Confidential helpline to support male victims of domestic violence):
0808 801 0327 (Monday – Friday 10am-5pm)

Forced Marriage Helpline 0800 5999 247 (not 24 hours).

Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151.

Broken Rainbow (for LGBT people who are experiencing domestic violence)
0300 999 5428.

Rape Crisis (provides co-ordination for the rape crisis movement in England and Wales - the website lists local centres).

REACH (Rape examination, advice, counselling and help) 0191 221 9222.

Sunderland Counselling Services (male and female victims of childhood sexual violence or rape in adulthood) 0191 514 7007.

Angelou Centre (BME women and children, women with no recourse to public funds). Outreach, advice and support 0191 226 0394.

The Halo Project (honour based violence) for information and advice 01642 683 045.

The National Stalking Helpline provides guidance and information 0808 802 0300.

Paladin - National Stalking Advocacy Service www.paladinservice.co.uk
Helpline 0207 840 8960

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). It is now mandatory to report suspected cases of FGM. If you suspect someone is at risk call Northumbria Police on 101.

NSPCC Confidential number for children and young people 0808 800 5000.

Sunderland City Council - Access to Housing 0191 520 5551

Gentoo Victim Support Service 0191 525 5000

Legal Advice: Holmes Family Law's 24/7 advice line 0191 500 9338; or Newcastle Law Centre 0191 230 4777 or www.resolution.org.uk

Drug and Alcohol Helpline (Adults) 0800 234 6798 (24hrs a day)

Drug and Alcohol Helpline (Children and young people)
0191 561 2852

Mental Health Advice (Adults) 0191 566 5450 or 0191 566 5454

Washington MIND 0191 417 8043

Sunderland MIND 0191 565 7218 or 07961 064 117

Mental Health Advice (Children and young people) 0191 566 5500

Clare's Law

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (the right to ask and the right to know) is designed to provide victims with information that may protect them from an abusive situation before it ends in tragedy. The scheme allows the police to disclose information about a partner's previous history of domestic abuse or violent acts.

To make an application. Ring 101, or visit a police station or apply on-line at www.northumbria.police.uk

Good practice guidance when responding to an adult victim of domestic abuse

What do you do if you suspect that abuse is happening but it is not disclosed, and how do you ask about it?

- When your suspicions are raised it is important that you act on them. You could provide the only opportunity for the victim to tell someone.
- Remember it can be dangerous to ask about domestic abuse in front of anyone else, particularly a partner. A later opportunity should be identified to speak to the person alone or pass your concerns onto another professional who could also attempt to ask. Also, children who are able to speak may later mention the conversation. Ensure privacy – you are unlikely to receive a disclosure if someone might overhear.
- Show the person you have time to listen – if you appear rushed or uninterested you are less likely to receive a disclosure. **Make sure you establish how long you have to talk**
- Find a quiet area to talk without disruptions.
- Establish where the perpetrator currently is.
- Reassure about confidentiality and explain the limits of this, eg “I’m going to ask you a question and I want you to know that whatever you tell me will go no further without your permission, unless I believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk”.
- Begin with an open indirect question, eg “Are you alright?”; “Is everything OK at the moment?”
- Then use framing questions eg “Because domestic abuse is so common in our society I have started asking all of my clients/patients about it”.
- Follow up with direct questions eg “I notice that you seem anxious/have some bruises/often miss appointments (whatever your concern is), is there anything happening at home that you are worried about? Is anything happening in your life that is making you feel unsafe? Is someone hurting you?”
- It may be necessary to ask more than once, as many victims do not identify that they are experiencing abuse if it is not physical.

How to respond to an initial disclosure:

- Do not appear shocked. Be sensitive, respectful and listen carefully to what you are being told.
- Record what they tell you in their own words.
- Seek to empower victims, not to take over or make decisions for them. Ask them what they want you to do.
- Remain non-judgemental – never imply that the victim is to blame for the abuse.
- Validate the victim's experience and give key validation statements eg “I am glad that you told you”, “You are not alone”, “You don't deserve to be hit or hurt like this, there's help available”.
- Keep the responsibility for the abuse explicitly with the perpetrator.
- Document your decision making and actions.

Address immediate safety issues:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the victim and anyone else in the family. Ask if they have somewhere safe to go in an emergency
- Do not take any action that could place you or your colleagues at risk of violence.
- Seek emergency assistance if needed.
- Discuss the use of the DASH RIC (see overleaf) or arrange a follow-on private appointment to do this, and discuss the possibility of sharing the information about the disclosure with others who could help.
- Offer your ongoing contact. Carry out basis safety planning by discussing how the victim has/can keep themselves safe until the next time you meet.
- Always get safe contact details for the victim.

Good practice guidance when responding to a child who is a victim of domestic abuse

To obtain accurate and reliable information from a child regarding a domestic abuse situation the language and questions must be appropriate for the child's age and developmental stage.

Domestic abuse framing question for children (under 16) could include:

“We know that in many families, mums and dads have arguments and disagreements, does that ever happen in your family?”

Professionals should not press a child for answers. Instead:

- Listen and believe what the child says;
- Reassure the children that the abuse is not their fault, and it is not their responsibility to stop it from happening;
- Give several telephone numbers, including Childline (0800 1111), Northumbria Police (101) and local domestic abuse services (0800 066 5555).
- Explain the limits of confidentiality and your safeguarding responsibilities.
- Make a children's safeguarding referral for any child who is living with or experiencing domestic abuse.

For young people (16-17years old):

- Use the adult questioning techniques and refer them to domestic abuse specialist services.
- Safety plan with young person
- Make a children's safeguarding referral and refer into MARAC if high risk. Remember that teenage pregnancy with domestic abuse is high risk.

Good practice guidance when working with perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

Be alert to and prepared to receive and clarify a disclosure about domestic violence from an abusive person. However, remember that the majority of abusers will deny or minimise the domestic violence which they are perpetrating.

You may have contact with a perpetrator directly or in the context of a family. They may present with a problem such as substance misuse, stress, depression or aggressive or offending behaviour – without reference to abusive behaviour in the household or relationship.

Before seeking to clarify a disclosure from an alleged perpetrator, professionals should first of all take into account their own safety, the safety of any children, the safety of the victim and the safety of any other potential victims (such as ex-partners or extended family members).

The most effective way to alter abusive behaviour is for the perpetrator to attend a structured perpetrator programme which includes education, as well as challenging behaviours and beliefs about gender and relationships in order to change their behaviour. Do not refer perpetrators to anger management courses and do not recommend couples counselling, mediation or restorative justice. There is a national helpline for domestic abuse perpetrators run by **RESPECT 0808 802 4040**. In Sunderland, the accredited perpetrator programme is **The Big Programme**, Tel: 0191 567 8282 Fax: 0191 566 0629 Email: BIG@impactfs.co.uk