



# Doncaster multi-agency domestic abuse protocol

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A resource pack for professionals

Please do not print – this is a live document and regularly updated to ensure that it contains the latest information and best practice.  
For the most up to date version go to: [www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse) and click on Information for professionals.

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## Aim of this protocol

### ***“In Doncaster people no longer experience Domestic Abuse”***

Our vision is aspirational and is for a Doncaster where domestic violence and abuse is recognised as unacceptable, and people live safe and happy lives free from abuse.

Anyone experiencing domestic abuse, whether being abused, being the abuser or witnessing abuse, has access to the support they need at the time they need it, to be safe and recover, or address their behaviour.

This protocol has been produced to provide agencies and practitioners across Doncaster with the guidance and resources to ensure that we are all working together to achieve this vision. They outline practical, good practice approaches for responding to adults and families who are affected by domestic abuse.

This protocol has been endorsed by the Doncaster Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership, the Doncaster Safeguarding Partnership and the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership, recognising that domestic abuse is a priority issue to be tackled jointly by partner agencies.

## Domestic abuse and safeguarding

This domestic abuse protocol does not replace existing safeguarding children or adult's procedures.

As such this protocol should be read in conjunction with:

- Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures [About Us | Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership \(dscp.org.uk\)](https://www.dscp.org.uk)
- Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board policies and procedures [Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board \(DSAB\) - Doncaster Council](#)
- [MARAC Operating Protocol](#)
- Your own internal agency policies and procedures

By adhering to the best practice guidance outlined in this protocol practitioners will be contributing to a vision and an ethos whereby victims are empowered and are not re-victimised by the system and where perpetrators are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.

Domestic Abuse is also included as part of the Care Act 2014. The Act stipulates that each local authority must:

- Make enquiries if it believes an adult is (or is at risk of) being abused or neglected. An enquiry can range from a conversation with the person of concern to a multi-agency safeguarding meeting
- Arrange for independent advocacy when necessary
- Cooperate with relevant partners to protect adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Minimise any restrictions on the individual's rights of 'freedom of action' involved in protecting the person from harm
- Make a proportionate response

The enquiry will do the following:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the individual
- Establish the facts
- Determine the person's views, wishes and desired outcomes and seek consent
- Assess the needs of the person for protection or support
- Make decisions as to the follow up required
- Lead to a protection plan (when appropriate)

The local authority will either make enquiries or will ask another agency to do so if appropriate.

This protocol, along with the multi-agency domestic abuse training delivered by Doncaster Council, will enable professionals to make appropriate enquiries in relation to domestic abuse and take appropriate and safe action.

Please also see the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Website for further information:

[www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse)  
[Domestic Abuse Protocol - Doncaster Council](#)

## Definition of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Some people (whether due to choice, disability, or sexuality (e.g. A-Sexual) have relationships without sex (which many people would define as intimacy). These relationships also fall within the definition of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse continues to be a prevalent risk factor identified through children social care assessments for children in need. Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people.

Children may experience domestic abuse directly, as victims in their own right, or indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on others such as the non-abusive parent.

Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, and are related to the perpetrator of the abuse or the victim of the abuse. Abuse directed towards the child is defined as child abuse.

Where there is domestic abuse, the wellbeing of the children in the household must be promoted and all assessments must consider the need to safeguard the children, including unborn children.

The Government (2021) definition of domestic abuse 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.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- (b) obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).

#### Definition of "personally connected"

(1) For the purposes of this Act, two people are "personally connected" to each other if any of the following applies:

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

Parental relationship in relation to a child is if:

- a) the person is a parent of the child, or
- b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

- "child" means a person under the age of 18 years;
- "civil partnership agreement" has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- "parental responsibility" has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
- "relative" has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

#### Section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

"relative", in relation to a person, means:

- (a) the father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandson or granddaughter of that person or of that person's spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner, or

(b) the brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin (whether of the full blood or of the half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) of that person or of that person's spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner, and includes, in relation to a person who is cohabiting or has cohabited with another person, any person who would fall within paragraph (a) or (b) if the parties were married to each other or were civil partners of each other

For more information about the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Family Law Act 1996 please visit the following webpages:

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/26/contents)

[Family Law Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/26/contents)

There is no requirement for the victim and perpetrator to live in the same household.

The statutory guidance Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-framework-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-in-an-intimate-or-family-relationship>) defines controlling or coercive behaviour as:

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.

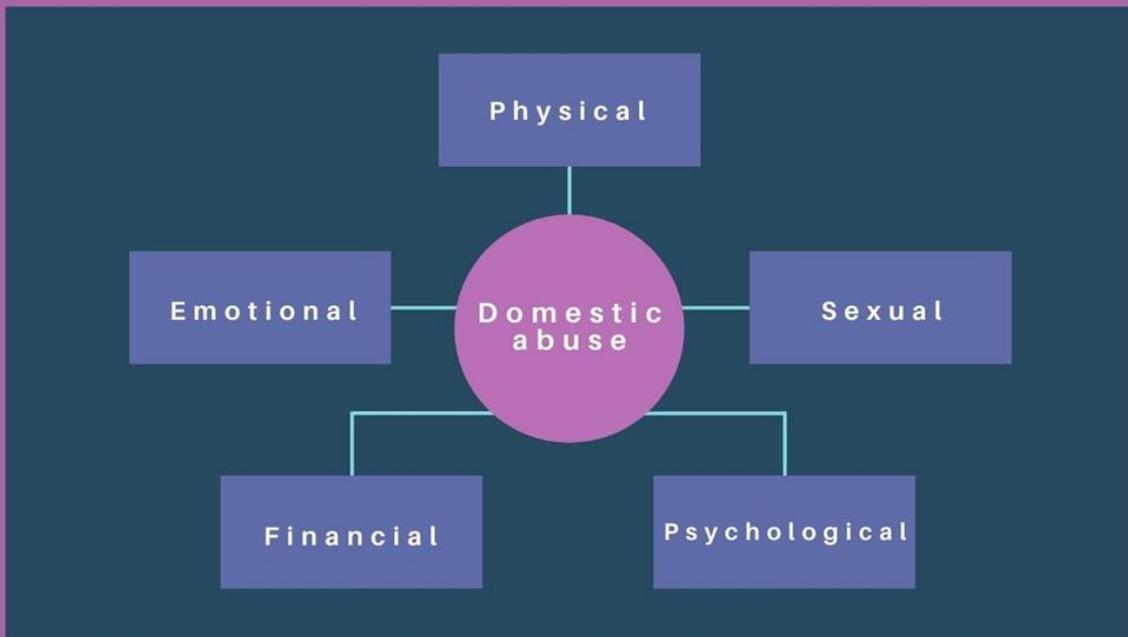
Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."

Note:- The Government is updating the statutory guidance relating to the controlling or coercive behaviour offence as section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 will be amended by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

On producing this protocol consideration was given to using completely gender neutral language throughout in recognition that domestic abuse can and does happen to anyone. However, it was felt that there are still too many perceptions that domestic abuse is only committed by men, and that victims are all women. The Doncaster Domestic and Sexual Abuse Theme Group has therefore chosen to specifically use men/women, he/she but practitioners should be mindful of the needs of non-binary people, trans people, gender neutrality and gender fluidity.

# 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.



## Domestic abuse can occur in a variety of situations:

- 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 pattern of behaviour

## Domestic abuse in Doncaster

Domestic Abuse affects thousands of women, men and children every day. National statistics state that there is a report of domestic abuse to the police every minute. It is known that much domestic abuse goes unreported and that these figures represent just a quarter of the estimated number of victims.

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority in Doncaster with agencies committed to heightening awareness of domestic abuse and providing guidance and support for practitioners and managers to reduce the occurrence of domestic abuse and its effects on the communities they serve.

### The reason domestic abuse is a priority in Doncaster is because:

- 9,724 incidents of domestic abuse in Doncaster were reported to South Yorkshire Police in between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021



Based on South Yorkshire Police data

**9,724**

crimes and 'non-crimes' linked to domestic abuse were reported to the police in Doncaster between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021.

That is an increase of



on the previous year.

- Doncaster has the highest rate of reporting domestic abuse to the Police compared with population size
- Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 1,858 referrals were made to specialist domestic abuse services via the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub. This is an increase of 18% on the previous year.
- In the same year 1,406 referrals were made to Doncaster Council's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate services which is for high risk victims. This is a 53% increase from the previous year.

- Data from the Domestic Abuse Hub is consistent with national trends in that women are the victims in 89% of referrals although increasingly men are coming forward and now equate 11% of referrals.
- One in three referrals (33%) to the Doncaster domestic abuse hub identify as having a disability. Of which over a third (36%) have mental health issues.
- In 2020-2021, 1,687 children were referred to Doncaster Children's Services Trust<sup>1</sup> due to risks associated with domestic abuse. This is an increase of 47% on the previous year. While this increase is significant, it does show that partner agencies are recognising the risk to children and acting on it by making appropriate referrals to safeguard them.

## Over £18 million

per annum in Doncaster.

As well as the physical and emotional impact of domestic abuse on victims, the cost of child protection arrangements, some known costs to health and the criminal justice system are estimated to be over £18m per year.



For more information about domestic abuse in Doncaster and the wider context please read the [Doncaster Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024](#).

<sup>1</sup> The Children's Service Trust was formally disestablished on 1st September 2022. Services

that were previously delivered by the Trust transferred to Doncaster Council

## The Importance of Professional Curiosity and Non-Disguised compliance

### Professional curiosity

Many Domestic Homicide Reviews and Serious Case Reviews refer to a lack of professional curiosity or respectful uncertainty. Practitioners need to demonstrate a non-discriminatory approach and explore the issues and formulate judgements that translate into effective actions in their dealings with children, adults and families. This should be matched by an organisational culture which supports its staff in open-ness, constructive challenge and confidence to practice sensitive and challenging circumstances at the front line.

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 life.

Professional curiosity is the capacity and communication skill to explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value.

Practitioners should never avoid asking the difficult questions, sharing concerns with colleagues or your supervisor as a "fresh pair of eyes". Looking at a case can really help to maintain good practice standards and develop a critical mind set.

Professional curiosity is much more likely if practitioners:

- are supported by good quality training to help them develop.
- have access to good management, support and supervision when working with challenging situations of domestic abuse which will impact on staff working with families.
- 'walk in the shoes' (have empathy) of the child and/or adult to consider the situation from their lived experience; and
- remain diligent in working with the family and developing the professional relationships to understand what has happened and its impact on all family members.

Practitioners should always try to see all parties separately. However, when that is not possible, and particularly when a victim is not being seen alone, professionals should also be alert to the following behaviours they may observe. If these signals are present, the practitioner should find a way of seeing the suspected victim alone:

- the victim waits for her/his partner to speak first.
- The victim glances at her/his partner each time (s)he speaks, checking her/his reaction.
- The victim smooths over any conflict.
- The suspected perpetrator speaks for most of the time.
- The suspected perpetrator sends clear signals to the victim, by eye/body movement, facial expression or verbally, to warn them.

- The suspected perpetrator has a range of complaints about the victim, which (s)he does not defend.

Staff must be cognisant to the needs of young people (aged 16 years or above) who may be experiencing inequality and/or violence in their relationships and be able to advise on their right to pursue actions under the revised guidance.

Professionals, however curious cannot protect children and adults by working in isolation. Domestic abuse requires a multi-agency response and families, and communities also have a vital role to play in protecting children and adults.

If any professional suspects or becomes aware of domestic abuse, they must notify their manager with their concerns, whether they work directly with members of the public or not.



[Professional Curiosity - YouTube](#)  
[7 minute Briefing on Professional Curiosity | Equation](#)

### Disguised compliance and Non-Disguised compliance

As part of professional curiosity, practitioners should be aware of disguised compliance and non-disguised compliance, and use their professional judgment to question what is really going on.

**Disguised compliance** can take a number of different forms and parents, adults or perpetrators can use these techniques to avoid raising suspicions, to allay professional concerns and to delay or avoid professional intervention. Examples include:

- focus on engaging well with one set of professionals (e.g., education,) to deflect attention from their lack of engagement with other services.
- criticise other professionals to divert attention away from their own behaviour.
- promise to take up services offered but then fail to attend; or
- promise to change their behaviour and then avoid contact with professionals.

'The term '**disguised non-compliance**' in social work refers to uncooperative and hostile behaviours from parents, initially masked by a short period of cooperation that seeks to draw practitioners' attention away from any concerns.' [Understanding disguised non-compliance in social work | Iriss](#)

If disguised compliance or non-disguised compliance is suspected this should be carefully recorded with evidence. However, practitioners should also consider that the above behaviour could also be due to high levels of fear experienced in the relationship. This behaviour can be a mechanism that victims use in order to keep themselves safe when they believe that engaging with agencies would escalate their risk.

It is therefore very important for practitioners to explore the reasons behind the perceived disguised compliance and carefully consider the next steps. Some myth busting in relation to the roles and responsibilities of agencies might be needed e.g., perpetrators often tell victims that children's services will remove their children if they tell anyone about the abuse.

## The importance of the language we use

When working with domestic abuse language is important. From how we refer to the people we work with (victim or survivor, perpetrator or person causing harm, use their names and describe the behaviour) for example, to how we are trauma informed in our recordings and how to avoid unintentionally victim blaming. Adding context can often make all the difference. For example, 'the victim won't leave the relationship' has a very different interpretation when followed with 'because they are terrified they will be killed if they do'. This is far too often the sad reality for victims of domestic abuse, but without the context can read like the victim is making a choice. Research tells us leaving is the riskiest time for a victim and that homicides take place regularly post separation.

Being mindful about the language we use helps to clearly define the problem and to place the responsibility for abuse with the person using abusive behaviours. It develops a shared understanding of the complexity of domestic abuse for both professionals and most importantly for the families we work with. Taking care with language supports the engagement of families regardless of whether as a professional you are working with the whole family, the person being harmed, the person causing the harm or the children.

See [Appendix C](#) for further guidance

## Training

A programme of multi-agency domestic abuse training is available for any practitioner in Doncaster. Training includes:

**Domestic Abuse Awareness** - full day course (formerly known as Level 2) - This course provides a full overview of what Domestic Abuse is, the dynamics of relationships, how to recognise it, asking the question and also how to signpost and support if a disclosure is forthcoming. This course should be undertaken by those wanting to refresh their knowledge and before undertaking any further training on the programme.

**DASH and MARAC** - full day course (formerly known as Level 3) - This course is suitable for those professionals that will need to complete the DASH Risk Assessment form and also gives an overview of the MARAC process. The Domestic Abuse Awareness course should be completed prior to this course unless you have an up to date in depth knowledge of Domestic Abuse.

**Stalking and Harassment** - This course is to increase knowledge and understanding of this area of domestic abuse and look at how to support evidence gathering.

**Young People Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence** - This course is for professionals working with secondary age pupils to enable them to identify domestic abuse, look at the young people's risk assessment and healthy relationships.

**Coercive and Controlling Behaviour** - This course will increase practitioner knowledge of this area and support evidence gathering for victims. Developed with the Adult Safeguarding Team this course also takes into account mental capacity when defining domestic abuse.

**Honour Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - This course will support professionals to develop knowledge in these 3 areas of domestic abuse provision and enable signposting to specialist support.

**Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse** - This course aims to help practitioners understand the additional barriers to reporting and accessing support for male victims of domestic abuse.

**Supporting Children Living with Domestic Abuse (primary age)** - This course will assist those working with primary aged children and their families to support those who are experiencing Domestic Abuse within a family environment and look at tools to enable decreased risk, increased resilience and moving on to recovery.

**Sexual Abuse Awareness** – This will help practitioners understand more about sexual abuse and sexual harassment and support services available.

**Supporting Older Victims and People with Care and Support Needs and Domestic Abuse** - This course aims to help practitioners understand the additional risks and barriers to reporting and accessing support for older people experiencing domestic abuse.

For regular updates about training sessions and how to book go to:  
[Domestic Abuse - Training - Doncaster Council](#)

## Employers supporting employees

Employers owe a duty of care to employees and have a legal responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment. The cost of domestic abuse to business is estimated at £1.9 billion a year due to decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages and sick pay. It can potentially have an adverse impact on staff morale, as well as on an organisation's image and reputation.

All Doncaster employers signing up to this Domestic Abuse Protocol are expected to have an employee domestic abuse policy or procedure (or inclusion of this issue within other relevant policies and procedures). A national toolkit is available at <https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/domestic-abuse-toolkit-employers> to inform the development of this support. Advice is also available from the Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead at Doncaster Council – [Karen.shooter@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.shooter@doncaster.gov.uk)

Vicarious Trauma – As well as supporting employees that are directly experiencing domestic abuse employers should also consider vicarious, or secondary, trauma that practitioners may experience as a result of working with victims of domestic or sexual abuse. This also includes employees that are exposed to reading or hearing about traumatic events e.g. when taking minutes, processing referrals etc. Employers should ensure that managers are aware of vicarious trauma including how to prevent it, how to identify it and how to respond to it.

Risk transference – Additionally employees may be at risk of abuse or harm from perpetrators or their associates. Employers have a duty to protect their employees and any agency signing up

to this domestic abuse protocol is expected to abide by Health and Safety legislation and risk assess the activities of their employees, with specific consideration for the risk to employees by others.

Some things employers might want to consider when assessing risks to employees include:

- assessing areas of risk including history of violence from perpetrators
- threats made by perpetrators or associates
- location of perpetrator
- lone working arrangements for employees
- access to work calendars
- use of cars – in particular whether any personal car use involves easily identifiable cars/registration plates
- whether personal details of employees are easily accessible by potential perpetrators

Please refer to your agency Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

## Types of domestic abuse:

### Child to parent abuse

Child-to-Parent Abuse can include physical violence from a child towards a parent or other family members such as siblings and a number of different types of abusive behaviours, including damage to property, emotional abuse, and economic/financial abuse. Violence and abuse can occur together or separately. Abusive behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating language and threats, belittling, damage to property and stealing and heightened sexualised behaviours.

For programmes to support young people causing harm see the following sections in this protocol:

[Getting On](#)  
[Level Up](#)

### Coercive and controlling behaviour

The Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships. The new offence closes a gap in the law around patterns of controlling or coercive behaviour in an ongoing relationship between intimate partners or family members. The offence carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

In December 2015 the Home Office issues a Statutory Guidance Framework relating to the new offence called '[Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship. Statutory Guidance Framework. Home Office December 2015.](#)

The Guidance states that:

'This offence is constituted by behaviour on the part of the perpetrator which takes place "repeatedly or continuously". The victim and alleged perpetrator must be "personally connected" at the time the behaviour takes place. The behaviour must have had a "serious effect" on the victim, meaning that it has caused the victim to fear violence will be used against them on "at least two occasions", or it has had a "substantial adverse effect on the victims' day to day activities". The alleged perpetrator must have known that their behaviour would have a serious effect on the victim, or the behaviour must have been such that he or she "ought to have known" it would have that effect.

The cross-Government definition of domestic violence and abuse outlines controlling or coercive behaviour as follows:

- 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: a continuing 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.”

Behaviours may include:

- Isolating a person from their friends and family
- Depriving them of their basic needs
- Monitoring their time
- Monitoring a person
- Controlling aspects of their everyday life i.e., where they can go, who they can see, what to wear and sleep
- Depriving them access to support services, such as specialist support or medical services
- Repeated put downs. Enforcing rules and activity which humiliate, degrade or de-humanise the victim

Victims of coercive and controlling behaviour should be encouraged to keep a log of the abuse and to report it to South Yorkshire Police.

### **Changes to coercive and controlling behaviour legislation under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021:**

‘Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 provides for the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour, where the perpetrator and the victim are personally connected.

Under the current legislation personally connected means intimate partners, or former intimate partners or family members who live together.

The amendment to the legislation removes the co-habitation requirement, ensuring that post-separation abuse and familial domestic abuse is provided for when the victim and perpetrator do not live together.

Controlling or coercive behaviour is an insidious form of domestic abuse, and this Government is committed to ensuring all victims are protected. We recognise that coercive or controlling behaviours may escalate following separation, and that members of a victim’s extended family may be involved in control or coercion. We have heard the calls from experts on this matter, and I am very pleased to say that the Government will be removing the co-habitation requirement contained within the offence through an amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill at Report stage in the House of Lords. This amendment will bring the controlling or coercive behaviour offence into line with the statutory definition of domestic abuse in clause 1 of the Bill and send a clear message to both victims and perpetrators that controlling or coercive behaviours, irrespective of living status, are a form of domestic abuse.’

Victoria Atkins MP, Minister for Safeguarding, Written Ministerial Statement, 1st March 2021.

## **Economic abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 definition of domestic abuse includes economic abuse (previous version refer to financial abuse).

Information from Surviving Economic Abuse explains the importance of recognising economic abuse and explains the impact on victims:

'Abusers may control (through restriction, exploitation and sabotage) more than 'just' their partner's access to money and finances (financial abuse). They also interfere with things that money can buy, including food, clothing, transportation and a place to live. This is **economic abuse**, and it is designed to limit someone's freedom.

This type of abuse can create economic instability and/or make one partner dependent on the other. This can prevent victims from leaving and rebuilding their lives.

(Surviving Economic Abuse 2022 - [Economic abuse and the Domestic Abuse Act - Surviving Economic Abuse](#))

The Act defines economic abuse as any behaviour that has a substantial and adverse effect on an individual's ability to:

- acquire, use or maintain money or other property (such as a mobile phone or car) or
- obtain goods or services (such as utilities, like heating, or items such as food and clothing)

Economic abuse is not a crime in its own right. However, it can be addressed through other offences, such as coercive or controlling behaviour and criminal damage.

## **Emotional abuse**

Some examples of emotional and psychological abuse are listed here - this is not an exhaustive list and there are many more forms of this type of abuse:

- Manipulating you to do what they want
- Constantly checking where you are
- Preventing you from seeing your friends or family or suggesting that you are better off without your friends or family 'interfering'
- Constantly putting you down
- Persistently calling you names, mocking behaviour or saying things that make you feel bad
- Using the children to bully you or blackmail you to stay in the relationship
- Shouting and intimidating behaviour
- Stalking
- Harassment

Many victims and survivors of domestic abuse will say that the emotional abuse was worse than the physical abuse.

## **Familial abuse**

Abuse by family members can involve abuse by any relative or multiple relatives. Abuse within a family set-up can encompass a number of different behaviours, including but not limited to violence, coercive or controlling behaviours, and economic abuse. Abuse by family members also encompasses forced marriage, so called 'honour'-based abuse and female genital mutilation.

## Female Genital Mutilation and Breast Ironing

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is child abuse and violates the rights to health, security and physical integrity of the person and to be free from torture, cruel and degrading treatment. Professionals have a duty to safeguard everyone, including women and girls, which means tackling FGM is an integral part of their role. Effective action must be taken to do so, without allowing themselves to be inhibited by fear of doing or saying the wrong thing. FGM is sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting'.

FGM is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this. Mandatory reporting of FGM has been in place since October 2015.

### Mandatory reporting of FGM

It is important that any referral regarding FGM contains as much information as possible. This will help ensure that the referral is directed appropriately, and a fully informed assessment is made. See further guidance on gathering information for a good referral here: [Referral Guide \(nationalfgmcentre.org.uk\)](http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk)

The Government guidance on mandatory reporting of FGM [FGM Mandatory Reporting - procedural information nov16 FINAL.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544447/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf) states that regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales must make a report to the police by the **close of the next working day**.

You must also make a referral to Doncaster Council Children's Services, following child safeguarding policies and procedures.

### Useful Key Resources:

- The National FGM Centre – Resources <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/>
- The latest statutory guidance on FGM, published February 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>
- [The Home Office resource pack on FGM](#)
- [The Home Office FGM E Learning Module](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>
- The Department of Health Publications:
  - [Safeguarding women and girls at risk of FGM](#) - This document provides practical help to support NHS organisations developing new safeguarding policies and procedures for FGM.
  - [FGM E Learning](#) – for Health colleagues is also available via LSCB/LSAB training
- The NSPCC runs a specific FGM Helpline:  
Email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk) or Telephone: 0800 028 3550
- South Yorkshire Police FGM webpage:  
[Female Genital Mutilation - SYP \(southyorks.police.uk\)](http://southyorks.police.uk/female-genital-mutilation)

**Breast ironing** (sometimes called flattening) is the pounding and massaging of a young girl's breasts, to prevent and stunt breast growth. It is usually carried out by pressing, massaging or pounding the breasts using hard or heated objects. It is child abuse and it is illegal. As with female genital mutilation it is pre-pubescent girls that are most at risk. For more information go to: <https://safeguardinghub.co.uk/breast-ironing-a-guide/>

## Forced Marriage/Child Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people who lack mental capacity), cannot, consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. The practice of Forced Marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages, or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

There are national guidelines for responding to cases of forced marriage.

Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for dealing with forced marriage 2014. Practitioners should pay particular attention to Chapters 5 and 6.

Multi-Agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage 2014

- Any case of Forced Marriage must be reported to South Yorkshire Police by calling 999.
- If the victim is under the age of 18 years, a referral should also be made to Doncaster Children's Services Trust. Telephone: 01302 737 777.
- If the victim is over the age of 18 years and has additional care and support needs, a learning disability or there are any concerns about mental capacity, a referral should be made to Doncaster Adult Social Care. Telephone: 01302 737063.

Additional support is available by contacting the Forced Marriage Unit: <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage> Telephone: 020 7008 0151.

Other useful information and contacts in relation to forced marriage:

Forced Marriage Unit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

<https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

Forced Marriage and Disability guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/forced-marriage-and-learning-disability-new-guidelines-to-help-prevent-abuse>

Forced Marriage Survivor handbook

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/727408/forced-marriage-survivors-handbook.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727408/forced-marriage-survivors-handbook.pdf)

The Sharan Project <http://sharan.org.uk> (supporting South Asian Women in the UK)

Karma Nirvana – national charity working to end honour based abuse [Karma Nirvana](https://www.karnanirvana.org/)

Application for a Forced Marriage Protection Order <https://www.gov.uk/apply-forced-marriage-protection-order>

The Forced Marriage Unit has also developed an e-learning package: [eLearning training for professionals](#)

[Information for people directly affected by forced marriage](#) is also available.

## **Child marriage**

The Marriage and Civil Partnership Act came into effect in February 2023.

This means that it is a crime for a child to be married in England and Wales i.e., anyone under the age of 18 cannot get married. It will be a forced marriage or child marriage.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted contact causing alarm or distress and might include such things as:

- antisocial behaviour
- bullying at school or in the workplace
- unwanted attention from somebody seeking a romantic relationship
- cyber bullying on the internet
- sending abusive text messages
- constantly sending unwanted messages/making unwanted calls
- sending unwanted gifts
- stalking

Victims of harassment should be encouraged to keep a log of the unwanted contact and report it to South Yorkshire Police. There are also Civil Court remedies such as non-molestation orders that can be ordered to stop the abusive behaviour. Victims should also be supported to contact domestic abuse support agencies. [See the section on Stalking.](#)

## **Honour Based Abuse**

Honour based abuse refers to crimes or incidents committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. It can take many forms including harassment, criminal damage, arson, sexual assault, forced marriage, kidnap and even murder.

When dealing with potential victims it is important to recognise the seriousness/immediacy of the risk. Consider the possibility of forced marriage, abduction, missing persons and murder. Incidents that may precede a murder include:

- Forced marriage
- Domestic violence
- Attempts to separate or divorce
- A pre-marital relationship
- Pre-marital conflict
- Pregnancy
- Threats to kill or denial of access to children
- Pressure to go abroad
- House arrest and excessive restrictions
- Denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends

When dealing with victims, do not speak with them in the presence of their relatives. Women or men that return to their families should be offered escape plans.

Please seek further advice from South Yorkshire Police and if someone is at immediate danger then call 999.

Karma Nirvana provides information and support for male and female victims of forced marriage and honour-based abuse. Telephone: 0800 5999 247 Website: [Karma Nirvana](#)

## **Physical abuse**

Some examples of physical abuse are listed here - this is not an exhaustive list and there are many more forms of this type of abuse:

- Punching
- Kicking
- Slapping
- Pushing
- Strangling or smothering you
- Threatening to hurt you or someone you care about
- Not allowing you to take medication or giving you too much
- Using weapons against you

## **Psychological abuse**

‘Psychological abuse involves the regular and deliberate use of a range of words and non-physical actions used with the purpose to manipulate, hurt, weaken or frighten a person mentally and emotionally; and/or distort, confuse or influence a person’s thoughts and actions within their everyday lives, changing their sense of self and harming their wellbeing’

Research funded by the Oak Foundation on ‘psychological violence’ resulted in a report that was co-created with survivors with lived experience and practitioners and sheds light on the regularity of psychological abuse, the daily experience of those living with it, and the tactics perpetrators use to threaten and control.

[Psychological abuse | Safelives](#)

## **Revenge Porn and threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films**

The Revenge Porn offence applies both online and offline and to images which are shared electronically or in a more traditional way so includes the uploading of images on the internet, sharing by text and e-mail, or showing someone a physical or electronic image.

The CPS recently updated its legal guidance in order to clearly set out how such cases should be brought to court under the new legislation. Details can be found on the CPS website.

For more information about revenge porn visit the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenge-porn>

You can also get information and help from the Revenge Porn Helpline: <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/> Tel: 0345 6000 459.

The Domestic Abuse 2021 extends the existing offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress at section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 to include ‘threats’ to disclose such material.

The act clarifies that threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films, as defined at section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, will constitute a criminal offence within England and Wales. Such behaviour will be subject to the existing maximum penalty of two years’ imprisonment, or a fine, or both. The prosecution will not have to prove the image exists.

[Threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Sexual abuse**

A child, young person or an adult can be sexually exploited. This is when they are coerced into sexual activities by one or more persons who have deliberately targeted them due to their youth, gender, inexperience, disability, vulnerability and/or economic or social position. The process usually involves a stage of 'grooming' involving the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques to target a vulnerable person.

Sexually exploitative relationships are characterised by an imbalance of power and the use of controlling behaviours to maintain a person's subordinate or dependent position, and to regulate his or her everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviours are also extremely common, including the use of assault, threat, humiliation and intimidation as a means of ensuring the compliance of a victim.

Sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the persons consent or immediate recognition. A central mechanism for offenders to extend their control of their victim is through the use of mobile technology.

Many victims of domestic abuse also experience sexual abuse, including rape. This type of abuse can have severe consequences for the victim, both physically and psychologically. It is often one of the questions left unanswered when practitioners complete the domestic abuse risk assessment (DASH) with victims. Practitioners sometimes find it difficult to ask that question and it is also often difficult for victims to answer. Yet it is vitally important that the question about sexual abuse is asked so that specialist support can be provided.

Support for people who have been abused is available from the South Yorkshire Sexual Violence Partnership (SYSVP). This is the commissioned Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service. The referral link is <https://www.syisva.org.uk/referral>

There is also counselling and therapeutic support specialist support services available in Doncaster provided by Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service ([DRASACS](#)). Victims should be supported to access appropriate support.

If the victim is a young person, you should also contact Doncaster Children's Services Trust on 01302 737777 and 01302 796000 (out of hours). If the victim is a vulnerable adult, you should also contact Doncaster Council, Adult Safeguarding on 01302 737063.

See also [Revenge Porn](#) below.

## **Spiritual abuse**

Spiritual abuse using religion and faith systems to control and subjugate a victim often characterised by a systemic pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour within a religious context. A form of spiritual abuse may include the withholding of a religious divorce, as a threat to control and intimidate victims.

## **Stalking**

Stalking can be defined as persistent and unwanted attention where the victim feels pestered and harassed.

The British Crime Survey (2006) suggests that up to five million people experience stalking or harassment in any given year and that many victims will suffer up to 100 incidents before talking to the police.

The most common forms of STALKING/harassment are:

- Frequent, unwanted contact e.g., appearing at the home or workplace of the victim.
- Telephone calls, text messages or other contact such as via the internet (i.e., social networking sites).
- Driving past the victim's home or work.
- Following or watching the victim.
- Sending letters or unwanted gifts to the victim.
- Damaging the victim's property.
- Burglary or robbery of the victim's home, workplace, vehicle or other.
- Threats of harm to the victim and/or others associated with them (including sexual violence and threats to kill).
- Harassment of people associated with the victim (e.g., family members, partner, work colleagues).
- Physical and/or sexual assault of the victim and even murder.

Is someone at risk?

If someone is unsure that what is happening to them is stalking, then there are a set of questions which can be considered. For more information go to <http://www.protectionagainststalking.org/are-you-at-risk/>

If someone feels they are at immediate danger, then call 999. The National Stalking Helpline can help with advice and support. Telephone: 0808 802 0300 or <http://www.stalkinghelpline.org>. You can also contact Paladin – the national stalking advocacy service. <https://paladinservice.co.uk/> Tel: 020 3866 4107.

## Technology

Technological abuse using technology and social media as a means of controlling or coercing victims. This happens frequently both during and after relationships with abusers and is particularly common amongst younger people.

As a professional, the case you are involved with may have elements of online/digital abuse. Many of us now use mobile, social media, e-mail and shop online for example. If someone wants to upset, scare or intimidate another person they may use technology to do it.

This abuse can take various forms: bullying, harassment, stalking, domestic abuse, trolling, and/or hate campaigns.

Questions you may wish to consider:

- Is the victim being abused in multiple ways and means?
- How long has it been going on for?
- Is it escalating?
- What is the motivation of the abuser?
- What is the victim worried will happen?
- Mental state of the victim – are they afraid/suicidal?

You may wish to refer to the Get Safe Online website for further advice as a professional, or to guide the person who is being abused online to advice on the steps they can take to improve their online security. Visit: <https://www.getsafeonline.org/>  
[Click here](#) for further information about digital stalking.

## Children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right

Domestic abuse always has an impact on children. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, but they can also experience it indirectly by:

- hearing the abuse from another room
- seeing someone they care about being injured and/or distressed
- finding damage to their home environment like broken furniture
- being hurt from being caught up in or trying to stop the abuse
- not getting the care and support they need from their parents or carers as a result of the abuse (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008).

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 includes children as victims of domestic abuse in their own.

'Part 1 of the Act provides that a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, domestic abuse and is related to or under parental responsibility of the person being abused or the perpetrator is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse. This means that where the Act imposes a duty in relation to victims of domestic abuse, this will include children as described in Part 1.

This will help to ensure that locally commissioned services consider and address the needs of children affected by domestic abuse.'

[Statutory definition of domestic abuse factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94422/statutory-definition-of-domestic-abuse-factsheet.pdf)

Existing safeguarding, risk assessment and referrals processes and procedures should be followed.

[About Us | Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership \(dscp.org.uk\)](https://www.dscp.org.uk/about-us)

The statutory guidance '[Working together to safeguard children](#)' sets out expectations for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In October 2022 the NSPCC produced a briefing on learning from rapid reviews and child practice reviews about domestic abuse. The paper introduces a set of core practice principles when working with children in domestic abuse situations:

### Core practice principles

#### Domestic abuse informed

- The source of the harm is named, and the behaviours of the abuser are described.
- The impact on the parents and children experiencing abuse is identified.
- The focus of work is on the continuous patterns of behaviour, rather than each individual incident.

#### Trauma-informed

- Those seeking help are responded to in a non-judgemental, non-blaming and strengths-based way.
- Practitioners work towards building trusting relationships and prioritise avoiding re-traumatisation.

#### Intersectional

- Agencies and practitioners seek to understand how the characteristics and identities of the people they help lead to discrimination and oppression.
- Practitioners aim to reflect and be aware of their own values and biases and how these views may impact their work.

#### Whole family

- The support and safety of the child and the non-abusing parent is prioritised.
- The impact of abuse on the care given by the non-abusing parent is taken into consideration.
- The abusive parent's harmful behaviours are not separated from the impact they have on the children in their care.
- Abusive behaviours are challenged and there is a focus on specialist support and behaviour change.

These core principles are woven throughout this domestic abuse protocol.

## **Intersectionality - Additional barriers and complicating factors to reporting and accessing help:**

Victims of abuse face many real and perceived barriers to reporting and accessing help. These can include:

- lack of confidence
- low self esteem
- shame
- guilt
- love for the abuser
- fear of what might happen next - including what the perpetrator might do, what action services might take, fear of not being listened to, fear of being judged etc.

The Oxford Dictionary defines intersectionality as “the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage”.

Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of life, trauma, discrimination, abuse, oppression etc. We must work in a trauma informed, individually tailored way to understand what has happened in a person's life if we are to understand how best to engage with them and provide meaningful support.

Anything that can marginalise people – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, disability, substance or alcohol misuse, mental ill health etc. must all be considered in a holistic way.

The following issues can all marginalise people, make it more difficult for them to acknowledge the abuse, report the abuse and trust practitioners who want to help. These things can make engagement harder and so it is vital that practitioners recognise the interconnected nature of these issues and domestic abuse.

### **Violence and conflict within the child and parent/carer relationship**

The official definition of domestic abuse covers individuals from the age of 16 years. However, there are occasions of familial abuse where the parent/victim is over the age of 16 years, but the child/perpetrator is under that age. As MARAC is victim focused, if the case is high risk, a referral of child to parent abuse should be made to MARAC. If they are not at immediate harm, please contact the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub if you want advice or support regarding a concern. The child perpetrator should be referred to Children's Services. It is important to note that whether a child is a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse, a referral should be made to Children's Services.

In addition, Cranstoun (providers of the Inspire to Change voluntary perpetrator programme in South Yorkshire) also deliver an intervention for young people who are causing harm towards

others (either in intimate relationships or family members). The programme is called Level Up and has been designed specifically for young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

### [Level Up - Cranstoun](#)

## **Cultural and language barriers**

The 2021 census reported that while Doncaster remains predominantly white, we are seeing an increase in diversity within the ethnic minority communities that are becoming residents. Therefore, we must ensure that we provide a service that is inclusive and accessible for all residents.

- 93.1% of Doncaster's residents identified themselves as 'White' in the 2021 census, this has decreased from 95.3% in 2011.
- Across the 19 ethnic groups recorded, the largest increase in Doncaster was seen in the number of people identifying through the "Other White" category (5.7%, in 2021, from 2.8% in 2011)

### **Cultural barriers:**

Domestic abuse is not an isolated phenomena that is only visible in certain communities, rather it can be present in any community. However, what we do know is that victims of domestic abuse that belong to a minority community may face cultural barriers which can make their individual situation more complex compared to their white counterparts. These cultural barriers can result in further difficulties when it comes to reporting and accessing support services.

Each community has its own culture and values and it's important that we navigate these cultural differences in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner. Consideration should be given by all service providers of cultural differences between people from communities within the UK and from other countries as they could impact on the recognition, disclosure and prevention of domestic abuse.

Appropriate advice should be sought by service providers when dealing with cultural differences as these are significant to their seeking help. This may include traveller communities, different religions and a range of beliefs about marriage, divorce, gender, sexual orientation, and domestic abuse as a taboo issue.

### Examples of cultural barriers:

- Social stigma from their community for reporting and speaking about DA.
- Gender norms, some communities may reinforce traditional gender roles with males being the sole bread winner in the household, resulting in women having no financial freedom or financial security to leave the male perpetrator.
- Women from minority communities may be reluctant to talk to or be in the presence of male service providers, especially in cases linked to sexual abuse.

One of the main ways to help navigate cultural barriers is to gain a better understanding via listening and learning about the culture whether that be from the victim or through appropriate training courses. It's important that assumptions and pre-conceived notions are not automatically applied to the individual and their situation.

Language barriers:

The 2021 census reported that proficiency in English as the main language within Doncaster has decreased from 95.9% in 2011 to 92.8% in 2021. As well as compared to Yorkshire and Humber region where proficiency in English went from 94.1% (2011) to 93.2% in 2021.

Main language spoken in Doncaster	2011	2021
Polish	4,595	6,495
Romanian	88	5,428
Kurdish	508	699
Slovak	334	689
Turkish	495	631

Limited English language may also be a significant barrier for victims of abuse seeking assistance from support agencies.

- Where there are language barriers school staff should always use an appropriate interpreter. Family and friends should not be used to interpret in domestic abuse cases.
- Do not use excessive jargon, acronyms or complicated words when communicating
- Do ensure that any communications presented by the service is available in a different language.

Click on the link below for good practice guidelines on the use of interpreters for domestic abuse situations.

<https://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/Sheffield-Guidance-for-Use-of-Interpreters-in-situations-of-Domestic-and-Sexual-Abuse-FINAL-May-16.pdf>

**Disability**

In 2021, 20.4% of Doncaster residents identified as disabled under the Equality Act. This has decreased from 23.2% in 2011.

If a person has a disability, whether male or female, their chances of experiencing domestic abuse are greatly increased:

- Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as non-disabled women. (Women's Aid 2012). Disabled men and men with mental health problems are at greater risk of domestic abuse than non-disabled men. (Respect 2014).
- Studies show that 80% of disabled women have been sexually abused (Women's Aid 2012).
- 48% of cases involving older adults are those that cannot physically care for themselves (WA 2012).
- 1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse. Therefore 50% of disabled women experience domestic abuse.

Often the carer is a partner or family member. Research by Women's Aid (2008) found that many people with disabilities were afraid to speak out about the abuse due to fear of the carer (who is a partner or family member) leaving and them being left alone. They were reliant on the perpetrator for care and support, they were also afraid of losing their independence, and losing their care package. Many people were afraid of not being believed as the perpetrator who the carer was seen by friends and family as a 'hero' and 'selfless.' The ability to disclose may be reduced if the carer/perpetrator attends all appointments and is at all contacts.

Research has also found that sexual abuse was used as another form of control and power over women with disabilities as well as being used to humiliate and degrade.

Abuse can include with-holding medication, over medicating, refusing care e.g., taking to the toilet, washing, not feeding the person, threats to leave. The person's impairments are used to belittle and exercise control.

Disabled victims of domestic abuse are more likely to develop care and support needs including mental health, substance misuse and long-term health effects.

In addition, not all refuges are equipped to accommodate people with reduced mobility, complex health needs or disabilities, which therefore can reduce some of the safety and exit plans options available to that person.

Where the adult is vulnerable and is being abused or at risk of being abused this should be reported to <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/doitonline/reporting-a-safeguarding-concern>

## **Drugs and alcohol**

Alcohol and drugs are not causal factors in domestic abuse incidents however some domestic abuse incidents occur when people are in drink/drug misuse. Understanding the role that alcohol/drugs plays when domestic abuse happens is important, but there are wider considerations that are not always obvious. The victim may use alcohol/drugs as a method of coping with the abuse they are experiencing and the person harming them may use alcohol/drugs as a method to control for example by withholding the substance or by encouraging the victim to drink/take drugs. Therefore, the link between the domestic abuse and any alcohol/drug use should be carefully explored and fully understood and any plans for the family should take this into consideration

Although substance use does not cause domestic violence, there is a clear link between the two.

- A UK study showed that 51% of respondents from domestic abuse agencies claimed that either themselves or their partners had used drugs, alcohol and/or prescribed medication in problematic ways in the last five years
- Almost two thirds of survivors drawn from domestic abuse agencies in the same study showed that they began their problematic substance use following their experiences of domestic violence
- Another UK study of 60 women using crack cocaine found that 40% reported being regularly physically assaulted by a current partner and 75% being physically assaulted by a current or past partner
- A US study reports that 60% of women accessing drug or alcohol services (n = 360) reported current or past domestic abuse
- The Yale trauma study showed that abused women are 15 times more likely to use alcohol and 9 times more likely to use drugs than non-abused women

- Findings from a review of the British Crime Surveys revealed that 44% of domestic violence offenders were under the influence of alcohol and 12% affected by drugs when they committed acts of physical violence

Figures taken from the AVA Stella Project Toolkit:  
[Stella-Project-Toolkit-2007.pdf \(avaproject.org.uk\)](#)

Barriers to leaving a relationship when there is substance use involved:

- The victim may be more likely to lose their children
- They may be dependent on the abuser for the substance or financially dependent
- They may be less likely to be able to access counselling and less likely to benefit from it while still using alcohol or substance
- They may be less likely to be admitted to a refuge or provided with temporary and permanent housing

In addition, injuries might be explained as due to being under the influence of drugs/alcohol rather than due to domestic abuse.

Guidance when working with victims/perpetrators/families where there is substance/problematic alcohol use:

- All agencies should take a trauma informed approach and ensure that they are not victim blaming and are dealing with the cause of the trauma and substance/alcohol use
- Working in partnership with drug and alcohol agencies will ensure that there are multiple sources of support for the individual with the right level of expertise. This could improve outcomes and reduce repeat victimisation/serial perpetrators
- Consider safeguarding issues for children, vulnerable adults as well as the victim and how drugs and alcohol alter the risk levels and potential intervention
- Many survivors use drugs and alcohol as a strategy to cope with the abuse. You need to address the substance misuse alongside the abuse and the trauma that has been caused
- Remember that the stress of withdrawal and/or relapse of the violent partner may increase their abuse and the risk to the victim/family

## Immigration

Concerns relating to the immigration status of the victim is a huge barrier to reporting and accessing support, particularly if the victim has no recourse to public funds.

Any immigration case must be dealt with by an advisor regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). Immigration law is complex and wrong advice can cost a client a lot of money and result in dire consequences e.g., deportation or destitution. Phoenix WoMen's Aid, a partner in the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub is regulated to provide Level 1 Immigration Advice and Support.

Their work includes:

- Asylum.
- Nationality.
- Family Immigration including Spousal Visa, passport applications and advice and support with Indefinite Leave to Remain.
- Provide assistance to enable them to access Life in the UK test,
- Biometric testing.
- Provide certified translation and interpretation of legal documents.
- Provide interpretation and translation services.
- Referral to relevant agencies including Immigration and Human Rights Solicitors.

As with all domestic abuse support this specialist immigration support can be accessed via the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub. Please note on the DA Hub referral form that immigration advice is required and email your referral and DASH risk assessment to [dahub@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:dahub@doncaster.gov.uk)

## **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans + (LGBT+)**

In Doncaster 2.6% of residents identified with an LGB+ orientation (“Lesbian”, “Gay”, “Bisexual” or “Other sexual orientation”)

There are many myths and stereotypes which minimise the experience for LGBT+ victims of abuse and make it difficult for victims to seek help.

Common myths and stereotypes are:

- Abuse doesn’t happen in same sex relationships
- Abuse in same sex relationships is not as serious as heterosexual abuse
- Abuse is more likely to be mutual
- Abuse is about size and strength - an abusive lesbian will be the more masculine one and a gay male victim will be the smaller one.
- Sexual abuse does not happen in same sex relationship – a woman cannot sexually assault another woman and a man cannot be raped,

These myths and stereotypes make it harder for professionals to feel confident to identify a perpetrator and make it difficult for LGBT+ stories of abuse to be told and heard

### Existence of LGBT+ Domestic Abuse

- 25% of lesbian and bisexual women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship (Stonewall, 2017)
- Almost half (49%) of gay and bi men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16 (Stonewall, 2017)
- 80% of trans people have experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner (Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2010)

There are also some issues which are unique to the experiences of LGBT+ people

- The perpetrator may threaten to ‘out’ the victim to friends, family, colleagues, and others as a method of control.
- A victim may believe they deserve abuse due to internalised negative beliefs about themselves
- With specific reference to trans people the perpetrator may withhold medication or prevent treatment needed to express victim’s gender identity
- Refuse to use correct pronouns and prevent the abused from telling other people about their trans identity
- Ridicule the person’s body image (body shaming)

Barriers faced by LGBT+ people in accessing non-LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Services

Structural barriers include:

- Lack of visibility that the service is also for LGBT+ people – e.g., on website/leaflets
- Services refusing individuals based on gender identity or perceived gender identity

- Lack of knowledge and confidence amongst professionals to work with minority gender and sexual identities
- Professionals relying on myths and stereotypes which minimises risk experienced by LGBT+ people

Individual barriers include:

- An LGBT+ victim people not identifying their experience as domestic abuse as they don't recognise it happens in LGBT+ relationship
- A victim might believe that no help is available due to experienced or perceived homo/bi/transphobia of support services and criminal justice system.
- Belief than non- LGBT+ services are not for LGBT+ people

### **Ethnic minority + LGBT**

The experience of someone who belongs to an ethnic minority background as well as identifying themselves as part of the LGBT+ community may differ from the experience of their white LGBT+ counterpart.

The type of abuse that they are vulnerable to may differ as well as the barriers that prevent them from reporting and accessing service. Therefore, it is vital we take an intersectional approach and understanding to each case to ensure that suitable support is available.

An example of a risk factor for ethnic minority and LGBT+ individuals is forced marriage. An individual may be forced into an arranged marriage to someone of the opposite sex to conform to a heterosexual relationship by their family. They may also be victims of intrusive and harmful 'conversion therapies' to "cure" their homosexuality.

To find out more about this issue:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/05/18/lgbtq-forced-marriage-research-university-of-bristol-university-of-lincoln/>

<https://www.doncasterpride.co.uk/lgbt-domestic-abuse-support>

### **Male victims**

There are myths about men who suffer domestic abuse, with some people thinking that it doesn't happen to men. Men who are victims are not 'real men' and that the law only protects women. These myths are of course completely untrue, but it is possibly why male domestic abuse victims do not report the abuse (Crime Survey England and Wales).

- Of those that suffered from partner abuse 29% men and 23% of women suffered a physical injury, a higher proportion of men suffering severe bruising or bleeding (6%) and internal injuries or broken bones/teeth (2%) than women (4% and 1% respectively). 30% of men who suffer partner abuse have emotional and mental problems (47% women). Only 27% of men sought medical advice (73% of women)
- In terms of mental and psychological effects felt as a result of the partner abuse experienced in 17/18, 41.2% of men suffered from mental or emotional problems (55.8% women). 11% of male victims (7.2%) had tried to take their own lives.
- Nearly half of male victims fail to tell anyone they are a victim of domestic (only 51% tell anyone). They are nearly three times less likely to tell anyone than a female victim (49% as opposed to 19%). This has worsened since 2015/16 where the figures were 61% for men (88% women).

(ManKind 2019)

In Doncaster all domestic abuse services are available to **ALL** victims.

One of the main barriers for men to report abuse is the stigma associated with being the 'victim'. Speaking up as a victim of abuse and being seen as taken advantage of is seen as not being 'masculine'. This fear of being stigmatised can lead male victims to isolate themselves and not reach out to their friends, family, or services for support.

The fear of a counter-allegation as well as the fear of services not believing that they are the victim in this situation can cause many men to hesitate and/or not proceed to report the abuse. The possibility of a counter-allegation may cause restrictions regarding child custody rights as well as the fear of losing their job.

## **Older People**

Within Doncaster there is a greater number of residents aged 55 to 70 compared to the national average.

Older people might not identify themselves as victims of domestic abuse as the term domestic abuse is a relatively new way of describing abusive behaviour in relationships for the general public. It is even less likely to be recognised if the abuser is not their husband/wife as people often think of partners/ex-partners when the term domestic abuse is used. There is an increase in adult child to parent abuse - some research suggests in up to 25% of cases where older women are abused. Financial abuse is also a common factor, particularly when an adult child is the abuser.

Until recently, the Crime Survey of England and Wales has only collected information on victims and survivors aged 74 and under, neglecting and overlooking those aged 75+. Therefore, while domestic abuse has been a present issue for those aged 75+ there is little historic data that can be utilised for this neglected community. Therefore, it is vital we educate ourselves and remain vigilant in addressing domestic abuse for this community.

The research commissioned by Action on Elder Abuse in 2004 undertaken by Kings College identified that in any given year some 350000 elder adults aged 65+ may be abused. More than 60% of reported cases the perpetrator was a family member, known to them or was a principal carer.

There may be fewer services involved with older people and they could be more isolated, making it difficult to report the abuse or have someone else who will notice and report the abuse.

Additional barriers facing older people could include:

- Abuser may also be their carer.
- The victim may care for the abuser, making them feel additional guilt for leaving.
- The abuser may be his/her child(ren) – additional barriers to reporting a child and criminalising a son or daughter.
- Many older survivors have lived in the same area, or even house, for many years. It may be more difficult for them to access new social networks and facilities.
- Some older people have problems with mobility or complex health problems and not all refuges are equipped to accommodate these additional needs

Where the adult is vulnerable and is being abused or at risk of being abused this should be reported to <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/doitonline/reporting-a-safeguarding-concern>

For further information:

<https://wearehourglass.org/abuse>

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/age\\_uk\\_no\\_age\\_limit\\_sept2020.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/age_uk_no_age_limit_sept2020.pdf)

## **Teenage abusive relationships**

Domestic abuse in teenage relationships can be just as dangerous and traumatic as abuse in adult relationships. Victims under 16 should be treated as victims of child abuse and age-appropriate consequences should be considered for perpetrators under 16. Abuse involving perpetrators and victims aged between 16 and 18 could be both child and domestic abuse.

A recent NSPCC survey showed that 25% of girls and 18% of boys have experienced physical violence in a relationship.

As with adults, abuse in teen relationships doesn't just cover physical violence. Other examples of this type of abuse include:

- Pressuring you into having sex.
- Controlling behaviour including what friends you can see or speak to and where you go.
- Jealousy or anger.
- Threatening to put lies, personal information, pictures on social networking sites.
- Constant name calling and comments.

Research completed by the NSPCC into partner exploitation and partner violence in teenage intimate relationships revealed that for girls in particular, having an older partner, and especially a "much older" partner, was a significant risk factor. Overall, three-quarters of girls with a "much older" partner experienced physical violence, 80 per cent emotional violence and 75 per cent sexual violence.

In those circumstances where the victim is under 18 years old and the perpetrator is 18 years or above, or if both victim and perpetrator are under 18 years, this should also be treated as a child safeguarding concern. A referral/signposting can also be made to specialist domestic abuse services when deemed appropriate. In the event that a child is known to be involved in a violent relationship, the practitioner should consider undertaking an Early Help Assessment. Should the practitioner subsequently decide they would like a consultation with an Early Help Advisor regarding their next steps this should be arranged. During the course of any such discussions the practitioner may find it helpful to consider with the Early Help Advisor whether the matter meets the threshold for social care intervention.

If the practitioner believes the child is at immediate risk then they should contact the police and initiate child protection procedures by contacting City of Doncaster Council Children's Services on tel: 01302 737 777 and reporting a safeguarding concern; e.g. a child involved in a relationship with a violent girlfriend/boyfriend.

In addition Cranstoun (providers of the Inspire to Change voluntary perpetrator programme in South Yorkshire) also deliver an intervention for young people who are causing harm towards others (either in intimate relationships or family members). The programme is call Level Up and has been designed specifically for young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

[Level Up - Cranstoun](#)

## Asking the Question

Victims of domestic abuse are often too afraid or uncomfortable to raise the issue of abuse themselves. Practitioners should be prepared to ask questions sensitively, but directly.

For example:

- Can you tell me what's been happening?
- You seem upset. How are things?
- Are you frightened of someone/something?
- How are things at home?
- Did someone hurt you?
- How did you get those injuries?
- Are you in a relationship in which you have been physically hurt or threatened by your partner?
- Have you ever been in such a relationship?
- Do you ever feel frightened by your partner or other people at home?
- Are you (or have you ever been) in a relationship in which you felt you were badly treated? In what ways?
- Has your partner destroyed things that you care about?
- Has your partner ever threatened to harm your family? Do you believe that he/she would?
- What happens when you and your partner disagree?
- Has your partner ever prevented you from leaving the house, seeing friends, getting a job or continuing in education?
- What would happen if you wanted to go out with friends?
- Does your partner restrict your access to money or access your Child Benefit or allowances?
- Has your partner ever hit, punched, pushed, shoved or slapped you?
- Has your partner ever threatened you with a weapon?
- Does your partner use drugs or alcohol excessively? If so, how does he/she behave at this time?
- Do you ever feel you have to walk on eggshells around your partner?
- Have the police ever been involved?
- Have you ever been physically hurt in any way when you were pregnant?
- Has your partner ever threatened to harm the children? Or to take them away from you?

Basic Principles:

Make sure that the time and place is appropriate when asking the question e.g., not when he/she is about to pick the children up, go to work or an appointment, or there are other people around. If you suspect domestic abuse, make sure that the perpetrator is not likely to interrupt you/come home. If you need to complete a risk assessment, make sure you have plenty of time - there are 27 risk factors to go through.

Be cautious about the phrasing of the question, especially if the person you are supporting could be easily influenced by potentially leading questions. Some people could say what they think you want to hear.

## Risk Assessment

**If you have evidence of domestic abuse, a disclosure has been made to you or an agency or a member of the public has shared concerns with you relating to domestic abuse you,**

**or a competent practitioner within your agency, must make every effort to complete a DASH risk assessment with the victim.** This will help you to explore the risks to the victim. There may be occasions when it is not possible to undertake a DASH risk assessment e.g. victim denies there is any abuse, you don't have any evidence or the individual leaves the service before a DASH has been completed. In these circumstances you must ensure that you have tried to follow up any safeguarding concerns with the individual and, if required, followed Adult and Child safeguarding processes.

You should also provide information about support services and that you have carefully documented what you have done and the reason why the DASH has not been completed. Your decision needs to be defensible.

To be competent in completing a DASH risk assessment the practitioner must have completed the full one-day training on DASH and the MARAC. For training dates and how to book go to: <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/crime-anti-social-behaviour-nuisance/domestic-abuse-training>

**Practitioners must be aware that the responsibility for safeguarding and for managing risk does not end once a referral has been made to another agency or multi-agency arena.**

The DASH allows professionals to make an assessment of risk relating to domestic abuse and ultimately can help determine the course of action that is required. **The assessment should be carried out at once, by the practitioner who identifies the concern wherever possible and safe. Where this is not appropriate, the assessment should be carried out as soon as possible by the practitioner who identifies the concern, or the colleague identified in the organisations internal procedures.**

**If a referral has been made to you with an accompanying DASH risk assessment the practitioner should complete their own risk assessment with the victim.** This might seem like duplication, but it is important that the practitioner establishes the facts as:

- a) Victims will disclose different information to different practitioners
- b) Risk is dynamic and could have changed since the last risk assessment and referral was made
- c) It demonstrates to the victim that practitioners in Doncaster understand domestic abuse and the risk factors. We are all speaking the same language
- d) It supports your management of the case
- e) The DASH provides a prompt for the practitioner to explore the victim's situation and assess what help and support is needed

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. It is important that you document the answers and keep a record of the outcomes in line with your own agency protocols. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for the full DASH risk assessment.

### **Additional factors**

There are a number of factors that have the potential to increase the risk of abuse in relationships and accordingly increase the risk of harm to victims, children, dependents and perpetrators. The impact of mental health problems/issues, problematic drug and alcohol use should be considered as additional risk factors which should be planned for accordingly in collaboration with the client and relevant professionals where they are involved.

It is highlighted in Serious Case Reviews and in statutory safeguarding guidance that known risk factors for families are where problematic alcohol and/or drug use and parental mental health problems co-occur with domestic abuse (sometimes known as the Toxic Trio). Nearly a third of mothers (31%) and a third of fathers (32%) had disclosed mental health problems, problematic

drug and alcohol use, or both. (*SAFELIVES, In plain sight: The evidence from children exposed to domestic abuse, February 2014*)

## What happens after risk assessment and what are the referral pathways?

On completion of the risk assessment, you should decide on your course of action. The DASH risk assessment will help you to determine the most appropriate course of action and what response is required. It is important that practitioners become familiar with this risk assessment and referral pathways so that resources and intervention can be allocated accordingly.

Risk identification, assessment and risk management will not remove the risk to the victim entirely, but by taking positive action risk management and information sharing can help to reduce the probability of harm. **Always consider whether you need to take any immediate action to safeguard the victim, any children or vulnerable adults, or share any information with agencies to safeguard the victim/family. Other safeguarding policies and procedures you will need to consider can be found at:**

- Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board policies and procedures <http://www.dscb.co.uk/professionals>
- Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board policies and procedures <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/adult-social-care/safeguarding-adults-policy-and-procedures>

On completion of the risk assessment you will be able to make a judgment of whether the victim is at high risk of significant harm or death. This is when:

- There are clear risk factors identified on the risk assessment.
- You can see escalation of the abuse, either in frequency or severity and/or.
- Using your professional judgement you believe that the victim is high risk.

If you believe the victim to be at imminent high risk of significant harm or death and a crime has been committed you must contact the police, call 999 and make an emergency referral to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). If further significant harm or death is not considered to be imminent you should still encourage the victim to report the abuse to South Yorkshire Police and make a referral to MARAC. If a crime has been committed, but there is no immediate danger, dial 101. 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). Please refer to the MARAC referral process section below.

If you do not consider the victim to be high risk of serious harm or death and that the risk is not imminent, then you should always ensure that details of the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub are provided, or support them to make a self-referral, or ask if they would like you to make the referral on their behalf. It is also good practice to provide safety advice/information ([see Appendix B](#)).

If there are children linked to the victim or perpetrator and you believe that a child or children are being affected by domestic abuse, then please refer to the Children's referral process below. You should also consider whether a Safeguarding Adult Referral is needed.

### High Risk Referral Process (MARAC and IDVA service)

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) - The MARAC process ensures a timely risk assessment of the circumstances affecting a victim of domestic abuse, ensures that those individuals believed to be at high risk of serious harm or death are linked directly with appropriate

services, providing a co-ordinated multi-agency response to high-risk domestic abuse cases in a single meeting.

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). The role of the IDVA is to discuss risk and safety, provide information about options available and be the voice of the victim at the MARAC. A leaflet about the Role of the IDVA is available on the practitioner pages of the Domestic Abuse website:

[www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse)

You must then contact the MARAC representative for your service before submitting the referral. Under no circumstances should the perpetrator of domestic abuse be informed if a case involving them has been referred to MARAC. This includes Subject Access Requests.

If the victim has already been heard at MARAC and there has been a further significant incident with the same perpetrator, a repeat referral should be made via your MARAC representative. See the MARAC Operating Protocol for 'repeat referral' criteria and procedures.

Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. If you feel that the victim is NOT at high risk of significant harm or death you should still ensure that they are referred or given information about local specialist domestic abuse services. Consider whether you need to share information with any other agency to safeguard the victim/family or prevent a crime.

For more detailed guidance on the MARAC process contact your MARAC representative. If you do not know who your MARAC representative is, contact your supervisor. If you are still in doubt, or your agency does not have a MARAC representative, please contact the MARAC Administrator at Doncaster Council on **01302 737080** or via secure email at [MARAC@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:MARAC@doncaster.gov.uk)

[MARAC - Doncaster Council](#)

### **Specialist DA Services for non-high-risk victims – The Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub**

The Domestic Abuse Hub is a partnership arrangement between providers of specialist domestic abuse services. These are:

- City of Doncaster Council (Domestic Abuse Caseworkers and IDVA service)
- City of Doncaster Council Children's Services (Domestic Abuse Navigators)
- City of Doncaster Council Survivor Liaison Service
- Phoenix WoMen's Aid
- Riverside Housing Group

Specialist domestic abuse services have experienced staff that work with victims and survivors of domestic abuse. They can provide practical and emotional help and support. These services also work with many other agencies that support the wider needs of victims e.g., housing agencies, police, offender management agencies, health etc.

If you do not consider the victim to be high risk of serious harm or death and that the risk is not imminent, then you should always ensure that details of the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub are provided, or support them to make a self-referral, or ask if they would like you to make the referral on their behalf. [Domestic abuse - Support for victims - City of Doncaster Council](#)  
[Refer someone for support - City of Doncaster Council](#)

It is also good practice to provide safety advice/information ([see Appendix B](#)). (Those people who are at high risk of serious harm or death should be referred directly to the MARAC – see section 11.1 above).

The Domestic Abuse Hub is where all non-high risk domestic abuse referrals are coordinated to ensure that there is a single point of contact for victims and professionals. Advisors in the Hub will then speak to the victim and determine which service will most effectively meet their needs. This process of having one coordinated approach to accessing a wide range of support makes it much simpler for practitioners to know who to refer to and for victims to self-refer for support.

See the Referral Pathway below. [Refer someone for support - City of Doncaster Council](#)

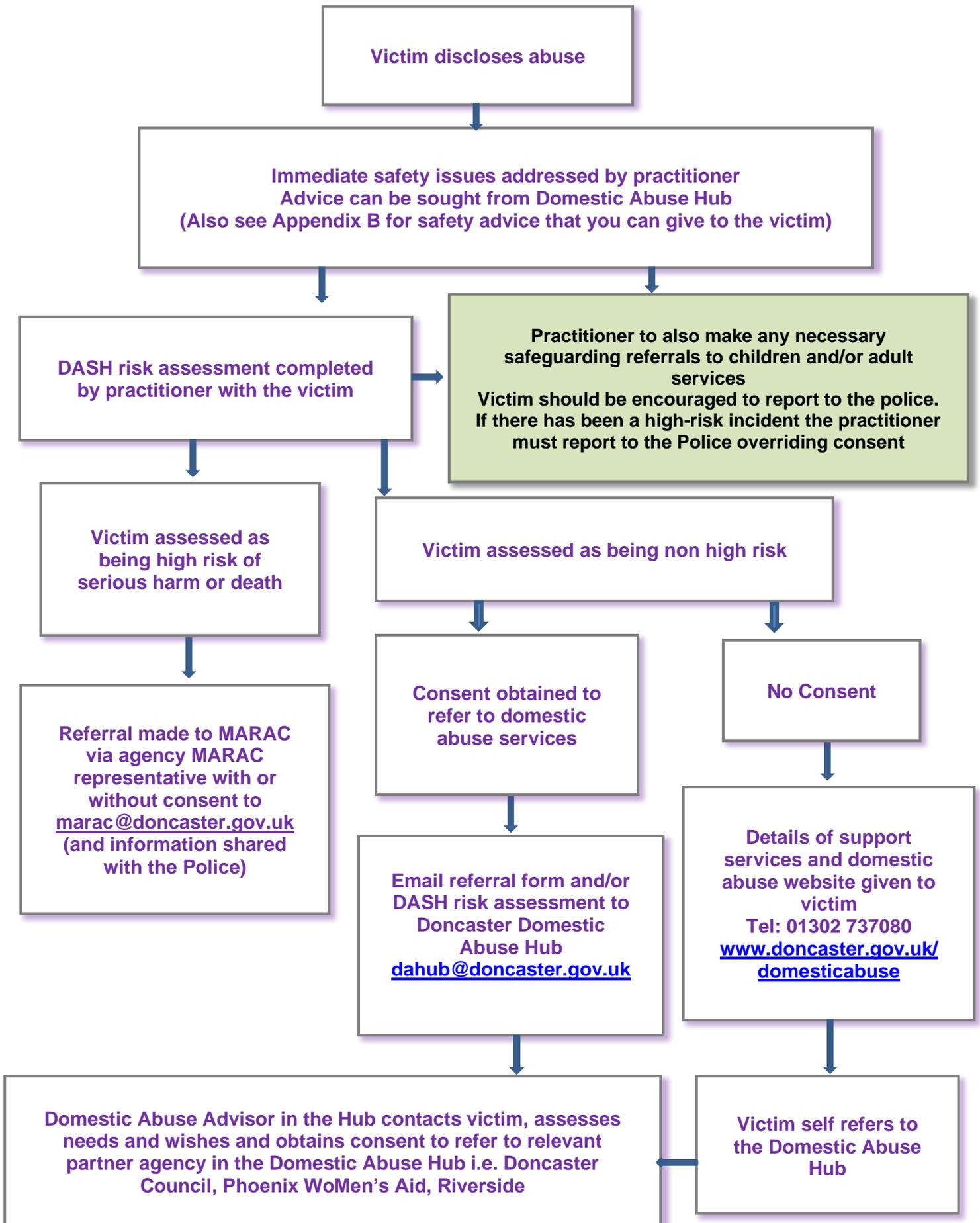
## Referral Pathways

Wherever possible agencies should aim to have professionals within the service area that can complete a domestic abuse risk assessment. However, service areas that have minimal contact with victims e.g., general customer services may not be able to complete an in-depth risk assessment. Below are two referral pathways – the first is a simple referral pathway for service areas with minimal face to face/casework type contact with victims. The second referral pathway is for service areas that are working directly with victims/families.

## Simple Referral Pathway



## Doncaster Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway with Risk Assessment



## What happens after a referral has been sent to the domestic abuse hub?

The domestic abuse hub will contact every victim that is referred into the service with consent. Once contact has been made their needs, wishes and risk factors will be discussed with them. Some people may only want advice and information which will be given to them. Other people will want additional support. The domestic abuse advisors in the Hub will determine which service is needed and make the appropriate onward referral. This could include:

### **Doncaster Council Domestic Abuse Caseworkers**

The domestic abuse caseworkers at Doncaster Council provide practical and emotional support to victims of domestic abuse. The support is individually tailored based on the needs and risks involved. Referral to a domestic abuse caseworker is following a conversation with the victim by the domestic abuse advisors in the domestic abuse hub.

[Refer someone for support - Doncaster Council](#)

### **Doncaster Council Survivor Liaison Service**

For people that are no longer in abusive relationship but are still suffering from the long term impact of the trauma caused, Doncaster Council provides a Survivor Liaison Service. The Survivor Liaison Workers will work with the survivor of domestic abuse for as long as the person requires support. The aim is to help the survivor not only 'survive' domestic abuse but thrive. The support may consist of one to one emotional and practical support and/or support groups.

Survivor support can be accessed through the Domestic Abuse Hub.

For more information visit: [Domestic abuse survivor zone - Doncaster Council](#)

### **Phoenix WoMen's Aid**

Phoenix WoMen's Aid is an independent charity in Doncaster supporting victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

Services include safe accommodation, advice, counselling, advocacy, training, office-based and out in the community 7 days a week.

Phoenix WoMen's Aid work closely with the Hub and will often accept onward referrals for support after the domestic abuse advisor in the Hub has ascertained the requirements of the victim.

Victims and survivors of domestic abuse can also approach Phoenix WoMen's Aid directly for support.

[Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Charity | Phoenix WoMen's Aid \(phoenixwomensaid.org.uk\)](#)

### **Emergency safe accommodation/sanctuary**

If the victim/family need to flee their home due to domestic abuse the Hub Advisor will try to find alternative safe accommodation either through St. Leger Housing Options or through the national network of domestic abuse refuges.

In some cases the victim may be able to stay in their property with onward referral to a domestic abuse caseworker, improving the security of the property through the [Doncaster Sanctuary Scheme](#) and with enforcement action against the perpetrator.

### **Doncaster Council's IDVA service and MARAC**

If after speaking to the victim the Hub advisor believes the victim to be at high risk of further serious harm or death a referral will be made to the Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates at Doncaster Council and referred into the [Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference](#).

## Other specialist domestic abuse intervention for victims/whole family

A wide range of additional support and intervention is available to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse that can be accessed either via the specialist domestic abuse workers in the Hub or the IDVA service and MARAC or directly from the agencies that lead on them:

### Civil injunctions

An 'injunction' is a court order that makes someone act or forbids someone from acting in a certain way. An emergency injunction is an informal description for a court order made without notice/ex parte – it means the person you are applying against will not be aware of the injunction until it is served on him/her.

Here is some basic information about emergency injunctions that can be applied for in relation to domestic abuse:

#### Non-Molestation Order

Usually forbids an abuser from using or threatening physical violence, intimidating, harassing or pestering communication with you. If this order is breached the perpetrator can be arrested.

#### Occupation Order

Regulates the family home, such as suspending rights to occupy or visit, evicting an abuser from the home, preventing an abuser from returning, preventing an abuser from coming within a certain distance of the home.

#### Prohibited Steps Order

This forbids someone from taking your child away from your care and control. This order is particularly appropriate when the person threatening to take away your child(ren) is ordinarily allowed to have the care and control of them. There is no power of arrest attached though police may assist informally. It is also enforceable in the County Court as contempt of court. It does not necessarily prevent all contact between the child(ren) and the respondent if appropriate in the circumstances.

More information about obtaining an injunction can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/injunction-domestic-violence>. Victims can also contact a local solicitor. Domestic abuse agencies can sometimes provide letters of support to enable some people to access legal aid for injunctions (subject to means testing).

### Domestic Abuse Navigator Service (DANs)

As part of City of Doncaster Council Children's Services, the DAN service offers a whole family approach to domestic abuse. The service works with families where the domestic abuse is risk assessed as high risk, where additional complexity exists in the form of substance misuse, mental health and/or learning disabilities, and where there is an identified impact on any children.

The work stream for the DAN service is through the MARAC process.

The DAN service works with families to support them to stay together or separate safely. Intervention is both psycho-educational and psycho-therapeutic dependent upon identified need. Working whole family tackles the cycle of abuse as it represents itself within the relationship itself, in future relationships and inter-generationally.

## Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) (also known as Clare's Law)

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme was launched in Doncaster in 2014. A police led scheme, with two routes available 'Right to Ask' & 'Right to Know'.

The scheme has the following key principles:

- Introduce recognised and consistent procedures for disclosing information to persons with concerns about a current partner. It enables a current partner of a violent individual to make informed choices about whether, and how, to take forward that relationship.
- Disclosure is considered if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to protect a potential person at risk from harm.
- Disclosure MUST be accompanied by a robust safety plan, based on all relevant information, which delivers on-going support to the potential person at risk.

### Right to know

As a practitioner, if you are aware of the risk to a victim you should make a referral to South Yorkshire Police under the Right to Know route.

Should someone be at immediate risk of harm, always call 999 in an emergency. For further information and to make a request for a disclosure email:

[doncaster\\_ppureferrals@southyorks.pnn.police.uk](mailto:doncaster_ppureferrals@southyorks.pnn.police.uk)

Professionals should also ensure that they are making people aware of the Right to Ask where there is no confirmed risk but a suspicion of a history of abuse by the perpetrator.

### Right to ask

Clare's Law 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.

Once an application is made, police and partner agencies will carry out a range of checks. If these reveal a record of abusive offences, or suggest a risk of violence or abuse, the police will consider sharing this information. The aim is to help people to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship and provide help and support when making that choice.

If the Police decide to make a disclosure, this will usually be made to the person at risk. This is unless, in the circumstances, someone else is better placed to use the information to protect them from abuse.

Any disclosure will be made in person - none of the disclosure is made in writing and you will not be given any documentation.

To make an application the person enquiring will need to attend a police station in person or contact 101 where a police officer or member of police staff will take the details of the enquiry. They will also establish a safe way to contact the victim.

Professionals should ensure that they are making people aware of the Right to Ask.

For more information visit the [South Yorkshire Police website](#)

## Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders

In 2014, South Yorkshire Police introduced Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO). The Crime and Security Act 2010 provides the Police with additional powers to protect victims of domestic violence and abuse, with the objective of securing a co-ordinated approach across agencies for the protection of victims and the management of perpetrators. The DVPN/DVPO process is not intended to replace the Criminal Justice system in respect of charge and bail of a perpetrator. A DVPN will be issued in circumstances where no enforceable restrictions can be placed upon the perpetrator. A DVPO can then be applied for up to a maximum period of 28 days.

Email for more information: [CRU\\_DomesticAbuseAdmin@southyorks.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CRU_DomesticAbuseAdmin@southyorks.pnn.police.uk)

## Emergency accommodation for victims fleeing domestic abuse

Some victims will not be able to stay in their current home because they might not have a legal right to remain or the risk to them is too high.

Refuge and dispersed accommodation

You can contact the provider of the Doncaster Refuge and dispersed accommodation service directly to make a referral for a victim if it is safe for them to remain the area. Practitioners can call: 01302 883599 or 07980789061

Email address: [victoriahouseservices@riverside.org.uk](mailto:victoriahouseservices@riverside.org.uk)

If it is not safe for the victim to remain in the area, or it is out of normal working hours, contact the National 24-hour domestic helpline for availability of refuge accommodation throughout the Country. Tel: 0808 2000 247.

Homeless Team

St. Leger Housing can provide support, information and advice about emergency accommodation and longer-term housing options and solutions. Tel: 01302 862862.

## Getting on

Getting On is a nine-week group work programme for families who are experiencing Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA). Developed from research findings the programme takes a restorative justice approach and focuses on the reparation between the young person and their female parent/carer. Groups are separated and run concurrently with young people in one group and female parent/carers in the other. Learning across both groups is mirrored and safety is a primary consideration.

To refer a family to Getting On professionals need to obtain a referral form and send it to [GettingOn@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:GettingOn@doncaster.gov.uk)

## Level up

Cranstoun (providers of the Inspire to Change voluntary perpetrator programme in South Yorkshire) also deliver an intervention for young people who are causing harm towards others (either in intimate relationships or family members). The programme is called Level Up and has been designed specifically for young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

[Level Up - Cranstoun](#)

## Restraining orders

Unlike the civil injunctions outlined above Restraining Orders may be made on conviction or acquittal for any criminal offence. These orders are intended to be preventative and protective. The guiding principle is that there must be a need for the order to protect a person or persons. A restraining order is therefore preventative, not punitive.

The types of cases in which a restraining order may be appropriate include:

- cases where the defendant and witness know each other or have been in a previous intimate relationship (such as domestic violence cases).
- cases where the parties have ongoing contact (for example, where the victim runs a local business); or
- cases where there is evidence that the victim has been targeted by the defendant in some way (for example, continued minor public order offences or criminal damage).

However, restraining orders are not limited to these types of cases. The overriding consideration should always be whether a restraining order is required to protect the victim or other person.

Any breach of an injunction or restraining order should be reported to the Police.

## Safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse

The **Doncaster Safe at Home Scheme** has been created to enable victims of domestic abuse to remain in their home, reduce the fear of crime, improve their safety while in the home and therefore prevent them from having to leave their home, work and support networks.

Improving the security of homes has been proven to help reduce homeless applications and improve the quality of life for victims. It is not the answer for all victims but is another tool that can be used.

The scheme will hopefully prevent homelessness across all tenures by ensuring that, with the addition of appropriate security measures and support, victims of domestic abuse feel able to remain in their homes.

To be eligible for security adaptations through this scheme the perpetrator must not have any legal right to be at the property, the owner of the property must agree to the works being carried out and the victim must be engaging with domestic abuse services who can provide the safety advice and risk management information and guidance.

For more information and to access the referral forms please email [Sophie.bishop@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.bishop@doncaster.gov.uk)

Please note: If the victim lives in a St. Leger property they should be referred to St. Leger for the target hardening initiative for St. Leger tenants. [Safe and Secure Scheme \(stlegerhomes.co.uk\)](http://stlegerhomes.co.uk)

**South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR)** operate a Safe and Well scheme to vulnerable people across the region. This includes victims of domestic abuse who could be at of arson from the perpetrator. SYFR can perform a free Safe and Well check during which firefighters will give advice on how to make the home safer and plan what to do in the event of a fire. They will also fit free smoke alarms if the property is without one, provide well-being advice and refer to others for support as needed. In some cases where there is a serious risk further intervention may be required to reduce any fire risks. This work may involve the provision of fire safety equipment such as deaf alarms, blanking plates to cover letterboxes etc.

The scheme can be accessed via the partner agencies in the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Hub. The domestic abuse worker will assess risks to, and the vulnerability of, the victim and make a referral to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue as part of the victim's support plan.

## Specialist intervention and enforcement for people causing harm

Doncaster Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership is responding to the needs of all domestic abuse perpetrators through the development and delivery of training and interventions aimed to reduce interpersonal violence. Individuals who use violence often have difficulties with emotional management, substance use and mental health which, if addressed, may reduce the likelihood of ongoing domestic abuse. Some perpetrators of domestic abuse may not be motivated to seek help. Engagement with support and intervention is significantly increased if professionals remain open and non-judgmental in their attempts to understand the perpetrators' reasons and motivations for using abusive behaviours. Continuing to increase our understanding of the complex reasons for domestic abuse is an essential part of reducing the harm caused to the lives of those affected by it.

People can be abusive without using physical violence, and this can have a devastating impact on families. Some perpetrators can appear to be caring and co-operative with agencies. Practitioners should be aware that some perpetrators may also try to manipulate professionals, their partners and other family members. Perpetrators may deny or minimise abuse, focus on the actions of others as the reason for their behaviour or avoid contact with those who seek to challenge them.

### Caring Dads

You will also see the initiative listed in the previous section – support for victims. That is because it is a whole family approach to tackling domestic abuse.

Provided by the Domestic Abuse Navigator Service within Doncaster Council's Children's Services, the Caring Dads programme is a seventeen-week evidence based programme that focuses on the relationship between father and child(ren) in the context of domestic abuse in the adult relationship. The aim of the programme is to increase safety for the mother and children, help fathers improve their relationships with their children and end controlling, abusive and neglectful behaviours within relationships.

Caring Dads referrals need to be sent to [CaringDads@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:CaringDads@doncaster.gov.uk)  
Caring Dads need a lead professional involved for the entire 17 weeks of the programme.

Note: if it is the mother causing harm in the relationship work can be done one to one with the mother and if there were to be sufficient numbers of mums causing harm in a domestic abuse situation the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership would consider commissioning a similar programme for Caring Dads. Evidence to date suggests that there is no demand for a group programme such as this.

### Getting On

You will also see the initiative listed in the previous section – support for victims. That is because it is a whole family approach to tackling domestic abuse.

Getting On is a nine-week group work programme for families who are experiencing Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA). Developed from research findings the programme takes a restorative justice approach and focuses on the reparation between the young person and their female parent/carer. Groups are separated and run concurrently with young people in one group and female parent/carers in the other. Learning across both groups is mirrored and safety is a primary consideration.

To refer a family to Getting On professionals need to obtain a referral form and send it to [GettingOn@dcstrust.co.uk](mailto:GettingOn@dcstrust.co.uk)

## Level Up

Cranstoun (providers of the Inspire to Change voluntary perpetrator programme in South Yorkshire) also deliver an intervention for young people who are causing harm towards others (either in intimate relationships or family members). The programme is called Level Up and has been designed specifically for young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

### [Level Up - Cranstoun](#)

## Inspire to change

Inspire to Change is a voluntary programme for men and women who are or who have been abusive, controlling or violent towards their partner or family member.

The course is delivered by Cranstoun.

At the first appointment fully trained staff will meet with participants to develop their own tailored engagement plan. Meetings can also be held online. The engagement plan may include:

- Setting up one-to-one sessions
- Participating in group work sessions

Staff will work closely with participants to ensure they feel comfortable and confident to take the next step in their Inspire to Change journey. Cranstoun Inspire to Change can also provide support and advice to help address wider issues linked to abusive behaviour such as addiction problems, debt and unemployment.

Support is also offered to victims of people on the programme.

[Support for people who want to change their abusive behaviour - Doncaster Council Inspire to Change, South Yorkshire - Cranstoun](#)

## MATAC

In March 2021 South Yorkshire Police introduced the Multi agency tasking and coordination (MATAC) in Doncaster. Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination involves regular meetings led by South Yorkshire Police, along with key partners, to assess and plan a bespoke set of interventions to target and disrupt serial perpetrators and/or support them to address their behaviour.

Currently the only agency that can refer a perpetrator into MATAC is South Yorkshire Police.

## MAPPA

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements or MAPPA is the process through which the police, probation and prison services work together with other agencies to assess and manage violent and sexual offenders in order to protect the public from harm. It is a system of sharing information and combining resources to maximise the risk management in place for each individual offender. Every MAPPA offender must qualify as one of the three categories outlined below:

### Category 1

Registered sexual offender. This includes offenders required to comply with notification requirements under Part 2 of the Sexual Offence Act 2003.

### Category 2

An offender who has been convicted of an offence under Schedule 15 of the CJA 2003 and:

- who has been sentenced to 12 months or more in custody, or

- who has been sentenced to 12 months or more in custody and is transferred to hospital under s47/s49 of the Mental Health Act 1983 ('MHA 1983'), or
- who is detained in hospital under s37 of the MHA 1983 with or without a restriction order under s41 of that Act.

### **Category 3**

Other dangerous offender: a person who has been cautioned for or convicted of an offence which indicates that he or she is capable of causing serious harm and which requires multi-agency management.

If a case falls into one of these 3 categories they are managed at one of 3 levels depending on the complexity of the case, the risk posed and the level of partnership working required to ensure the most effective risk management plan is in place

#### **Level 1 (ordinary agency management)**

Ordinary agency management is where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the lead agency. This does not mean that other agencies will not be involved, only that it is not necessary to refer the case to level 2 or 3.

It is essential that information sharing takes place, disclosure considered, and there are discussions between agencies as necessary.

#### **Level 2 (active multi-agency management)**

Level 2 management is necessary in cases that have been:

- assessed as posing a high or very high risk of serious harm
- identified as a lower risk but active involvement, interventions and coordination are required from other agencies to manage the risks of serious harm
- lowered from level 3
- identified as ones where multi-agency management adds value to the lead agency's management of the risk of serious harm posed.

#### **Level 3 (active enhanced multi-agency management)**

Level 3 cases are those that meet level 2 criteria but risk management requires senior representation from the Responsible Authorities and Duty To Corporate agencies.

These cases are likely to require significant resource allocation, or have media scrutiny or public interest considerations.

Level 2 and 3 is necessary in cases that have been assessed as posing high or very high risk of serious harm. This identifies cases where multi-agency management adds value to the lead agency's management of the risk of serious harm being posed. This process involves cases being discussed amongst a multi-agency panel to identify any risks, safeguarding issues and opportunities to protect the public. Part of the work with victims incorporates the use of Victim Liaison Officers, Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA's) and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA's).

### **Building Better Relationships (BBR)**

Building Better Relationships (BBR) is a 30 session programme for adult male perpetrators of domestic abuse committed within the context of an intimate relationship i.e. by a current or former partner or spouse. The programme is completed while in prison or in the community, either on licence or as a requirement to a community order. The aim of the programme is to reduce the risk of further violence being committed within a similar context.

The programme is accredited by the CSAAP as an effective and proven way of reducing re-offending. The accredited manuals detail how the programme should be delivered effectively and offer the recognised benchmark. In order to satisfy CSAAP, there must be a CSAAP approved framework in order to maintain quality and programme integrity.

- Consistent focus on outcomes

BBR is designed and proven to achieve the following strategic outcomes: delivering the sentence of the court, protecting the public from harm and reducing re-offending. These outcomes are more likely to be achieved if the programmes are delivered as designed. The Interventions Integrity Framework therefore enables providers to demonstrate their goals and achievements in relation to these outcomes.

- Offers an holistic approach

It is important that the Interventions Integrity Framework fits within a whole systems approach of service delivery. The framework uses a range of different methods to provide a holistic assessment of programme delivery. For example, observation of practise, monitoring of completions and listening to stakeholder feedback.

- Fully integrated with work on improvement and development

The Interventions Integrity Framework is a supportive process aimed at supporting development and improvement. The reports compiled by Interventions Services specialist clinicians will provide a clear assessment of the evidence whilst identifying both strengths and areas to develop.

## Respect Phone line

The Respect Phone line is a confidential and anonymous helpline for domestic abuse perpetrators looking for help to address their behaviour. The main focus of the Respect Phone line is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic abuse by engaging with the abusers to reduce the risk.

The phone line helps men and women in heterosexual or same-sex relationships who want to stop being violent and/or abusive towards a partner or ex-partner. It's also available for frontline workers who engage with domestic violence perpetrators in their work.

Opening hours: the Respect Phone line is open Monday - Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Call: free phone 0808 802 4040

Email: [info@respectphoneline.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphoneline.org.uk) (aim to reply within two working days).

Website: [www.respectphoneline.org.uk](http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk)

## Victim or perpetrator?

Sometimes there will be mutual abuse in relationships with both people being equally abusive. In these cases a DASH risk assessment should be completed on both people.

It is also important to remember that whilst we must not excuse abusive behaviour, the people that are being abusive often have underlying issues that we should try to help resolve. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are known to increase a person's risk of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of abuse. That does not mean that people who experience trauma or children who have experienced multiple ACEs are destined to worse outcomes in life but a sensitive awareness and appreciation of a person's life history could help understand choices made and how people respond to situations. It can also help professionals tailor support in a trauma informed way.

The ten adverse childhood experiences include five direct ACEs:

1. sexual abuse by parent/caregiver
2. emotional abuse by parent/caregiver
3. physical abuse by parent/caregiver
4. emotional neglect by parent/caregiver
5. physical neglect by parent/caregiver

and five indirect ACEs:

1. parent/caregiver addicted to alcohol/other drugs

2. witnessed abuse in the household
3. family member in prison
4. family member with a mental illness
5. parent/caregiver disappeared through abandoning family/divorce.

Practitioners are advised to take a trauma informed practice approach to both victims and perpetrators i.e., trying to look at what has happened in their past that is contributing to their current behaviour, and what support could be given to support them. When working with perpetrators this should be done in conjunction with helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour.

There are also occasions when a perpetrator of domestic abuse might masquerade as a victim or when a victim might become a perpetrator as they seek to change the power imbalance. Here are some particular signs that might indicate whether a person is a victim or a perpetrator (this is not conclusive or exhaustive, but practitioners should bare them in mind when assessing cases):

<b>Genuine Victim</b>	<b>Potential/Predominant Perpetrator</b>
Fearful of his or her partner and the abuse	Does not express or demonstrate fear of his or her partner
Confused about what is happening	Presents himself/herself confidently
Has tried to leave (unsuccessfully) or tried to repair the relationship	Partner has recently left him/her or is in the process of leaving him/her
Feels empathy for her/his partner's current problems or childhood experiences	Little or no empathy with her/his partner and focussing solely on herself/himself
Minimises the severity of the abuse, but is able to provide details in a chronological order, given time	Is good at focussing on one incident but is vague about incidents or events when you enquire further
Feels ashamed of the abuse, and of being a victim	Assertively claims the victim status and does not find fault in himself/herself
Feels remorse or guilt for having retaliated	Feels aggrieved and in the right
Excuses the actions or expectations of his/her partner and carries the responsibility for the problems in the relationship	Blames his partner for the abuse, presenting his/her partner for example as an unreasonable or unstable character
Worries about how it is affecting the children	Does not consider the children's experiences or feelings
Feels a sense of obligation to protect the abusive partner	Negative or unreasonable attitudes

## Information Sharing With and Without Consent

### General guidance:

Knowing when and how to share information is not always easy, but it is important to get it right. Families need to feel reassured that their confidentiality is respected. In most cases you will only share information about them with their consent, but there may be circumstances when you need to override this.

If you are not sure, but in your view there is a risk of abuse to someone, you should speak to your supervisor, safeguarding professional or Information Governance Lead.

The seven golden rules for information sharing:

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act/General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) is not a barrier to sharing information, but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>
2. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the child's/adults/public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the needs of the child/adult facts of the case.
5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

#### Points for Consideration:

- Is there a legitimate purpose for sharing information?
- Does the information enable a person to be identified?
- Is the information confidential?
- If so, do you have consent to share?
- Is there a statutory duty or court order to share the information?
- If consent refused/there are good reasons not to seek consent
- Is there sufficient public interest to share information?
- If the decision is to share, are you sharing the right information in the right way?
- Have you properly recorded your decision?

#### **MARAC – Information Sharing and Consent**

For further guidance on information sharing please refer to the Domestic Abuse Information Sharing Agreement and the MARAC Operating Protocol on the domestic abuse practitioners pages of the [MARAC - Doncaster Council](#)

## Specific Considerations in Relation to Children and Adults – Information Sharing/Consent

There may be circumstances where a parent is not informed that a safeguarding referral is being made if you suspect:

- Sexual abuse, organised abuse or fabricated illness or injury (FII).
- It isn't possible to contact parents without causing undue delay in making a referral.
- The risk of destroying evidence.
- Possibility of increased risk of domestic violence.
- Possibility of the family moving to avoid professional scrutiny.

It is always essential in safeguarding to consider whether the adult at risk is capable of giving informed consent in all aspects of their life. If they are able, their consent should be sought. This may be in relation to whether they give consent to:

- An activity that may be abusive – if consent to abuse or neglect was given under duress (e.g., as a result of exploitation, pressure, fear or intimidation), this apparent consent should be disregarded.
- A Safeguarding Adults enquiry going ahead in response to a concern that has been raised. Where an adult at risk with capacity has made a decision that they do not want action to be taken, and there are no public interest or vital interest considerations, their wishes must be respected. The person must be given information and have the opportunity to consider all the risks and fully understand the likely consequences of that decision over the short and long term.
- The recommendations of an individual protection plan being put in place.
- A medical examination.
- An interview.
- Certain decisions and actions taken during the Safeguarding Adults process with the person or with people who know about their abuse and its impact on the adult at risk.

If, after discussion with the adult at risk who has mental capacity, they refuse any intervention, their wishes will be respected *unless*:

- there is an aspect of public interest (e.g., not acting will put other adults or children at risk); and/or
- there is a duty of care on a particular agency to intervene, for example the police if a crime has been, or may be, committed).

When an agency works alongside a victim to complete a MARAC referral, their ability and capacity to give informed consent to the information within the referral should be considered. Victims must be made aware that the information shared will be discussed with the other agencies at the MARAC meeting and these agencies will also share information which is relevant to the abuse and protection of the victim and their family. The fact that agencies who work with the perpetrator will also receive the information needs to be made clear, the purpose of this being so that all agencies can work to protect victims and their families. Information will not be shared directly with the perpetrator without the victim's expressed consent and all agencies store this information securely and in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

## **Third party reporting to the Police – without consent (non-high-risk victims)**

This is still under development.

## **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

The purpose of the Local Authority Designated Officer is to coordinate work to respond to concerns about people who work with children and young people in either a paid or voluntary capacity. Further detail regarding the role of the LADO can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding children procedures.

Whilst the principles which underpin the LADO role are straightforward, decision making in the context of domestic abuse can be complex. Examples of this complexity would include for example a case in which the children of a survivor of domestic abuse is referred to children's social care due to concerns that they are not able to keep their children safe. Following assessment the survivor's children are made subject to a protection plan. Evaluating the different aspects of a case of this type is complex and the LADO should be contacted for further advice and guidance.

[Allegations against adults working with children referral form \(LADO\) - Doncaster Council](#)

## **Safety Advice and Planning**

**It is important that all agencies work with victims to plan ahead and stay safe so that in times of crisis decisions are made easier and safer. It is expected that where an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate or specialist domestic abuse service is not involved with the victim, the agency aware of the domestic abuse will provide the function of safety planning and advice.**

Victims of domestic abuse are at increased risk when they are planning to leave a relationship or have just left.

You should be very clear about who is at risk and consider other people in the household, other friends or relatives. If you have identified risks, you should ensure that appropriate actions are taken to acknowledge, remove or reduce the risk of harm. This may include:  
Contacting, or supporting the victim(s) to contact, the Police.

- Finding suitable alternative accommodation, either with a safe and trusted friend, relative or through emergency temporary housing or refuge.
- Referral to Children's Services or Adult Safeguarding.
- Liaising with partner agencies to share relevant information that may reduce the risks.
- Referral to health agencies.

See [Appendix B](#) for more details in safety advice and information that you can discuss with the victim.

Safety booklets can be ordered via the domestic abuse website: [Posters, Leaflets and Booklets - Doncaster Council](#)

## Appendix A – DASH Risk Assessment

### The Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Assessment

<b>DASH Question</b>	<b>What to consider when asking the question</b>
1) Has the current incident resulted in injury?	Is medical assistance required? How does this compare to previous injuries? Consider emotional trauma. Be mindful that in cases with no physical abuse you might want to re-word this question so that it doesn't appear to belittle their experiences.
2) Are you very frightened? 3) What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence?	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.
4) Do you feel isolated from family / friends? Does (...) try to stop you from seeing friends / family / GP or others?	Consider support networks, Honour Based Abuse and Female Genital Mutilation. Victims may believe that they have chosen to stop seeing friends and family due to manipulation.
5) Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?	Has the victim made any attempt at suicide or has any plans. Consider the risks to the victim and any children. Do you need to take any immediate action?
6) Have you separated or tried to separate from (...) within the past year?	Victims are at increased risk when they are planning to leave or have just left the relationship. Ask if the victim is planning to leave and if the perpetrator is aware of this.
7) Is there conflict over child contact?	This maintains communication between the victim and the perpetrator. Are the children being used as a tool/weapon against the victim?
8) Does (...) constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you?	Domestic stalkers are more dangerous as they know more about the victim. Consider cyber abuse, digital stalking and whether the perpetrator has access to information about them via email accounts, social networking sites etc.
9) Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (in the past 18 months)?	Domestic abuse often starts or escalates during pregnancy. You need to consider the welfare of the child/unborn child. You will need to make a referral to Children's Services.
10) Are there any children, step-children that aren't in the household? Or are there other dependents in the household i.e. older relatives?	Has everyone at risk been considered? You may need to make a referral to Children's or Adult Services.
11) Has (...) ever hurt the children/dependents?	Domestic abuse and child abuse are often linked. If there has been FGM consider risks to children. Share this information with Children and Adult Services

<b>DASH Question</b>	<b>What to consider when asking the question</b>
12) Has (...) ever threatened to hurt or kill the children/dependents?	Could the perpetrator abuse any vulnerable adults? Share this information with Children and Adult Services
13) Is the abuse happening more often?	Previous abuse is the most effective indicator that further abuse will occur. Try to ascertain if anything is happening in the relationship that might be triggering more abuse.
14) Is the abuse getting worse?	It is possible/probable that the abuse will escalate.
15) Does (...) try to control everything you do and / or are they excessively jealous?	Power and control, leading to dominance and isolation. Record ways in which the victim is being controlled and any implications for practitioners working with them currently or in the future.
16) Has (...) ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?	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.
17) Has (...) ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them?	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.
18) Has (...) ever attempted to strangle / choke / suffocate / drown you?	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.
19) Does (...) do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else?	Also consider threats made by the perpetrator to post naked photographs on the internet or send to family or friends. Consider grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation.
20) Is there any other person who has threatened you or that you are afraid of?	Consider HBA or FGM. If this is relevant do not speak to the family as they may be involved.
21) Do you know if (...) has hurt anyone else?	Consider previous partners, family members, colleagues and friends.
22) Has (...) ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?	There is a link between cruelty to animals and to people. The family pet may be used as a tool to control the victim.
23) Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on (...) for money / have they recently lost their job / other financial issues?	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.
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?	The victim may conceal this information if they are also using drugs or rely on the perpetrator for drugs. Record what problems and how it affects them. This is important information that could be shared with other agencies to reduce risk. Also ask if the victim has alcohol or drug issues and whether they want help and support.
25) Has (...) ever threatened or attempted suicide?	There is a link between the perpetrator 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.
26) Has (...) ever breached bail / an injunction and / or any agreement for when they can see you and / or the children?	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

<b>DASH Question</b>	<b>What to consider when asking the question</b>
	interventions if they have previously been ignored.
27) Do you know if (...) has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history?	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.

## Appendix B – Safety Advice and information

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
- They should pack an emergency bag for themselves and their children and hide it somewhere safe, for example, at a neighbour's or friend's house. They should try to avoid mutual friends or family
- They should try to keep a small amount of money on them at all times, including change for the telephone and for bus fares
- They should ensure they have a safe mobile phone, try to keep it with them and charged up
- They should keep credit on her/his phone
- They should set up speed dials for emergency telephone numbers
- They should try to memorise telephone numbers, or keep them in a place of safety
- They should have Caller ID on their telephones where possible

If appropriate, set up signals or codes with neighbours and friends, for example:

- Lights on/off in a certain room.
- Windows open/shut.
- Blinds/curtains half shut or half open.
- Sentences such as "I won't be able to come over for coffee as my Mum is here."
- Discuss with your neighbours when you would want them to call the Police (for example if they see your partner at your house).
- Pack a bag with important things that you would need if you had to leave in a hurry – this should include money, passport, medication, birth certificates and a change of clothes for children. Put the bag in a safe place or leave it with someone.
- Keep any court orders, injunctions and emergency numbers with you at all times.

- Diary/log any abuse including abusive calls, texts, emails, etc.

#### If you are at home and being threatened or attacked

- When in danger always ring 999 – you may want to ring other support agencies but remember, this may delay help arriving.
- Try to stay calm and use a calm voice (even though you may not feel calm inside!)
- Do not fight back – it will make you more unsafe (although you can still defend yourself).
- Try to stay near a door/exit.
- Try to stay near a phone.
- Be aware of rooms with potential hazards (stairs, windows etc.)
- Be aware of rooms with weapons such as knives, blades, etc.
- Exit as quickly as possible.
- Go to a neighbour, friend or shop and seek medical help if needed.

**If you do leave in a hurry without taking important things, don't worry. Agencies can help you to retrieve them at a later date.**

#### Keeping yourself safe at work

- Tell your line manager what is happening – you may be able to change duties/venue if necessary.
- If possible, give a copy of the abuser's photo to the security guard or reception staff.
- Keep a copy of any court order, injunctions etc. at work.
- Report any incidents to your line manager.
- Do not go to lunch alone.
- Ask someone to walk you to the car or bus.
- Diary or log any contact that the abuser has with you at work via telephone, e-mails, visits, etc.

#### Staying safe in your car

- Check around visually while you are parking the car and also before you get out.
- Park your car so you can drive straight off without making any manoeuvres, for example reverse into parking spaces and don't park behind closed gates.
- Park as near to a streetlight as possible.
- Keep the doors locked when driving and remember that when you have windows open fully anyone can reach in.

- Always check your petrol, oil and water to avoid breaking down.
- Join a breakdown organisation or keep the number of someone you can call in the event of a breakdown.
- Keep your mobile phone charged, in credit and in reach (i.e., not at the bottom of a cluttered bag).
- If you are not sure about finding your destination, get the directions before you set out.

### Safety when walking alone

- Walk as confidently as possible – hold your head up and try not to look frightened.
- Don't walk down alleyways, short cuts or across wasteland.
- Stick to routes that are well lit and near to residential areas if possible.
- If possible, tell someone where you are going, which way you are going and when you are expected to arrive.
- Keep your mobile phone charged, in credit and handy in a pocket or at the top of your bag.
- Have a torch with you and keep the batteries charged up. Check that it still works from time to time.
- Have a personal alarm with you if the Police or a domestic abuse agency has provided you with one.

### Safety planning and children

Talk to the children about what is going on – whatever you may think, children do know about it and do hear it. If you don't talk to them, they will come to their own conclusions which may not be accurate.

Try to be honest without frightening them.

Talk to the children about why you have left, or why you haven't left – this is important as some children feel angry and upset when the victim does leave, but some children feel unprotected and let down when victims don't leave the abuse.

Do not encourage children to join in with the abuse – this includes things like name calling.

Do not tell children they are just like their father/mother when they are showing frustration or anger about the abuser.

#### **Remember:**

Children will feel more secure with one parent in a stable environment than with two parents in an unstable and violent environment.

Any plans undertaken with children must **NEVER** give them responsibility for anyone else's safety.

If appropriate, while making plans with your child, it is important to:

Go through an escape plan with them – plan and find safe routes out of the home and to somewhere safe.

Discuss how you would leave at different times, days and situations. Leaving in the dark or middle of the night would be different to leaving in the daytime.

Discuss places they would run to or hide at in an emergency (such as a neighbour or corner shop) and agree a plan if you get separated from the children.

Encourage the child to have a bag packed as well – this could include favourite things that they don't want to leave behind.

Encourage children to stay out of the way during episodes of abuse.

Show them how to use the telephone, including making a 999 call. Find somewhere for them to keep telephone numbers of who they can ring for help e.g., supportive family/friends.

Discuss signals or codes, for example, agreed sentences, lights on/off, position of lamp, etc. These can help everyone living in the house. Also think about how children can raise the alarm to neighbours and/or family.

Discuss who is going to know at school – this is important to a child who will usually be reluctant to talk about the abuse.

Make sure the school knows who they can and can't talk to and that they have copies of any necessary paperwork such as court orders, injunctions etc.

Discuss who will be picking the child up from school and possibly who they must never go with, even if there is a good story, e.g., "mum is poorly so 'X' has got to pick you up".

Discuss which family, friends, babysitters, etc. who they can talk to or go to in an emergency – this is important to a child who may be confused about the abuse.

Talk to the child about what to do if they see the abuser while at school or while with family or friends.

Discuss not giving out addresses and phone numbers.

Discuss what they can and can't say to the abusing parent (for example where they are living).

Discuss safety during contact visits.

Do activities with them that may encourage good conversation about what is happening.

Perhaps encourage the child to keep a journal of how they are feeling, what has happened and what makes them scared/sad.

Where possible, discuss any realistic options of the child having a telephone (including speed dials).

Suggest your child looks at websites for children experiencing domestic abuse, for example: [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk).

Staying safe after the abuser has moved out

- Change the locks where possible – make use of security support that is available free of charge (see below).
- Where possible, shop and bank in a different place to before.
- Cancel any bank accounts, credit cards etc. that you have shared.
- Keep any court orders, injunctions, emergency telephone numbers with you.
- Keep a mobile with you at all times – try to keep it with credit on. Emergency calls can still be made without credit, and support agencies will accept reverse charges – but remember your battery needs to be charged!
- Set up speed dials for emergency telephone numbers.
- Change your regular travel routes/habits.
- Diary any abusive calls, visits, texts or email.

### Mobile/internet safety and digital stalking

You can pick up an inexpensive pay-as-you-go phone at a supermarket for about £10. It is a good idea to try to get one and get it charged up with a small amount of credit on it before you leave. Once you are safe then you should clean the old information from your usual telephone.

Clean your telephone: back-up your photographs, music, address book and any apps you want to keep then you should do a factory reset. This will delete any unwanted software. (If safe, do this after the Police have reviewed your telephone for evidence.)

Secure your telephone: set the telephone so that if it isn't used for more than a minute you have to put in a PIN to use it. Make sure that your telephone is set to hide your Caller ID. Change your login name and password on your Google/iCloud/iTunes account.

There are mobile telephone applications that will block calls. Choose an application that offers a 'whitelist' feature. This means that it will only accept calls from those in your contact list. If you are using a whitelist then remember to add contacts such as the doctor's practice, school, solicitor and your police contact details.

Choice of phone: a low-cost telephone (not a smartphone) is the safest. If you have to have a smartphone, think about using two telephones. A low cost one for texting and calling and a smartphone for internet browsing, games, music etc.

Gather evidence: save all texts but also take pictures or screenshots of any threatening messages on your telephone. That way if anything happens to your telephone, you still have evidence of the text. Make a recording of all voicemails left on your telephone. Mobile operators limit how long they will keep the voicemail on the system (on average one week). Once that time is expired, they delete the voicemail, and that evidence is gone.

**Safety plans should be personalised so information above should all be considered and discussed with the victim where relevant. Any other additional risks and means of mitigating these should also be discussed with the victim.**

Emergency safety plans should be in place whilst assessments, referrals and interventions are being progressed.

In some cases where there is a severe risk of harm to the child/ren, the emergency safety plan/strategy should be for the child/ren and, if possible, the non-abusive parent, not to have contact with the abuser.

It is important that Practitioners do not work in isolation and utilise the skills and expertise of specialist services in assessing, intervening and safety planning for the victim and the child/ren.

## Appendix C – The importance of language

Statement	Possible interpretation	Alternative trauma informed description
The victim failed to engage with (police, social care, domestic abuse support services etc)	The victim was unable or unwilling to engage	Despite our best efforts we were unable to find a successful way to engage with..... Our efforts included....
Victim retracted their statement and did not support a police prosecution	Victim is not supporting police action and therefore not acting protectively and could be planning to reconcile	The victim feels unable to support a police prosecution. This is because they are afraid of the consequences This is because they have told me they have lost faith in the police process due to..... This is because they want to continue with the relationship...
The victim won't end the relationship	The victim is not protecting themselves and do not see the relationship as a problem	The victim is unable to leave the relationship because they feel it is unsafe to do so. Research tells us leaving is the riskiest time for victims.
The victim is prioritising the relationship over the children	The victim cares more about the relationship than keeping the children safe.	The victim remains in the relationship at this time and reports they have no choice because they are afraid of the consequences if they do.? (leave)  The victim feels that it is safer for her and the children to remain in the relationship because....  The victim wants the family to stay together. To achieve this we need to consider.... (work completed, safety plans etc etc)
Mum or Dad is both a victim and a perpetrator	They are as bad as each other. It will be impossible to support appropriately as someone isn't telling the truth	Name the person or couple Where does this information come from? What have we done or what are we going to do?  Darren and Susan both report they are victims of domestic abuse from each other. At this time professionals (or I) have limited understanding of the relationship dynamics. This needs further exploration to understand what this means and how best to support them.

		<p>Within previous assessments held on the children's file, Susan is described as perpetrator and victim. This needs further exploration to understand what this means and how best to support her.</p> <p>Darren denies any use of harmful behaviour and reports (to police, to the social worker) that he is the victim of abuse from Susan. This needs further exploration to understand what this means and how best to support him.</p>
There is a cycle of reconciliation and separation	There is no point in trying to support as they always get back together anyway. Don't waste resources on this type of family as it will be unsuccessful. Neither parent see their relationship as a problem	Historically we are aware from (social care records / parent etc) that Mum and Dad have previously separated and reconciled. We need to understand the dynamics of the relationship and their understanding of domestic abuse before we can make any recommendations. We are aware that previously neither parent / both parents have completed any work around domestic abuse because...
Mum has entered into/chosen multiple abusive relationships	Mum likes a bad boy. Mum keeps meeting dangerous men, she never learns.	Social care records/family/police information shows that mum has been subject to domestic abuse in (number) previous relationships.
Victim has mental health issues	Until they sort out their mental health issues nothing will change	<p>What are the mental health issues?</p> <p>Who has said they have mental health issues? (the person causing the harm, a professional)</p> <p>What support are they receiving?</p> <p>Have you checked they have mental health issues?</p> <p>How does this interplay with the domestic abuse?</p>
The victim has decided not to/won't go to refuge	The victim does not understand the gravity of the risk. The victim is likely hoping for reconciliation	Refuge was discussed with the victim however she did not feel that this was the best option for her and the children at this time. The reasons were: (It was cutting her off from support network, police have put bail

		conditions / orders in place to protect her. The victim is working with domestic abuse services. The victim has gone to stay with a friend / family where she feels safer, etc)
Mum let her partner in to the property breaching the agreed safety plan.	Mum did not follow the safety plan therefore is not prioritising the children's safety. Mum does not understand the gravity of the risk.	We are aware that Dad has been allowed access to the property. Mum states that she felt matters would escalate more had she denied him access. Mum was in fear however had notified her neighbour as per the safety plan.

Consider the use of the word 'retracted' which means that what someone reported actually didn't happen. It is more likely when working with victims of domestic abuse that what they said happened, did happen, they are just afraid of consequences of continuing with police action. Therefore, use the word 'withdrawn' which means it did happen, but they no longer wish to pursue a prosecution. Although small, this difference is important. Context here is important, so if there is context that you know of, please include it. E.g., The victim withdrew their statement as they are intimidated by their partner.

## Appendix D – Resources and Support Services

### **Doncaster Resources and Support Services:**

#### **Domestic Abuse Specialist Services:**

- Domestic Abuse Hub  
All referrals for victims of domestic abuse can be made by calling the Hub on Tel: 01302 737080 or emailing a referral form to: [dac@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:dac@doncaster.gov.uk)  
Referral forms can be found at: [www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/domesticabuse)

#### Partner agencies in the Hub are:

- Doncaster Council Domestic Abuse Caseworkers - Tel: 01302 737080
- Doncaster Children's Services Trust Domestic Abuse Navigators – Tel: 01302 735078
- Phoenix WoMen's Aid - Tel: 07932 069 153  
<http://www.phoenixwomensaid.org.uk/phoenix/>
- Riverside – Tel: 01302 883599 or 07980789061 (practitioners only)  
Email address: [victoriahouseservices@riverside.org.uk](mailto:victoriahouseservices@riverside.org.uk)

### **Other Doncaster Services:**

#### **BAMER specialist support:**

- Ashiana – A charity working across Doncaster and other areas across the country to support and empower those from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) communities whose lives have been affected by violence and abuse to take control of their lives and move forward into healthy, stable and safer futures  
Tel: 0114 255 5740. <http://www.ashianasheffield.org/>

#### **Drug and Alcohol support services:**

- Aspire - Tel: 01302 730956  
<http://www.aspire.community/our-services/doncaster/> Sinclair House, 29 Thorne Road, Doncaster DN1 2EZ

#### **Housing:**

- St. Leger Housing Options – Tel: 01302 862862.  
<https://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/about/safeguarding-children-and-adults/domestic-violence/>
- Riverside Refuge and Dispersed Accommodation: Practitioners can contact Riverside directly if you need Refuge accommodation. To make a referral for a victim if it is safe for them to remain the area call: 01302 883599 or 07980789061  
Email address: [victoriahouseservices@riverside.org.uk](mailto:victoriahouseservices@riverside.org.uk)

#### **Relationship counselling:**

- Relate  
Premier House, Carolina Court, Lakeside, Doncaster, DN4 5RA  
Tel: 01302 347474 <https://www.relate.org.uk/find-my-nearest-relate/centre/south-yorkshire-relate-centre>

#### **Sexual Abuse Services:**

- Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service (DRASACS) – For Counselling telephone: 01302 360421. Business Calls: 01302 341572  
<https://www.drasacs.org.uk/>

- South Yorkshire Sexual Violence Service (SYSVP) – Independent Sexual Violence Advisors offer specialist confidential practical help and emotional support for individuals who have been raped or sexually assaulted at any time in their lives. They are an inclusive service and support all ages and genders; support is available whether or not you have chosen to report to the police.  
Telephone: 0114 2412766  
<https://www.syisva.org.uk/referral>
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)  
The nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre to Doncaster is in Sheffield:  
Tel: 0114 273 7009  
<https://www.sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk/support/sexual-assault-referral-centre-sarc/>
- The Children’s SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) is part of the [Safeguarding Support Unit](#) at Sheffield Children’s Hospital.  
They provide a child and adolescent friendly environment for 0-16 year olds from across South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw who have been victims of sexual assault or rape. Forensic examination can be carried out by specially trained doctors in our forensic examination suite.  
They are also able to make recommendations for ongoing services and support as appropriate.  
Referrals are accepted from the police and social care.  
If you have concerns about a child or young person who you think may have been sexually assaulted, please contact the police or report the issue to Children’s services. You can call your local Social Services to talk through your concerns with a social worker and find out about the next steps.

## **National Domestic Abuse Specialist services:**

- Children and Young People:

NSPCC

[How to Protect Children From Domestic Abuse | NSPCC](#)

Call on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000), email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) or fill in their [online form](#).

The Hideout:

<http://thehideout.org.uk/>

Women's Aid have created this space to help children and young people to understand domestic abuse, and how to take positive action if it's happening. There is a page for children and a page for young people.

- Court support:  
Survivor Family Network has produced some helpful guides about family court:  
<https://survivorfamilynetwork.com/>

National Centre for Domestic Violence was established in 2003 to help survivors of domestic violence and abuse obtain protection against an abuser, as well as offering services to the police, probation service, domestic abuse agency workers, the legal profession and judiciary.

They specialise in providing free, fast and effective support to survivors of domestic violence and abuse, usually by helping individuals obtain injunctions from their local county court. <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/>

DV Assist - <https://www.dvassist.org.uk/>

This is a charity specialising in arranging Non-Molestation Orders, Prohibited Steps Orders & Occupation Orders

- Disability:  
SignHealth provides advice and support for Deaf adults and young people experiencing domestic abuse.  
<https://signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse/>

- Elder abuse:

Hourglass is a confidential service that provides information and support to an older person or anyone concerned about an older person who is at risk of, experiencing or recovering from any form of abuse or neglect. <https://wearehourglass.org>

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):  
The NSPCC FGM Helpline:  
Email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk) or Telephone: 0800 028 3550

The National FGM Centre – <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/>

- Forced Marriage:  
Forced Marriage Unit  
<https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>  
Telephone: 020 7008 0151

<https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage>

The Sharan Project <http://sharan.org.uk/>

Application for an FMPO <https://www.gov.uk/apply-forced-marriage-protection-order>

- Honour Based Abuse:  
<https://karmanirvana.org.uk>  
Karma Nirvana run the national Honour Based Abuse Helpline, train professionals, gather data to inform policies and services, and campaign for change.  
Helpline: 0800 5999 247

- LGBT+  
Galop  
Specialist helpline for LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse  
Tel: 0800 999 5428  
<http://www.galop.org.uk/>

- Men:

ManKind  
Specialist support for male victims of domestic abuse  
Tel: 01823 334244

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

Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and the frontline workers supporting them. They support men in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

<https://mensadvice.org.uk/>

- National 24hour Domestic Violence Helpline  
Specialist advice line run in partnership by Refuge and Women's Aid  
Tel: 0808 2000 247  
<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>

- Pets:

The Dogs Trust Freedom Project is a dog fostering service for people fleeing domestic abuse and going into refuge. <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/hope-project-freedom-project/freedom-project>

- Respect  
Help for perpetrator of domestic abuse. <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/>  
Tel: 0808 8024040

- Revenge Porn  
Tel: 0345 6000 459  
<https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/>

- Stalking:  
The National Stalking Helpline can help with advice and support. Telephone: 0808 802 0300 or <http://www.stalkinghelpline.org>.

Protection Against Stalking <http://www.protectionagainststalking.org/are-you-at-risk/>

Or you can contact Paladin – the national stalking advocacy service.

Tel: 020 3866 4107 <https://paladinservice.co.uk/>

Alice Ruggles Trust - <https://www.alicerugglestrust.org/>

- Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA):  
Surviving Economic abuse is the only UK charity dedicated to raising awareness of economic abuse and transforming responses to it.  
<https://survivingeconomicabuse.org>  
The website is for professionals and survivors.  
For professionals it includes training and help in supporting a victim.  
For survivors there is a digital guide to help guide themselves to the correct help and ensure they understand the complexities of economic abuse.
- Victim Focus is an organisation who challenges victim blaming, this website is for professionals and survivors.  
<https://www.victimfocus.org.uk>  
For professionals there are numerous resources including the latest reports on trauma informed practice, a section of accredited therapist for those that can afford private therapy, a shop for purchasing resources professionals to use, blog, e learning courses and you can also join an anti-victim blaming trauma informed network of professionals.

For survivors there is a free course for anyone that has been affected by abuse and violence  
<https://www.victimfocus.org.uk/free-caring-for-yourself-after-sexual-violence>