

DDAH

**DONCASTER
DOMESTIC
ABUSE HUB**



**South
Yorkshire
Police and Crime
Commissioner**

Your Voice

Domestic Abuse Guide for Practitioners



Anyone can suffer from domestic abuse

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse can happen between two people who are both aged 16 years or over, are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive.

Personally connected includes:

- you are, or have been, married to each other
- you are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- you have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- you have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- you are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- you are relatives

Abusive behaviour consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse – this includes behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to obtain, use, or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse
- And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Types of domestic abuse:

Psychological/Emotional

Undermining confidence, making a person feel inferior, eroding your independence, or threatening suicide.

It can include gaslighting which is when a person is manipulated by forcing them to doubt their own thoughts, memories, and the events happening around them. Gaslighting can lead people to question their own sanity.

Sexual

Forced sex, forced prostitution, ignoring religious prohibitions about sex, refusal to practice safe sex, sexual insults, sexually transmitted infections, preventing breastfeeding, forced to be filmed or photographed naked.

Physical

Shaking, smacking, punching, kicking, grabbing and biting, starving, tying up, stabbing, strangulation, suffocation, throwing things, using objects as weapons, female genital mutilation, 'honour violence'.



Economic

Not letting a person work, undermining their efforts to find work or study, refusing to give them money, asking for an explanation of how every penny is spent, making them beg for money, gambling, not paying bills.

Controlling or coercive behaviour

Intimidation, threats to harm children; threats to have children taken into care, threatening abuse when you do not agree to conducting certain sexual acts, 'outing' a victim's sexuality or sexual orientation, threatening immigration status, isolation (for example, not being able to have own friends; stopped from seeing family; not being allowed to leave the house; controlling the use of the telephone to contact others)

It can include exploiting your lack of understanding of English; using the your actual or perceived mental health status to restrict activities, or contact with others; using physical impairments or disability to maintain control over you and restrict activities or freedom to leave the home when desired.

These are just some of the ways that perpetrators abuse a partner, ex-partner or family member. It is not on exhaustive list.

Asking the Question

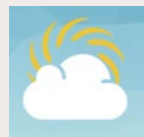
It can be incredibly difficult for someone to talk about domestic abuse. Please remember to respond to people sensitively and not to judge them about their situation. This could be the first time they have ever spoken about the abuse, or even acknowledged it to themselves.

Professional curiosity

Many Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews refer to a lack of professional curiosity. It is vital that professionals understand the complexity of domestic abuse and are curious about what is happening in the child, adult and perpetrator's lives'. Be aware of disguised compliance and use your professional judgement to question what is really going on. Share concerns with colleagues or your supervisor.

If you do not work directly with members of the public but suspect, or become aware of, domestic abuse please notify your manager with your concerns.

Bright Sky app



Domestic abuse charity Hestia and the Vodafone Foundation have created a free mobile app called Bright Sky to provide information and support to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship, or those concerned about someone they know. It's available in four languages and has a UK-wide directory of domestic abuse support agencies with contact details.

Search 'Bright Sky' on your device app store or find out more about the app at:
www.bright-sky.org.uk/

Basic principles:

Time and place

Make sure that the time and place is appropriate when asking the question e.g. not when they are about to pick the children up, go to work or an appointment or there are other people around.

Who is at risk and who are they at risk from?

Check whether there are any children involved in the relationship. This includes children or other family members that might not be living with the victim or perpetrator. Consider if they could be at risk.

Consider whether any actions you take could put them at risk e.g. if the perpetrator leaves the family home could it result in them staying with vulnerable family members who could be at risk or staying with other family or friends where there are children or vulnerable adults. Think about Honour Based Abuse and that there could be multiple people who present a risk to the victim/family.

What is the context of the behaviour?

Keep an open mind, remember that victims will minimise, what is the history?

Is the perpetrator also a carer? What is the victim's situation e.g. level of mobility, carers, support networks, etc.?

Do they have a learning disability? They might not respond how you might expect them to.

Understand the victim's perception

Victims often minimise so if they say they are very frightened - believe them.

Equally, they might not seem frightened but could still be at risk of serious harm.

Background

What information does your agency hold on this person or family and/or the perpetrator? Do you need to talk to other agencies, either to share your concerns or to obtain further information to protect the victim and the family?

Some examples of how to ask the question:

- How did you get that injury? Did someone hurt you?
- Do you ever feel frightened by your partner or other people at home?
- What is your relationship like with...?
- How are things at home?
- What happens when your partner disagrees with you?
- Do you ever feel you have to 'walk on egg shells' around...?



Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Abuse (DASH) Risk Assessment

If you suspect domestic abuse, a disclosure has been made to you or an agency or member of the public has shared concerns with you relating to domestic abuse you should consider completing a DASH assessment with the victim.

There are 27 questions so please ensure that you are in a safe environment and that there is sufficient time to listen to the victim and complete the assessment.

The risk assessment focusses on the victim but we need to take a whole family approach. This involves thinking about the risks to and needs of all of the people involved. As you go through the risk assessment consider the impact on the children and any vulnerable adults involved as well as the person that is being abusive.

There is no excuse for domestic abuse. People who are abusive are very often aware of their behaviour, are in control and are manipulative. However, if we want to reduce domestic abuse we need to think about the abusive person and address any issues that might be contributing to the abuse, while at the same time challenging beliefs and behaviour, protecting those at risk and holding perpetrators to account.

This table details all 27 questions in the DASH risk assessment and provides details about why the question is being asked, if there is additional information you might need to obtain and examples of actions you might need to take depending on the answer given.

<p>1. Has the current incident resulted in injury?</p>	<p>Is medical assistance required? How does this compare to previous injuries?</p>
<p>2. Are you very frightened? 3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence?</p>	<p>Establish the victim's perceived level of risk. Victims often play down the level of risk; if they say they are frightened this should be taken very seriously.</p>
<p>4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends? Does (...) try to stop you from seeing friends/family/GP or others?</p>	<p>Consider support networks. Think about people in rural areas or with mobility or care needs. Consider honour based abuse. This is controlling and coercive behaviour which is a criminal offence. Is there evidence that could lead to a charge?</p>
<p>5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?</p>	<p>Has the victim made any attempt at suicide, has any plans or suicidal thoughts? Consider the risk to the victim and any children. Do you need to take any immediate action? Do you need to take action such as support from local peer support services, referral to the Mental Health Crisis Team or talking to them about Samaritans and other mental health services?</p>

<p>6. Have you separated or tried to separate within the past year?</p>	<p>Victims are at increased risk when they are planning to leave or have just left the relationship. Try to find out what happened last time they separated. It could help predict what could happen if they separate again.</p>
<p>7. Is there conflict over child contact?</p>	<p>This maintains communication between the victim and the perpetrator. Are the children being used as a tool/weapon against the victim? Are any children at risk? Do you need to make a referral to children's services or share information with them?</p>
<p>8. Does (...) constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you?</p>	<p>This is coercive and controlling behaviour. Domestic stalkers are more dangerous as they know more about the victim. Encourage the victim to keep a diary and provide this information to the Police as stalking, harassment and coercive and controlling behaviour are criminal offences.</p>

The Silent Solution

If you call 999 in an emergency but you are unable to speak to the operator because of your circumstances, you can use something called the Silent Solution. This means that the operator will ask you a series of questions - they may ask you to cough, or make a noise, or press a button on your phone, so they know you are listening to them. They will then ask you to press '55' on your keypad.

This is the Silent Solution, and lets the operator know that you are in an emergency situation and require urgent help. The operator will then listen to what they can hear and make an assessment about what type of response is required.

Do not call 999 and press '55' immediately - this may not be registered as a legitimate emergency call, listen to the operator's instructions and only press '55' when instructed.

Pressing 55 will not bring emergency services directly to you as it does not let the Police know your location. By staying on the line, you are informing the police call handler that you might have an emergency that keeps you from talking, and they will do everything they can to determine your location so they can deploy officers to you.

<p>9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (in the last 18 months)?</p>	<p>Domestic abuse often starts or escalates during pregnancy. You need to consider the welfare of the child/unborn child and making a referral to children's services</p>
<p>10. Are there any children, step-children that aren't in the household? Or are there other dependants in the household i.e. older relatives?</p>	<p>Has everyone been considered? If there is HBA, Forced Marriage or FGM and there are younger siblings within the family, consider a child safeguarding referral as they may also be at risk.</p>
<p>11. Has (...) ever hurt the children/dependants?</p> <p>12. Has (...) ever threatened to hurt or kill the children/dependants?</p>	<p>Domestic abuse and child abuse are often linked. Could the perpetrator abuse any vulnerable adults? Consider making a referral or sharing information with children's services</p>
<p>13. Is the abuse happening more often?</p> <p>14. Is the abuse getting worse?</p>	<p>Previous abuse is the most effective indicator that further abuse will occur. It is possible the abuse will escalate.</p>
<p>15. Does (...) try to control everything you do and / or are they excessively jealous?</p>	<p>Power and control, leading to dominance and isolation. Explore what elements of their life are being controlled and the impact it is having. This is controlling and coercive behaviour and should be reported to the Police. Remember that coercive and controlling behaviour can happen after the relationship has ended.</p>
<p>16. Has (...) ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?</p>	<p>Consider all potential weapons including household objects, mobility aids, tools, sports equipment etc. as well as more obvious ones such as knives and guns. This is useful information to help protect the welfare of professionals as well.</p>
<p>17. Has (...) ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them?</p>	<p>Even though the perpetrator may never have any intention of carrying this out the fact that the victim believes the threat demonstrates the power and control the perpetrator has.</p>
<p>18. Has (...) ever attempted to strangle/choke/suffocate/drown you?</p>	<p>Restriction of the airways is dangerous and could easily lead to death. This is the second most common way for females to be killed in domestic homicides. Non-fatal strangulation is against the law and should be reported to the Police.</p>

<p>19. Does (...) do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else?</p>	<p>Also consider threats made by the perpetrator to post naked photographs on the internet or send them to family or friends. Sharing and threatening to share sexual images are crimes and should be reported to the Police.</p>
<p>20. Is there any other person who has threatened you or that you are afraid of?</p>	<p>Consider honour based abuse or female genital mutilation. If this is relevant do not speak to the family as they may be involved. Honour based abuse must be reported to the Police and there is mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation to the Police and Children’s Services.</p>
<p>21. Do you know if (...) has hurt anyone else?</p>	<p>Consider previous partners, family members, colleagues and friends. Also if you are aware that the perpetrator has hurt someone else, consider applying to South Yorkshire Police for the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare’s Law) ‘Right to Know’.</p>
<p>22. Has (...) ever mistreated an animal or family pet?</p>	<p>There is a link between cruelty to animals and to people. The family pet may be used as a tool to control the victim. Do you need to inform RSPCA or provide the victim with details about schemes that can look after pets if they need to flee the abuse?</p>
<p>23. Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on (...) for money / have they recently lost their job / other financial issues?</p>	<p>This could pose additional risks to the victim if money is withdrawn from the perpetrator. You may need to look for emergency funds to help the victim escape. Signpost the victim to sources of support such as the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub, Citizen’s Advice or the Surviving Economic Abuse website.</p>



<p>24. Has (...) had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life?</p>	<p>Explore the impact that these issues have on the relationship. The victim may conceal this information if they are also using drugs or rely on the perpetrator for drugs. Do you have an opportunity to signpost or refer the abuser to drug and alcohol services for support?</p>
<p>25. Has (...) ever threatened or attempted suicide?</p>	<p>There is a link between the abuser threatening suicide and homicide. Others may be in danger e.g. they may harm the children as a way of inflicting pain on the victim. If the abuser is feeling suicidal or has threatened suicide make referral or signpost to mental health services.</p>
<p>26. Has(...) ever breached bail / an injunction and / or any agreement for when they can see you and / or the children?</p>	<p>This may indicate whether the perpetrator has any respect for authority and the law. It may also mean that the victim is sceptical about legal interventions if they have previously been ignored.</p>
<p>27. Do you know if (...) has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history?</p>	<p>This may be an opportunity to gather new information that has previously gone unknown. It may be that the victim is not aware themselves of the abusive person's previous history. Consider the use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)</p>

It is very important that having completed the risk assessment you explore and explain the next steps. Wherever possible try to get informed consent to refer to Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub. If the victim does not want a referral, ensure that you leave details of the domestic abuse hub telephone number, the domestic abuse website details and the national 24 hour helpline number or Men's helpline. Always advise the victim to call 999 in an emergency.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) gives any member of the public the right to ask the police if their partner may pose a risk to them. Under Clare's Law, a member of the public can also make enquiries into the partner of a close friend or family member.

Practitioners can also ask the Police to make a 'Right to know' disclosure. If you believe someone you are working with, or know, is at risk of harm and could be eligible under the scheme, you should refer a person/case to South Yorkshire Police by calling 101

On completion of the risk assessment you should decide on your course of action.

If you believe the victim to be at high risk of serious harm or death you must make a referral to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). You must tell the victim that you are making a referral to MARAC and that he/she will be contacted by an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA).

Risk management will not remove the risk entirely but it can help to reduce the probability of harm. Consider whether you need to take any immediate action to safeguard the victim and any children or vulnerable adults or share any information with agencies prior to the MARAC to safeguard the victim/family.

Contact the MARAC representative for your service before submitting the referral.

Risk is dynamic and can change quickly. If you feel that the victim is not at high risk of serious harm or death you should still ensure that they are referred (with consent) or given information about the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub.

Consider whether you need to share information with any other agency to safeguard the victim/family or prevent a crime. This could include a child or adult safeguarding referral or referral to South Yorkshire Police.

Practitioners can report domestic abuse to the police on 101 or using the online portal: smartcontact.southyorkshire.police.uk

If you need emergency accommodation to help the victim/family get to safety, contact St. Leger Homes on 01302 736000

If they need to leave the area contact the National 24 hour helpline 0808 2000 247.

The Doncaster domestic abuse hub may also be able to help locate refuge accommodation, call 01302 737080 between 9am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.



There is a Doncaster Domestic Abuse Protocol available to practitioners which contains a wealth of information to support practitioners working with victims, perpetrators and families experiencing domestic abuse.

The Protocol can be found at:

**[www.doncaster.gov.uk/
domesticabuseguidance](https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuseguidance)**

Copies of Hub referral forms, the DASH risk assessment and the MARAC Operating Protocol can all be found on these pages.

Safety Advice

Victims of domestic abuse are at increased risk when they are planning to leave a relationship or have just left. Here is some safety advice that you could discuss with a victim.

- Dial 999 in an emergency and teach your children to call 999 in an emergency, and what they would need to say (for example, their full name, address and telephone number).
- Ask them to plan in advance how they might respond in different situations, including crisis situations.

Think about the different options that may be available.

- Do they have trusted neighbours, friends or family nearby where they could go in an emergency? If so, tell them what is going on, and ask them to call the police if they hear sounds of a violent attack.
- Rehearse an escape plan, so in an emergency you and the children can get away safely.
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself and your children, and hide it somewhere safe (for example, at a neighbour's or friend's house). Try to avoid mutual friends or family.
- Try to keep a small amount of money on you at all times - including change for the phone and for bus fares.
- Know where the nearest phone is, and if you have a mobile phone, try to keep it with you and charged up.

National Support:

**National 24 Hour
Domestic Violence Helpline**
Tel: 0808 2000 247

Galop
www.galop.org.uk
Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) people.
Tel: 0800 999 5428

Honour Network Helpline
www.karmanirvana.org.uk
Free helpline for victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour based abuse.
Tel: 0800 5999 247

Men's Advice Line
www.mensadvice.org.uk
National free confidential helpline for men who experience violence from partners/ex-partners.
Tel: 0808 801 0327

Respect Helpline
www.respectphoneline.org.uk
Support for people who are being abusive.
Freephone: 0808 8024040

Samaritans
www.samaritans.org
Providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.
Freephone: 116 123

Local support:

Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub

www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse

The domestic abuse hub advisors will listen to you and support you to talk about what has happened to you.

They can provide information and safety advice and also refer you directly for ongoing support with one of the services that are part of the Hub. Support can include practical help such as accessing emergency temporary accommodation, working with other agencies to protect you and your family or guiding you through the criminal justice system. Specialist domestic abuse workers also support you and your children to deal with the emotional impact of domestic abuse, helping you to have a safer and happier future.

Organisations that are part of the domestic abuse hub include Doncaster Council domestic abuse services, Riverside, Phoenix WoMen's Aid and Doncaster Children's Services Trust.

The Hub is open from
9am - 4.30pm, Monday – Friday.

Tel: 01302 737080

For out of hours support contact the national 24 hour domestic violence helpline:

Tel: 0808 2000 247

South Yorkshire Police

Call 999 in an emergency.

You can also report domestic abuse by calling 101.

More information can be found on the South Yorkshire Police website:

www.bit.ly/syp-da



Ashiana

www.ashianasheffield.org

Ashiana support and empower those from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) communities whose lives have been affected by abuse.

DRASACS

www.drasacs.org.uk

Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Services.

Tel: 01302 360421

Inspire to Change

www.inspiretochange.co.uk

Information and advice for South Yorkshire people concerned about their abusive and/or violent behaviour towards their partners or family members.

Tel: 0114 321 1377

Aspire Drug and alcohol service:

www.aspire.community

[/our-services/doncaster/](http://www.aspire.community/our-services/doncaster/)

Aspire provide a full range of drug and alcohol services to people aged over 18 across the borough of Doncaster.

Talking Shop and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

If you are feeling anxious or depressed Doncaster's Talking Shop and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Teams (IAPT) may be able to help you.

Tel: 01302 565556

Mental Health Crisis Team

(Out of hours service) Please phone RDaSH teams for support, including crisis support.

Freephone: 0800 804 8999