



One minute guide

Domestic violence and abuse

No. 20, May 2024

What is domestic violence and abuse?

Domestic violence and 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 as victims or survivors, but this is not always the case.

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

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour refers to a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by, for example: 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 refers to 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 abuse](#)', [female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#) and [forced marriage](#). Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. Coercive control can be a [criminal offence](#).

Responding to domestic violence and abuse incidents

Children's services become involved in cases of domestic violence and abuse where the household includes a pregnant woman and/ or children are present or are 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 or abuse in Leeds where a pregnant woman or a child/ 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 and abuse, 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 and abuse 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 and abuse 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 Partnership 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 and abuse when working with families. They should contact Duty and Advice if they are aware of an incident of domestic violence or abuse 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 3859576

[Leeds Domestic Violence Service](#) 24 Hour Helpline tel: 0113 246 0401 (women seeking refuge accommodation can also ring this number). Email: hello@ldvs.uk

[National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) tel: 0808 2000 247

[Men's Advice Line \(for male victims/ survivors\)](#) tel: 0808 801 0327

[Galop](#) - supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people who have experienced violence or abuse. Helpline tel: 0800 999 5428

[Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds](#). Helpline tel: 0808 802 3344

Forced Marriage—[Karma Nirvana](#). Helpline tel: 0800 5999 247

Perpetrators—[Respect](#) Helpline tel: 0808 802 4040