



One minute guide

Domestic Violence and Children's Services

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What is domestic violence?

Domestic Violence (also known as domestic abuse) refers to any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. Most reported incidents relate to women and girls but this is not always the case.

Domestic Violence can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Responding to domestic violence incidents

Children's Services become involved in cases of domestic violence where the household includes a pregnant woman and or children are present or members of the household and they are at risk of significant harm.

In some cases we are already working with the child and their family and get to know directly. At other times, we get to know about the incident following police attendance at any incident of domestic violence in Leeds where a pregnant woman or a child or children are present.

Following increased partnership working, police officers are now co-located at the Duty and Advice Team. This enables police and Children's Services to work together and share information on cases of domestic violence leading to more integrated and effective partnership working in this area.

How do partners work together

When the Police are called to a household because of a reported domestic violence incident, the attending officer completes a DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Honour Based Violence) risk assessment. When a pregnant woman or a child (or children) are present, Children's Social Work Service is notified and the DASH risk assessment is shared.

In addition to a planned daily meeting, domestic violence safeguarding discussions take place between police colleagues and social work managers as required during the day. Discussions focus on whether a child/children or unborn child is at risk of significant harm or there is the likelihood of significant harm. They consider the detail of the presenting incident and the DASH risk assessment along with historical information.

If this is the case Duty and Advice will progress to social work teams for further assessment. All referrals are dealt with in line with the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Procedures available from the [Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board](#) website. If it is decided that the family does not require a social work response or assessment but might benefit from universal or Targeted Services, information will be shared with the relevant practitioner at a local level. Where there is high risk to the adult, consideration may be given to a referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

What should practitioners do?

Practitioners should be mindful of the possibility of domestic violence when working with families. They should contact Duty and Advice if they are aware of an incident of domestic violence where a pregnant woman or a children are present or members of the household and they are at risk of harm. In emergencies or where a crime is suspected, the police should be contacted.

Key contacts and specialist helplines

Duty and Advice Team tel: 0113 3760336

Police emergencies tel: 999

Police Safeguarding Unit (non emergency) tel: 0113 2414180

Leeds Domestic Violence 24 Hour Helpline tel: 0113 246 0401 (Women seeking refuge accommodation can also ring this number)

National Domestic Violence Helpline tel: 0808 2000 247

Men's Advice Line tel: 0808 801 0327

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds tel: 0808 802 3344

Forced Marriage—Karma Nirvana tel: 0800 5999 247

Perpetrators—Respect Helpline tel: 0808 802 4040