

Domestic Abuse Briefing

Domestic abuse is recognised as a category of abuse in the statutory guidance to the Care Act (2014) (Care and Support Statutory Guidance). In Shropshire a considerable proportion of adult safeguarding work relates to adults with care and support needs who are experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. It is recognised that much of the adult safeguarding work involving adults in their own homes is, in fact is concerned with domestic abuse (LGA, 2015)

Definition

The government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

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.

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.

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group Home Office (2018).

Fact and Figures:

- Nationally there is one phone call every 30 seconds to police regarding domestic abuse
- In Shropshire, on average there are 130 phone calls every week to police about domestic abuse
- In Shropshire during 2017/18, 36% of all Safeguarding Adults Enquiries concerned domestic abuse, the majority of victims were adults with care and support needs who were over 65. This can bring greater risk and complexity to the plans needed to keep people safe.
- There are often at least 50 incidents of domestic abuse before it is reported to the police
- Over a third of domestic violence starts or gets worse when a women is pregnant
- In households where domestic violence is happening 90% of children are in the same or next room. Children are always affected if they live in a household with domestic abuse.
- On average two women are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week in England and Wales
- On average 27 men a year are killed by current or former partners in domestic violence incidents
- Victims/survivors aged 61+ are much more likely to experience abuse from an adult family member or current partner than those 60 and under
- People with physical care needs are twice as likely to be a victim/survivor of domestic abuse
- 41% of UK girls aged 14-17 in an intimate relationship experienced some form of sexual violence from their partner

Remember age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, class, or disability, are not barriers to domestic abuse it happens across society.

If someone discloses domestic abuse it's important to **listen, believe, show empathy, and ensure you do NOT judge.**

Be aware and look out for some of the factors that may increase risk of serious harm:

- Separation and attempts to separate
- Escalating abuse and social isolation
- Use of weapons and strangulation
- Sexual abuse begins or escalates
- Possessiveness, jealousy and stalking
- Abuse during pregnancy
- Threats to commit suicide, murder or both
- Agency awareness (e.g. Police, GP, Social Services)
- Breach of civil orders (e.g. child contact restrictions)
- Previous criminality (including abuse towards people or animals)
- Financial issues and / or unemployment
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol or drug use

This is NOT an exhaustive list – Use professional instinct.

Remember that children are often considered to be 'hidden victims' of domestic abuse. It is often difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because it usually takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around.

Ensure people can access local support services and consider if a referral to **MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)** is appropriate. The **MARAC** is where professionals share information, assess risk levels and look at ways to reduce risks, delegate actions, improve agency accountability and offer support for staff.

Resources / Document References:

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<https://www.galop.org.uk>

<https://www.NHS.uk>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Recognize-a-Potentially-Abusive-Relationship>

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/making-a-safety-plan>

<https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/media/2946/shropshire-marac-referral-form.doc>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/adult-safeguarding-and-do-cfe.pdf>

<http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Disabled%20Survivors%20Too%20CORRECTED.pdf>

<http://www.refuge.org.uk/files/Violence-against-young-women-and-teenage-girls-the-myths.pdf>

Home Office (2018) Domestic violence and abuse. London: Home Office.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

Crown Prosecution Service (2017) Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-intimate-or-family-relationship>

Reporting Domestic Abuse:

Police - Call 999 in an emergency or 101 non-emergency

First Point of Contact (FPOC) 0345 6789044

Adult Social Care and Safeguarding concerns

First Point of Contact (FPOC) 0345 6789021

Transferred to Compass who deal with all Child Protection and Welfare concerns

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) Mon-Fri 9am-5pm 0300 303 1191

Provides safe accommodation, specific confidential services for people aged over 60, an outreach and a children/young people's service to adults and their children whose lives are affected by domestic abuse and violence; to empower them, age appropriately, to make decisions for themselves about their own futures.

email: sdas@shropsdas.org.uk web: shropsdas.org.uk

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Helpline 24 hours: 0800 7831 359

Domestic Abuse Unit (for more information on MARAC referral process) 101 or 01743 264856