

PART 22

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Introduction

What is Domestic Abuse?

The objectives of these Procedures

Key Principles

The Impact of Domestic Abuse

Relevant Legal Frameworks

Taking Action

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Referrals to Children's Social Care

Appendix B: Specific Agency Policies and Procedures

Appendix C: Examples of Questions to inform an Assessment

Appendix D: Staffordshire County Council – Employee DA Policy

**Appendix E: Generic Guidance Notes for Employers wishing to
establish an Employee DA Policy**

Appendix F: Key Facts about Domestic Abuse

Appendix G: References

Appendix H: Useful websites

Introduction

1. The risks of harm to children who are exposed either directly or indirectly to domestic abuse are known to be significant. It is estimated that up to 750,000 children in England and Wales are living within environments characterised by domestic abuse (Humphrey's and Stanley 2006), and that there is a correlation between adult domestic abuse and poor outcomes for children, including a significant incidence of abuse and/or neglect (DoH 2002).
2. The knowledge or identification of domestic abuse should be viewed as a primary indicator of child protection needs.
3. Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board seeks to bring about the effective co-ordination and intervention between and within those agencies, organizations, and individuals who have responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the geographical boundaries of Staffordshire. These procedures reflect the underlying principles to Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and are complimentary to Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006), the Every Child Matters agenda, and other specific guidance which is highlighted within the Appendices.

What is Domestic abuse?

4. Domestic abuse is defined by the Home Office as:

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.
5. Domestic abuse is a generic term to describe a wide range of intentional behaviours used by one individual to control and dominate another with whom they have had, wished to have, or are currently in a close intimate, family or other type of relationship. It does not only relate to married or co-habiting couples, and it frequently continues after a relationship has ended. A significant number of women and children are no safer when they leave a violent home, and for very many it is known that the level of violence can escalate.
6. Domestic abuse is not typified by ethnicity, class, sexuality, age religion, gender or physical or mental impairment. It can affect men and women in same sex relationships and men in heterosexual relationships. It is not restricted to physical violence and often manifests itself as psychological, emotional, sexual and economic abuse.

7. Children and young people can also be subjected to abuse and violence within a context of forced marriage and honour-based violence. The cultural and religious complexities related to 'dishonour' within certain communities pose significant challenges for professionals in terms of identifying and responding to situations, but this should always be considered as a potential form of domestic abuse.
8. It is known that 1 in 4 women will be affected by domestic abuse in their life time (Home Office 2004), and that the most vulnerable age range for these women is between 18 and 24 years of age (Humphries et al, 2005).
9. Recent research evidence suggests that 30% of known domestic abuse begins or escalates during pregnancy (Lewis and Drife 2005).
10. In that respect the overwhelming pattern of abuse is dominated by the experience of women as victims and men as perpetrators, and whilst it is readily acknowledged that the adoption of that terminology is not without its shortcomings, it is to be assumed within these procedures that feminine references are in the context of being a victim (or survivor).

The Objectives of these Procedures

11. The overriding objective of these procedures is to provide appropriate direction and guidance for agencies and individuals who may encounter situations of domestic abuse in the course of their professional activities.
12. The notion of 'professional activity' is intended to include those engaged in statutory, independent or voluntary activities either directly or indirectly with potential victims.
13. The key objectives are as follows:
 - To set out the necessary process for taking action in situations where it is known or suspected that a child/children may be at risk of harm as a result of domestic abuse.
 - To set out the roles and responsibilities of key agencies whose professional activities may be directly relevant to an effective intervention, and to provide an awareness of 'agency specific' policies and procedures where appropriate.
 - To provide some core information which should assist in developing a better understanding of domestic abuse and its potential implications for safeguarding children, and to signpost sources of additional information that may assist the development of an enhanced level of practitioner knowledge.

- To highlight the importance of Policies for Employers, by providing as an example a copy of the Staffordshire County Council Policy in respect of Employees within the Appendices. Generic advice and guidance for employers who would wish to develop their own Policy is also included within the Appendices.

Underlying Principles

14. These procedures embrace four key principles which should be prominent in each agency or individual's activity and involvement in situations where children are subject to the impact of domestic abuse.

These are:

- To protect and support the child/ren.
- To support the mother to protect herself and her child/ren.
- To hold the abusive partner accountable for his behaviour and to recognise/promote opportunities for change.
- To undertake all professional activity within a framework of non-judgmental, non-discriminatory, and respectful practice.

The Impact of Domestic abuse

15. All of the 5 key objectives defined within the Every Child Matters agenda and critical to successful outcomes for children are likely to be adversely affected by a child's exposure to domestic abuse.

Be Healthy

16. Evidence indicates that infant – parent attachments can be impacted upon significantly, with the likelihood of a disorganised attachment, characterised by high levels of stress, hyper-vigilance and long term relationship difficulties. (Zeanah et al, 1999).

17. It is also known that domestic abuse can impact negatively on a child's mental health, and bring about increased risks of self harm, drug and alcohol misuse and the propensity to run away. (Mullendar and Morley, 1996).

Stay Safe

18. Approximately 75% of children whose names are included on local authority child protection registers live in households where domestic abuse occurs (DoH, 2003).

19. Men who are violent to their female partners are also prone to physically abuse any children in the home, the overlap of which is argued to be anything between 30% to 60% (Edleson, 1999).

20. The risk of physical injury arising as a consequence of parental violence is significant, for example as a consequence of being used as a shield or attempting to protect their mother from being assaulted.

Enjoy and Achieve

21. For those children whose daily lives are subjected to the impact of domestic abuse the ability to maintain regular school attendance and apply effective levels of concentration is likely to be seriously impeded.
22. Historical research highlights indicators of significantly lower levels of competence in school performance, reduced social competence, and problems with peer relationships (Wolfe et al, 1986).

Make a Positive Contribution

23. Evidence of lower self-esteem and difficulty in maintaining and developing positive relationships, can be further compounded by higher levels of behavioural and emotional disturbance in later adolescence (O'Keefe, 1994). Some children exposed to domestic abuse are reported to be more aggressive and anti social, whereby others become characterised by increased rates of depression and anxiety (O'Keefe 1995).

Enjoy Economic Well-being

24. Children experiencing domestic abuse find themselves more vulnerable to homelessness and exposure to poverty, and can endure financial hardship as a result as a result of a perpetrators financial abuse.

Additional Impacts

25. There is potential for mothers who are subjected to domestic abuse to experience increased levels of social isolation, to endure additional mental health needs such as depression, and to be more prone to the use of prescription medication. Many situations are further characterised by alcohol and/or drug use often indicative of day to day coping strategies, and in this context the parenting capacity of the abused parent can fall short of providing the nurturing and support necessary for the optimal development of the child(ren) (Calder et al, 2004).
26. The abusing father is likely to participate less in the broader parenting responsibilities, adopt physically controlling approaches within the home, and to be less physically affectionate (Holden and Ritchie, 1991).

27. There is a developing professional understanding of linkages between the abuse of children, the abuse of animals and domestic abuse (NSPCC 2005). Whilst professionals should be cautious about assuming direct causality between any of these factors, an awareness of the potential inter-relationships between these phenomena can inform the broader understanding of domestic abuse and its impacts.

See

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/publications/Downloads/understandinghelinks_wdf48177.pdf

Relevant Legislation

28. Domestic abuse is a crime under both civil and criminal law. There is a wide range of legislation which maybe appropriately accessed to inform a multi agency response to individual situations.
29. It is proposed here to provide only an overview of key legislative frameworks, a basic knowledge of which is potentially relevant to all agencies and individuals. Specific information should be sourced through the individual agencies legal departments or other specialist law advisors.

Information Governance and Confidentiality

30. There is no single body of legislation which prescriptively sets out the responsibilities of managing and processing information, although there is clear requirement to demonstrate legal compliance and professional accountability. The legal framework which informs professional duties and responsibilities around information sharing is complex.
31. *The Common Law Duty of Confidence* requires that personal information is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without consent.
32. *The Data Protection Act 1998* requires that personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully, and that it is only disclosed in appropriate circumstances.
33. *The Human Rights Act 1998* article 8 seeks to extend protection to the individual in respect of individual freedoms and rights to privacy.
34. However, the effective exchange of information is pivotal in enabling organizations to protect children from harm and in that respect expressed or implied powers to share information effectively are contained within *The Children Act 1989, and The Children Act 2004 (s10,11.)* Sharing information is a critical element in bringing about the co-ordinated provision of services for children with additional needs.

35. The seeking of consent to prior to sharing information, suspicions, or concerns relating to domestic abuse should always be seen as the preferred basis from which to undertake any course of action.
36. It cannot be stressed enough, however, that the duty to safeguard children and take necessary steps to protect them from harm should not be impeded by the withholding of a mother or child's consent, nor should action be unreasonably delayed or frustrated by the desire to seek the agreements of relevant parties.
- 37. Refer to Part 2 (SSCB Inter- Agency Procedures) for further guidance on Information Sharing.**

Additional sources of guidance:

see

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/ACB1BA35C20D4C42A1FE6F9133A7C614.pdf>

see

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/dpr30.pdf>

Family Law Act 1996

38. Part 4 of this legislation provides a single set of remedies to deal with domestic abuse and to regulate occupation of the family home, through two specific types of order, the non-molestation order and the occupation order.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

39. This is often referred to as the 'stalking legislation' and established two specific criminal offences relating to the fear of violence and criminal harassment.

The Domestic abuse, Crime and Victims Act 2004

40. This Act strengthened existing legislation in the areas of non molestation, occupation and restraining orders and was aimed at introducing new powers for the Police and courts to deal with offenders, while improving support and protection that victims receive.

The Children Act 1989

41. This Act remains the key piece of child care legislation and provides the statutory framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Section 31 sets out the threshold and criteria for significant harm. Section 17 of this legislation establishes general duties on local authorities relating to children in need, whilst Section 47 sets out statutory duties relating to the investigation of significant harm.

The Children and Adoption Act 2002

42. This legislation extended the definition of harm previously established within the '89 Act to include "*impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another*". This is particularly relevant to children who are exposed to situations of domestic abuse.

The Children Act 2004

43. This underpins the consolidation of multi agency working through Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Children's Trusts, Local Plans for services for children and young people, and endorses mechanisms for data sharing between agencies. It also establishes the legal underpinning to Every Child Matters and defines wellbeing as the 5 outcomes (see section 5 above).

Taking Action

44. If a family or children suffering domestic abuse are to be effectively supported and protected, it is vitally important that care is taken to develop as clearer understanding as is possible of the circumstances – an understanding that needs to be informed by an awareness of professional responsibility and appreciation of the complexities of the victim's circumstances.

45. An awareness or suspicion of domestic abuse may arise in a number of different ways, eg.

- Direct or indirect observation through own professional role.
- Disclosure from a victim or child within the family.
- Disclosure from a perpetrator.
- Information from third parties.
- Evidence arising from associated predicative indicators (eg bruising, marks).

46. In circumstances where a disclosure is made then the opportunity to work within a framework of consent and support should be pursued, notwithstanding the need to gather as much information as possible from which to make an assessment and decide upon the most appropriate course of action.

47. In the context of a concerns about a child's welfare, attempts should be made to discuss these with the child, subject to their age and understanding, and with their parents and seek their agreement to making a referral to children's social care unless the undertaking of such a discussion would place the child at an increased risk of significant harm.

48. However, there are likely to be significant barriers which prevent the making of disclosures, and professionals should be sensitised to the reasons for this. An abused mother may be fearful of professional intervention and be anxious of how statutory agencies may respond when children are involved. She may minimise the situation, be concerned that she won't be believed, or feel that the violence may increase and the situation made worse.
49. Children will often remain protective of their parents, or be in fear of the abusing father (male carer), or be anxious about the uncertainty of what might happen if they talk to someone. It is appropriate to acknowledge that investigations into children's coping strategies emphasise the importance of them being listened to and taken seriously in domestic abuse situations, and for them to be included in the solution finding process (Mullender et al 2002).
50. It is necessary to understand that children who have experienced domestic abuse often find it difficult to trust others, particularly adults. It is therefore crucial that when working with these children to take sufficient time to build rapport and trust before expecting the child to talk about painful emotions related to the experience of domestic abuse
51. It is important, therefore, that when engaging with known or suspected victims of domestic abuse that the conditions which might maximise the providing of a disclosure – for example, the environment, the nature of the enquiries or the questions posed, are structured in a way that convey a climate of safety, sensitivity and reassurance. A pre-condition to an effective and thorough assessment is enabling and empowering the mother to disclose her experiences, and to consider it's impact upon her own and her child(ren's) life. Evidence indicates that being honest and open, and asking questions in a direct way, is more likely to bring about disclosure. (Calder and Hackett, Eds., 2003)
52. Examples of questions to assist the assessment process are provided within Appendix C.
53. The important principles will be to:
- Listen carefully and take seriously.
 - Provide reassurance in terms of unacceptability and blame.
 - Take responsibility for alerting the appropriate agency/ agencies.
54. The overriding objective for any professional is to take an informed judgement about what to do next and to be ever mindful that all children living with domestic abuse are potentially children in need. The most appropriate course of initial action may be to discuss the concerns with the designated responsible individual for child protection within the individual's organisation.

55. Where there is knowledge or evidence to indicate that are **not** immediate needs of children relating to risks of harm, or that this is not a child in need (S17 Children Act 1989), then the most appropriate model of assessment establishing the basis of 'what next' may be through the undertaking of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) which is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs.

See

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/caf/>

<http://www.staffordshirechildrenstrust.org.uk/ISA/>

56. **See also PART 2 (SSCB Inter- Agency Procedures) for further guidance on Thresholds for Intervention.**

57. The overriding objective should be to collect information and establish an understanding of what is going on, so that the impact of domestic abuse and the associated level of risk can be evaluated. The assessment activity should not preclude the possibility of professional input which combines protection and support, and in that respect the process should seek to identify protective factors as well as risks.

58. The framework of any assessment focusing upon a child living with domestic abuse should include exploration of several key areas

- Evidence of harm – physical, emotional and behaviourally.
- The child's views and feelings about what is happening.
- The quality of the child's relationship/attachment with his/her mother.
- The quality of the child's relationship/attachment with the perpetrator.
- What are the child's support networks?
- What are the child's coping strategies?
- Are there additional factors compounding the child's vulnerability, eg. disability?

59. The most important aspect of an assessment is deciding upon what happens next - deciding what action to take should follow logically from the evaluation of what is known.

Referrals to Children's Social Care

60. In **all** cases where there is knowledge or suspicion that there exists a potential for a child or children to be suffering harm as a result of domestic abuse, then a referral should be made to Children's Social Care via the First Response Team (FRT) who act as the first point of contact for **all** referrals to the vulnerable children's division within the Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Local Authority.

61. The contact details for the First Response Team are as follows:

Between 8.00am and 6.00pm (Monday to Friday)

Tel: 0800 13 13 126

Email : *first@staffordshire.gov.uk*

Concerns which need to be referred outside of hours detailed above (and bank holidays) should be made to the Emergency Duty Service (EDS).

The Contact details for the Emergency Duty Service are as follows:

Tel: 01785 354030

62. It is important that as much information as possible is shared by the referrer, and the following framework of detail will assist the effectiveness of FRT (or EDS) in gathering the information.

- Family name
- Address
- Date of birth
- Details of family members
- Basis of concerns
- Other relevant information
- Are family individuals aware of the referral?
- Does the referral increase the potential risks of harm?
- How may the victim(s) be best contacted without compromising safety?

63. All referrers whose identity is known will receive written acknowledgment of their referral including where relevant detail about intended actions and reference details to assist subsequent actions and communication.

64. The referrer should ensure that they maintain appropriate and relevant records in accordance with their individual Agencies policies and procedures.

65. If the nature of the referral indicates a criminal offence may have been committed then in all cases the Police will be informed without delay, notwithstanding the need to co-ordinate any actions and be cognizant of the likely consequences for those who are considered vulnerable to further violence or abuse.

66. The contact details for Staffordshire Police are:

Tel: 08453 30 20 10

Where a very urgent immediate response is required then a 999 call should be made.

Police Referrals

67. The particular duties of the Police mean that they are often the first agency aware of domestic abuse within a household.
68. Any Officer attending a domestic abuse incident where a criminal offence has been alleged or committed will subsequently complete a comprehensive Crimed DIAL (Domestic Investigation Arrest Log). If no criminal offence has been alleged or committed but there are still concerns regarding issues of potential heightened risk i.e. Separation, Pregnancy, Escalation, Community issues, Choking/Strangulation, Stalking or Sexual abuse, the attending officer will complete a short No-Crimed DIAL (Domestic Intelligence Assessment Log) and forward it to the Domestic Abuse staff within their divisional Public Protection Unit (PPU) for information.
69. Regardless of the requirement to complete a DIAL, officers attending an incident where there is immediate risk of harm to a child, including where a child has sustained injury or is clearly traumatised should take immediate actions to protect them. This will include an immediate referral to Children's Social Care, First Response Team/Out of Hours Duty Service.
70. Following a risk assessment by Domestic Abuse officers within the PPU's, and where concerns have been raised regarding the welfare of any children and immediate referral to Children's Social Care was not required, the PPU shall forward a domestic abuse notification form to the First Response Team for any necessary action they wish to take.
71. The First Response Team will interrogate Children's Social Care records upon receipt of a notification which may result in notifications received being reclassified as referrals.
72. Notifications received and not processed as a referral will be recorded on a Contact Record and saved to the Children's Social Care Services electronic social care record. An acknowledgement of receipt of response will be forwarded to police.
73. Where domestic abuse notifications are received on open cases the case holding social worker will be informed of the notification by the First Response Team (recorded on SW590).
74. When the risk identification element of the Crimed DIAL is completed and direct reported, that specific information interfaces over from STORM to the Guardian system.

- Guardian is an IT system which brings together in a single system, information relating to vulnerable people and associated offenders in the areas of Child Protection, Domestic Abuse, Vulnerable Adults, Hate Crime and Dangerous Disordered Offenders
- The domestic abuse risk identification is then accessed directly from Guardian by Domestic Abuse Officers within Public Protection Units for them to make a full risk assessment with all the information they have at their disposal of previous incidents.
- This risk assessment will form the basis for further action and the involvement of other agencies as necessary. If considered High or Very High Risk it will ensure the family involved are put forward to a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) in order to more effectively deal with the victim, any children involved and to hold the offender to account

75. Lists of individual cases to be discussed at District (Police Division) MARAC's are forwarded to the First Response Team at Children's Social Care.

76. Disclosure regarding the sharing of information is undertaken by the Police or the IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor) following contact with the domestic abuse victim where possible unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Where police powers have been used, the police will consider legal authorities to disclose this information with MARAC partners. Children's Social care will be informed that consent has been obtained or not as part of the referral information received.

77. Upon receipt of the MARAC list, First Response staff will interrogate Children's Social Care records to ascertain relevant details known to this Department.

78. First Response will acknowledge receipt of the MARAC list to the Police in writing.

79. The First Response Team will amend the MARAC lists they receive to remove the details of those victims where there is no child living in/relevantly associated with the household prior to forwarding the list to the team manager in the relevant geographical district. Referrals are opened on each individual child pertinent to the MARAC list.

80. The Children's Social Care team manager will make arrangements for the Team Co-ordinator of the team to attend local MARAC's to participate in the decision making in cases where children are involved.

81. Recommendations made at MARAC meetings: The status of a MARAC is of a multi-agency information sharing forum. As a result of information shared, recommendations for future agency actions will be recorded. A MARAC meeting may identify that the threshold for actions under s47 of the Children Act has been met. However, the recommendation 'Convene a CP Case Conference' should not be made at a MARAC. This decision can only be reached as a result of properly conducted S47 enquiries, which will of course be informed by information received at the MARAC.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

82. Domestic abuse MARAC's are an evolving multi agency approach to domestic abuse in the form of a multi agency meeting whereby up-to-date risk assessment information can be combined with a comprehensive assessment of a victim's needs and linked directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in the domestic abuse case: victim, children and perpetrator.

83. There exists empirical evidence to indicate that these can be a very effective mechanism to reduce the incidents of violence for high risk victims (CAADA 2006).

84. The lead agency for the convening of MARAC's is the Police and the current referral process is detailed within Appendix B.

See

<http://www.caada.org.uk/>

Agencies Roles and Responsibilities

Police

Health

County Council Pupil and Student Services

CAFCASS

Voluntary / Support (Third Sector Organisations)

85. Specialist support services provided within Staffordshire are managed within the Voluntary and Community Sector. There is no single policy for domestic abuse used by these organisations as it is their core business.
86. The specialist support services provide support to women who need help with issues of domestic abuse, however, the definition of domestic abuse used is any abuse which takes place in the family environment or from a current or former partner wherever the abuse takes place. The support offered mainly involves women suffering abuse from their partners. However, it can and does include women suffering abuse from parents, older children, other family members, same sex partners and even neighbours. They work with women from 16 years old (with funding) and have no upper age limit.
87. The support services available are varied and range from refuge accommodation, resettlement work when leaving the refuge, children's services, specialist support workers, counselling, 24 hour help-line, life skills training, outings, floating support, self-help groups and support groups.

**BRIEF PROCESS OVERVIEW REGARDING DOMESTIC ABUSE
REFERRALS TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

ALL AGENCY REFERRALS

1. Any professional recognising that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of living in a family where domestic abuse is a factor should discuss their concerns with their agencies designated child protection officer and record this discussion in the confidential child protection module of the appropriate file. If concerns remain following this discussion a referral should be made with immediacy to Children's Social Care, First Response Team or EDT. Consideration should be given to discussing this referral with the family, but disclosure regarding referral is not required should the referrer believe that doing so would place, or be likely to place the child at risk of harm. This is a particularly important factor when considering the position of both children affected by and adult victims of domestic abuse. Decisions regarding whether or not to inform families about a decision to make a referral should be recorded and placed on the child protection module of the appropriate file.
2. Any professional recognising that a child is a child 'in need' as a result of living in a family where domestic abuse is a factor should discuss their concerns with their agencies designated child protection officer and record this discussion in the confidential child protection module of the appropriate file. If concerns remain following this discussion a referral should be made to Children's Social Care, First Response Team and EDT. Consideration should be given to discussing this referral with the family, and for child in need cases the presumption is that a referral would be made following discussion with the family. However, the potential risk to victims of domestic abuse by perpetrators should also be given consideration when considering whether or not to inform a family about a referral. Decisions regarding whether or not to inform families about a decision to make a referral should be recorded and placed on the child protection module of the appropriate file.
3. Where a child is in immediate danger 999 should be called.

POLICE REFERRALS

1. The particular duties of the Police mean that they are often the first agency aware of domestic abuse within a household.

2. Any Officer attending a domestic abuse incident where a criminal offence has been alleged or committed will subsequently complete a comprehensive Crimed DIAL (Domestic Investigation Arrest Log). If no criminal offence has been alleged or committed but there are still concerns regarding issues of potential heightened risk i.e. Separation, Pregnancy, Escalation, Community issues, Choking/Strangulation, Stalking or Sexual abuse, the attending officer will complete a short No-Crimed DIAL (Domestic Intelligence Assessment Log) and forward it to the Domestic Abuse staff within their divisional Public Protection Unit (PPU) for information.
3. Regardless of the requirement to complete a DIAL, officers attending an incident where there is immediate risk of harm to a child, including where a child has sustained injury or is clearly traumatised should take immediate actions to protect them. This will include an immediate referral to Children's Social Care, First Response Team/Out of Hours Duty Service.
4. Following a risk assessment by Domestic Abuse officers within the PPU's, and where concerns have been raised regarding the welfare of any children and immediate referral to Children's Social Care was not required, the PPU shall forward a domestic abuse notification form to the First Response Team for any necessary action they wish to take.
5. The First Response Team will interrogate Children's Social Care records upon receipt of a notification which may result in notifications received being reclassified as referrals.
6. Notifications received and not processed as a referral will be recorded on a Contact Record and saved to the Children's Social Care Services electronic social care record. An acknowledgement of receipt of response will be forwarded to police.
7. Where domestic abuse notifications are received on open cases the case holding social worker will be informed of the notification by the First Response Team (recorded on SW590).
8. When the risk identification element of the Crimed DIAL is completed and direct reported, that specific information interfaces over from STORM to the Guardian system.
 - Guardian is an IT system which brings together in a single system, information relating to vulnerable people and associated offenders in the areas of Child Protection, Domestic Abuse, Vulnerable Adults, Hate Crime and Dangerous Disordered Offenders

- The domestic abuse risk identification is then accessed directly from Guardian by Domestic Abuse Officers within Public Protection Units for them to make a full risk assessment with all the information they have at their disposal of previous incidents.
 - This risk assessment will form the basis for further action and the involvement of other agencies as necessary. If considered High or Very High Risk it will ensure the family involved are put forward to a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) in order to more effectively deal with the victim, any children involved and to hold the offender to account
9. Lists of individual cases to be discussed at District (Police Division) MARAC's are forwarded to the First Response Team at Children's Social Care.
 10. The MARAC process has the legal authority to share information on high risk victims which is necessary, proportionate, secure and accountable to protect the public from harm.
 11. Upon receipt of the MARAC list, First Response staff will interrogate Children's Social Care records to ascertain relevant details known to this Department.
 12. First Response will acknowledge receipt of the MARAC list to the Police in writing.
 13. The First Response Team will amend the MARAC lists they receive to remove the details of those victims where there is no child living in/relevantly associated with the household prior to forwarding the list to the team manager in the relevant geographical district. Referrals are opened on each individual child pertinent to the MARAC list.
 14. The Children's Social Care team manager will make arrangements for the Team Co-ordinator of the team to attend local MARAC's to participate in the decision making in cases where children are involved.
 15. **Recommendations made at MARAC meetings:**

The status of a MARAC is a multi-agency information sharing forum. As a result of information shared, recommendations for future agency actions will be recorded. A MARAC meeting may identify that the threshold for actions under S47 of the Children Act has been met. However, the recommendation 'Convene a CP Case Conference' should not be made at a MARAC. This decision can only be reached as a result of properly conducted S47 enquiries, which will be informed by information received at the MARAC.

Specific Agency Policies and Responsibilities

Examples of Questions to Inform an Assessment

Possible Questions for Mothers

1. You seem upset, is everything all right at home?
2. Is everything all right at home between you and your partner?
3. Do you feel you have to walk on eggshells when your partner is at home?
4. Do you ever argue or row with your partner?
5. What happens when you argue or row?
6. Does your partner get jealous, and if so how does he behave when he feels that way?
7. Does your partner ever make you feel scared or frightened by his behaviour?
8. Has your partner destroyed things you care about?
9. Has your partner ever physically hurt or threatened you in any way?
10. Where are your children when your partner behaves in this way?
11. Does his behaviour frighten them?
12. Have they ever been hurt by his behaviour?
13. Has your partner ever threatened to harm the children?
14. Does your partner ever take drugs, or drink excessively?
15. Have the Police ever been involved?

Possible Questions for Children

1. What kind of things do mum and dad (girlfriend/boyfriend) argue about?
2. What happens when they argue?
3. How often do they argue?
4. How does this make you feel?
5. Do they shout at each other and call one another bad names?
6. Do they ever break or smash things when they are arguing?
7. Do they ever hit each other when they argue?
8. Have you (or brother/sister) ever been hit or hurt when they argue?
9. Have the Police ever come to your home? Why?
10. Do you feel afraid of things that happen at home?
11. What do you do when your Dad becomes angry?
12. What would you like to happen to make things better?
13. Have you felt able to talk to someone about things?

Possible Questions for Abusing Partners

1. It sounds like your behaviour can be frightening. What happens when you become angry with your partner? Do you sometimes shout or push her around?
2. Have you ever frightened your children?
3. What is the worst thing you have done when you were angry?
4. What has been the most recent incident?
5. Have you ever been aggressive/violent in front of your child(ren)?
6. What worries you most about your behaviour?
7. Would you wish things to be different? What would need to change?
8. Would you like some help in making these changes happen?

Staffordshire County Council Domestic Abuse Policy

Staffordshire County Council			HR Policy Handbook				
Reference Number	HR128	Approved By		Issue	02	Date	02/11/2005
Policy Title	Domestic Abuse Policy						

Legislative Framework

1. **The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974** sets out the requirements to secure the health, safety and welfare of those at work, and to protect the health and safety of any persons affected by work activities.
2. **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999:** require an employer to make an assessment of significant risk to all those affected by its undertaking. And put in place control measures to bring any significant risks to the lowest possible level.
3. **The Domestic Violence, Crimes and Victims Bill:**
This bill has now received royal assent but has not yet been published as an act. The domestic violence, crime and victims bill builds on the July 2002 white paper on criminal justice *Justice for all* and the June 2003 consultation paper *Safety and justice: the government's proposals on domestic violence*. The bill has three main parts focusing on domestic violence, criminal procedure, and victims.

Policy Statement

The Home Office define Domestic Abuse as any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It has profound consequences in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Abuse happens in all societies irrespective of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, cultural background, disability, marital status, age or sexual orientation.

It can have a damaging effect on the recipient's mental and physical health, resulting in poor performance and attendance at work. It is a major issue. One in four women and one in six men will suffer domestic abuse and it can have a major impact on their working lives. The cost to an organisation can also be quite considerable in terms of time absent, loss of the employee to the working environment etc.

Staffordshire County Council recognises it has a duty to promote a safe and healthy working environment to provide support to any employee, male or female who is a victim of domestic abuse and to protect employees from the risk of violent attacks from partners, ex-partners or family members while they are at work. We have therefore developed the following policy statement on Domestic Abuse.

Guidance On How To Apply The Policy

Staffordshire County Council recognises that domestic abuse is an important issue and will not tolerate in the workplace or ignore it when it affects our employees. We will undertake to raise awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace, encouraging a positive attitude to combating domestic abuse. We will provide awareness training for relevant staff including anti-harassment support officers, managers and trade union representatives to enable them to respond in a sensitive, non-judgemental manner.

We will treat sympathetically and confidentially victims of domestic abuse. Accordingly, we will provide support to individuals through the provision of a safe working environment, up-to-date information and contact numbers for internal (where applicable) and external support agencies and where appropriate provide support for external counselling.

Confidentiality

We will:

Observe strict confidentiality and no personal details shall be disclosed to a third party without the express permission of the employee except in circumstances within the law including child protection, or the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse, when the appropriate services may need to be informed.

Support

We will:

- Identify a named person(s) who will have responsibility for the policy.
- Treat sympathetically the effect of abuse on an employee, which may result in stress, distraction, poor timekeeping, absence, depression or other related health problems. However, employees need to have a clear understanding of what is expected with regard to performance and attendance.
- Ensure that the employee is aware of the policy and the various support options available to them and decides their own course of action at every stage.

- Signpost the employee to other relevant agencies.
- Accommodate leave for appointments such as with support agencies, solicitors, police for re-housing or to alter childcare arrangements and for court appearances etc in line with the needs of the business and existing leave policies e.g. flexible working, emergency leave etc.
- Ensure that periods of absence as a result of domestic abuse will not adversely affect the employee's employment record within the organisation, where appropriate and ensure that any absence as a result of domestic abuse is recorded appropriately, for example in return to work interviews.
- Due consideration may be given for references to external organisations and discussions may be had with the employee prior to the release of references.
- In line with the needs of the business, we will give sympathetic consideration to requests for flexible working arrangements and relocation or redeployment and redeploy staff who are victims of domestic abuse from frontline positions if they are accessible to the public.
- Take appropriate action where the victim and alleged perpetrator may come into close contact in the workplace, for example invoking the Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy, re-arranging duties etc. Managers should seek advice from Directorate HR Units on how to apply existing policies (eg Anti-Harassment, Grievance etc) in these circumstances.
- Continue to update and monitor arrangements for ensuring support and protection in the workplace.

Safety at Work

- In public buildings, where necessary and appropriate, put measures in place to ensure open access is not available to staff areas.
- In public buildings, arrange reception areas to best suit the needs of the service. However, staff protection measures are provided if necessary and based upon risk assessments for individual cases, these can include panic alarms and screen provision in high-risk areas.
- Ensure that where staff are isolated at work that they have a system in place for raising the alarm. (A mobile phone may not be enough as they may be working in areas where there is poor reception). There should also be systems for checking out at the end of the shift.

Information and Guidance

We will:

- Display posters and information throughout the workplace and, from time-to-time, enclose leaflets in payslips and in internal newsletters. Named contact(s) will be included in this literature.
- Work together with partners to provide information on access to appropriate professional local and national assistance, including aid agencies, police, local refuges and helplines.
- Include the issue in induction courses and health and safety courses as an ongoing health and safety issue and other training courses as appropriate.

Review

We will:

Keep this policy under review.

Other considerations

HR 15 Flexible Working

HR 37 Redeployment Policy

HR 40 Managing Attendance at Work

HR 44 Time off for Emergencies

Frequently Asked Questions

None.

Accountabilities

The Equalities Consultant takes lead responsibility on updating and revising the policy in consultation with employees, service users, community groups and partners. However, there are individual accountabilities that managers and employees have under this policy. They are:

Managers Accountabilities

- People management is a core management competency, and everyone employed by the Council is entitled to be competently managed.
- We expect managers to respond in a sensitive, non-judgemental manner regarding issues of domestic abuse, while bearing in mind the needs of the business.
- If unsure about the help the Council can provide, managers must refer to the Directorate's HR Unit.

Employees Accountabilities

- Employees to be open and honest in communication with their managers.
- Employees to have a clear understanding of what is expected with regard to performance and attendance.

Further Advice and Information

If you need any further advice on how to apply this policy please contact your line manager or your departmental HR Unit.

If you, or someone you know, is affected by domestic abuse, help is available:

Lichfield & Tamworth

Pathway (24hrs)

01543 676800

Victim Support

01543 30 30 100

Cannock Chase

The Project (24hrs)

01543 500324

East Staffordshire

Kiaura 01283 511514 out of hours 07970 745275
Pathway (24hrs) 01543 676800

County Wide Numbers

Staffordshire Women's Aid 0870 2700 123
Karma Nirvana 01332 604098

Male Helplines

Mankind 01823 334244 (Mon-Fri 10am to 4pm &
7pm to 9pm)
Victim Support Male Helpline 0800 3283623 (Mon-Fri 12 noon to 2pm)

Staffordshire County Council Counselling Service

Angela Churm/Pam Horrocks 01785 277400/401

Standard Documents

None.

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Departmental HR Manager.

Generic Guidance Notes for Employers wishing to establish an Employee DA Policy

Introduction

Domestic abuse is a serious crime, which affects **one in four women** and their children at some point in their lives, and which in England results in the murder of 1 woman every 3 days by their current or former male partner.

Domestic abuse incidents account for almost 25% of all reported violent crime and UK Police receive a call for assistance in relation to domestic abuse **every minute**.

This guide should be used as a model for raising awareness and developing an effective response to domestic abuse in the workplace. It offers information and practical suggestions for employers.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a generic term to describe a range of behaviours used by one person to control and dominate another with whom they have had, wanted to have or are in a close, intimate, family or other type of relationship.

Domestic abuse can be actual violence, the threat of violence, or sexual psychological or emotional abuse. Its effects range from bruising to permanent injury and can result in death. It can be emotional, mental and verbal abuse, threats, belittlement, isolation or control of finance and activity. Less visible effects include diminishing self-esteem, fear, guilt, insomnia, depressions, agoraphobia and difficulty trusting others.

Domestic abuse occurs irrespective of actual or perceived ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, religion, gender and mental or physical ability. There is no typical recipient or perpetrator of domestic abuse, however research has shown that in the majority of cases it is women who experience domestic abuse from male partners, ex-partners or family members.

Domestic abuse can also effect men and women in some sex relationships and men in heterosexual relationships. Domestic abuse does not only relate to married or cohabiting couples, it is experienced by those who have never had a relationship or cohabited with their abuser. It often continues after a relationship has ended.

In addition to violence from a partner or ex-partner, domestic abuse can be experienced directly or by collusion from other family members and carers.

Why have a Workplace Policy on Domestic abuse?

As an employer, you have a responsibility to provide a safe and effective work environment that responds to your employee's needs. It must make a clear statement that as an organisation you will not tolerate any form of violence either within the workplace or outside. It will also demonstrate a commitment to responding with sensitivity to employees who need help and support and to taking action against perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Other key reasons are:

➤ **Recruitment and Retention**

A work place policy is a good investment, helping to retain skilled and experienced staff and contributing to motivation and job satisfaction.

➤ **More Effective Staff**

Staff will feel fully supported and confident in approaching their employer for help. This can only increase their commitment to their organisation.

➤ **Getting the Best People for the Job**

An employer with family-friendly policies will be attractive to a much wider pool of potential applicants.

➤ **Equal Opportunities**

Employers are demonstrating a powerful commitment to the principles of equal opportunities, community investment and to achieving equal opportunities for women in the workplace.

Your organisation's domestic abuse policy should give guidance in the identification of, and response to, domestic abuse, which will assist in personnel and performance management and ensure the safety and welfare of all employees.

The policy **must** be implemented effectively. It should introduce practical steps to support those experiencing domestic abuse and in taking action against perpetrators.

A positive approach will both support and retain produce employees and will save money **AND LIVES**.

The Impact of Domestic Abuse in the Workplace

Legal Liability

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 also places a requirement on employers to assess the risk of violence to employees and put in place planning, organisation and control measures to ensure their health and safety.

When looking at any issue affecting employees and the workplace, cost, safety, liability and productivity should be considered. Domestic abuse is no different.

By working to mitigate the risks related to domestic abuse, an organisation will also create a safer workplace for an employee experiencing abuse and will also send out a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable and responding to it makes good business sense.

A very high number of people are affected by domestic abuse, so in any organisation it is likely that there will be employees who are either at risk or are affected by domestic abuse, either as a survivor or perpetrator.

It may affect their productivity, emotional and physical health and wellbeing and there is a possibility that there may be an increased risk of workplace violence. However, the workplace may be one of the “safe places” where victims can access the support and help they need.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse in the workplace may affect business costs, productivity and safety.

It is imperative that domestic abuse is recognised as being serious, preventable and an important issue for an organisation that cannot be ignored.

Domestic Abuse in the Workplace

- Employees experiencing domestic abuse may receive harassing or repeated phone calls, faxes or emails, unwelcome notes on their cars or unplanned and unannounced visits at work. They may also be stalked, physically assaulted or murdered either travelling to and from, or at, work.
- Children using workplace childcare facilities may also be in danger of abuse or abduction whilst on the premises. Colleagues may also be followed to or from work or subjected to questioning about how to contact the victim or where he or she can be found.

- Perpetrators may also be using workplace resources - phones, fax, email or other means to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partner.
- An employee may **intentionally** misuse their position or encourage others to do so, to negatively impact on abused women, perhaps by assisting perpetrators to locate their partners, carry out acts of domestic abuse or by protecting the abuser.

Employers must deal with any incident of abuse that takes place in the workplace in a clear and effective manner, as they are very damaging and potentially dangerous for both the abused employee and their colleagues. Employers should also be concerned about perpetrators bringing the organisation into disrepute by the misuse of workplace resources, information and their authority to enable the abuse to continue.

Workplace Safety

Although many organisations have protocols and policies on security and safety at work, it is likely that these will not protect victims of domestic abuse from abusive partners. At the time a victim leaves the relationship is when they are at the greatest risk of serious injury or homicide.

An employer's responsibility should be increased towards the employee when a current or former partner has threatened them. The threat will not be an isolated incident and the perpetrator may already have knowledge of working hours, phone numbers, colleagues and security entry systems.

Employers need to recognise that anyone experiencing domestic abuse is particularly vulnerable while at work. Once a victim has tried to leave an abusive relationship, the workplace is the only place the perpetrator is able to locate her.

There is also a risk if the perpetrator, or their friends or colleagues, work within the same organisation as the victim. Security of personal information, including payroll records, is paramount to ensure addresses and other details are kept confidential.

Productivity and Cost

Domestic abuse has a strong impact on an employee's working life. Many of those who are abused suffer physical injury, sleep deprivation, low morale, low self-esteem and heightened anxiety. These effects contribute towards lateness, absenteeism, poor performance and the ability to access career progression opportunities or even hold down a job.

Research into the Impact of Domestic Abuse on the Workplace

Research carried out in the USA shows that:

- 75% of domestic abuse victims are targeted at work, experiencing harassing phone calls, abusive partners arriving at the workplace unannounced and physical assaults.
- 56% of abused women are late for work at least five times a month. 28% leave work early at least five days a month and 54% are absent from work at least three days a month.
- 47% of senior executives surveyed said that domestic abuse had a harmful effect on the company's productivity and 44% said that domestic abuse increased their company's health care costs.

The estimated cost of domestic abuse in the UK is thought to be vast, with substantial economic loss being attributed to lost wages, paid sick-leave and absenteeism linked to domestic abuse.

What should be contained in a Workplace Domestic Abuse Policy?

The following should be included:

- A policy statement which has a clear aim and states the organisation's commitment to treat domestic abuse seriously, alongside guidance which informs the policy's implementation.
- A clear definition of the term "domestic abuse" recognising that it is not gender-specific and affects all communities. Information and support must be accessible to ensure consistency and fairness in the treatment of employees who are both experiencing, or perpetrating abuse.
- A commitment to offering ongoing support to those experiencing domestic abuse, prioritising confidentiality and increased employee and workplace safety. This should include practical advice on offering assistance and support.
- A commitment to early intervention by creating a supportive environment to encourage employees to be alert to the possibility of abuse, and of creating confidential mechanisms for those experiencing abuse to seek help and information.
- A commitment to challenging perpetrators, accompanied by a statement that any conviction of a domestic abuse-related crime will be treated seriously and may be considered to be a disciplinary offence.
- Clarity about the specific roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in implementing the policy.

- Information about what the organisation offers in terms of counselling and support scheme, and details on both local and national support services.
- A commitment to raising awareness amongst employees, including publicity and training.
- Details of monitoring and review mechanisms.
- Details of links to any other policies - eg Health and Safety, Confidentiality, Performance, Monitoring, Grievance.

Good Practice Principles

Abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the perpetrator. No proof of violence is needed and a victim's statement alone must be enough for them to be given support and information on protection and help.

Employers must ensure that there is no collusion with the behaviour of employees who are perpetrators of domestic abuse. If they are violent and abuse against partners who are also employees, they should face disciplinary action. Serious consideration should also be given to whether a perpetrator's conviction for domestic abuse brings the organisation into disrepute. In some instances, this may be regarded as gross misconduct. Information should also be available about perpetrator programmes locally which may assist them to address their abuse behaviour.

Fair and open practices are key when responding to domestic abuse, including non-discrimination against abused women in recruiting and promoting women and sensitivity in performance evaluation.

A victim's experiences of domestic abuse may be compounded by racist reactions, isolation, language and cultural barriers or other reactions to age, sexuality or disability. The same access to information and support should be available for everyone experiencing domestic abuse. Employers should not make assumptions about what action is appropriate because of a woman's age or because she is black, disabled, a lesbian or whether or not she has children. It should also not be assumed that only a husband/male partner is a threat because abusers may include relatives, friends and same-sex partners.

Confidentiality

Any disclosure of domestic abuse by an employee must be treated in the strictest confidence. However, in certain circumstances it may be necessary to breach this confidence, for example where there may be an issue of child protection.

Any information can only be disclosed to another manager or member of staff with the permission of the employee, or where withholding could result in serious injury or death.

It is important that the employee is made aware of the above at the beginning of any discussions.

Employer's Response

A. The Victim

It is important to create an environment where employees feel safe to talk about what they are experiencing.

It is important to listen and believe what they are saying.

You must provide a sensitive, non-judgemental response and reassure the employee that they are not to blame, there is no justification for this treatment of them and that there is help and support available, both through the organisation and links with specialist agencies.

Be aware of any additional issues for any employee because of their ethnic background, age, sexuality or disability.

The information must remain completely confidential unless with the victim's permission.

Be well informed about the support options that are available and discuss these with the employee.

Respect the choices and decisions the employee may make about their situation - often it is difficult for them to leave due to financial and childcare responsibilities and threats of violence. Be aware that victims will make many attempts before they finally leave their violent partner.

Be flexible with working hours, workloads and discuss the option of time off to make arrangements, for example meetings with a solicitor, making financial arrangements, schooling and housing.

Carry out a workplace risk assessment for both the victim and other employees.

Develop a mutually agreed workplace safety plan with the employee - remember that those experiencing domestic abuse are best able to assess the danger to themselves and their children.

Keep in touch with the employee during any period of absence, maintaining confidentiality of their whereabouts at all times.

Organisations may wish to consider having a named domestic abuse support worker as the point of contact for employees experiencing domestic abuse.

Performance issues - it is hoped that by drawing this issue to the attention of managers, they will be better able to identify the likely symptoms of those experiencing domestic abuse. Unfortunately, it is often the case that an individual is already the subject of disciplinary procedures when the issue first comes to light. Poor work performance, unexplained absenteeism, poor timekeeping and lack of concentration can all be indicators of domestic abuse.

Employees should be encouraged to disclose what is happening to them to their line manager so that appropriate help and support can be provided and to prevent the possibility of disciplinary action being taken due to poor performance.

B. The Perpetrator

In circumstances where there has been no disclosure of domestic abuse but a manager, supervisor or colleague suspects that it may be an issue, it is only possible to identify and address any performance problems that may come to light. All employees should be clearly and regularly informed about the organisation's policy on domestic abuse.

If there has been a disclosure of domestic abuse, the alleged perpetrator should be interviewed and made aware that domestic abuse will not be tolerated, will be treated seriously and that it is a crime and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Carry out an investigation to determine whether abuse has occurred during work time or using workplace resources. It may be that it would be inappropriate for the perpetrator to carry out certain duties and consideration should be given to redeployment or disciplinary action.

If domestic abuse results in a criminal conviction, this may present a conflict between the violence and nature of employment. Consideration should also be given to whether the perpetrator's actions and any resulting conviction, brings the organisation into disrepute and may be regarded to constitute gross misconduct.

Confidentiality of the alleged perpetrator is paramount whilst any investigation is being carried out.

Do not allow employees to justify their behaviour with excuses. Domestic abuse is a choice and perpetrators are solely responsible for the violence and abuse.

Ensure the perpetrator is unable to use their position to find out details about the whereabouts of their partner, through databases, personnel files or contact with other agencies.

Make clear that the Police will be called if there is evidence of violence or abuse during work time.

Information should be made available on local perpetrator programmes.

Information and Training

In order to raise awareness of the organisation's domestic abuse policy, leaflets should be made available to all staff and be included in induction packs. Training should be provided to managers, HR officers and supervisors to promote the identification of likely victims/survivors and perpetrators, and how such cases should be dealt with.

Ongoing domestic abuse training and its impact on the workplace should be a requirement of all managers, supervisors, HR and security staff. It should include awareness of the issue, the effects of domestic abuse in the workplace and good practice responses. Managers should consider practical solutions - for examples sensitive questioning, identifying domestic abuse.

It may be helpful for short presentations on domestic abuse by local domestic abuse services to be held, perhaps during team meetings, as part of ongoing training programmes.

Monitoring and Review

The fact that an organisation has a domestic abuse policy does not necessarily mean that they support employees experiencing domestic abuse. It needs to be effectively implemented and regularly monitored to assess the impact on employees and the organisation itself. There should be a designated officer or department with responsibility for reviewing, monitoring and updating the policy.

The following should be considered in any review/monitoring process:

Manager Training

Do managers know how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. Are they aware of the policies that apply to the issue? Is domestic abuse included in management training?

Support

Does the organisation have a designated domestic abuse worker or counselling service? If a counselling service is available are the counsellors trained on domestic abuse? Is there a referral system to local domestic abuse service providers?

Leave/Flexible Working

Does the organisation offer special leave or flexible working arrangements to allow employees time to address practical issues such as going to court, solicitor appointments, counselling without fear of losing their jobs.

Education and Training

Does the organisation allow a safe environment for employees to talk about domestic abuse, provide domestic abuse awareness training and information via leaflets, posters etc?

Financial Support

Does the organisation offer any financial support to employees experiencing domestic abuse? Is support offered to local services through donations?

Security

Does the organisation's security policy take into account risks associated with domestic abuse? What action is taken if abusive partners come to the workplace - are the Police called, injunctions applied for? Is there access to mobile phones, escorts to cars, sufficient lighting in dark areas such as car parks?

Working with Perpetrators

What action is taken against an employee who perpetrates domestic abuse?

Feedback

Do you offer the opportunity for employees to feedback on their views as to how the organisation addresses the issue of domestic abuse? Consider making available an employee feedback/monitoring form. It may be that there should a report to the Director or Board to advise on progress and development of the domestic abuse policy.

Key Facts About Domestic Abuse

- The majority of domestic abuse involves heterosexual males abusing their female partners or ex-partners.
(British Crime Surveys 2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06),
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>
- 16% of violent crimes reported to the British Crime Survey (2005/06) were classified as domestic abuse, with similar figures for the previous years.
(ibid)
- Of all the violent crimes investigated by the British Crime Survey (which excludes some categories such as child sexual assault and trafficking) domestic abuse is consistently the violent crime least likely to be reported to the police.
(ibid)
(Homicide statistics for England and Wales, from K. Coleman, K Jansson, P. Kaiza, E. Reed, *Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2005/2006* (2007) - Supplementary Volume 1 to *Crime in England and Wales 2005/2006*).
- On average over the years between 1995 and 2006, two women per week in England and Wales were killed by a partner or ex-partner.
(Metropolitan Police, Findings from the Multi-Agency Domestic abuse Reviews in London 2003).
- Women are at greatest risk of being killed at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner, and 76% of domestic homicides occur after separation.
(S. Walby and A. Myhil, 'Assessing and Managing Risk', in J. Taylor-Browne, *What Works in Reducing Domestic abuse? A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals* [London: Whiting Birch, 2001]).
- Non fatal domestic abuse and stalking also continue or increase after separation for many women. According to the British Crime Survey, about 20% of domestic abuse incidents are experienced after the relationship has ended.
(Gyneth Lewis and James Drife, *Why Mothers Die 2000-2002 - Report on confidential enquiries into maternal deaths in the United Kingdom* [CEMACH, 2005]).
- 30% domestic abuse begins or escalates during pregnancy.
(British Crime Surveys 2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06).

- 16-24 year olds are at greatest risk of suffering domestic abuse. **(C. Humphreys, L Regan and R K Thiara, *Domestic abuse and Substance Use: Overlapping Issues/Separate* [Home Office and Greater London Authority, London 2005]).**
- A significant proportion of perpetrators are also misusing drugs and/or alcohol, although research suggests that most perpetrators are not drug addicts or alcoholics. Of those who are, there is evidence that they use abusive behaviour as much when sober if not more than when under the influence of drugs or alcohol. **(Department of Health, 2002).**
- In 2002, nearly three quarters of children on the subject of a child protection plan, lived in households where domestic abuse occurs. **(Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2004).**
- In relationships where there is domestic abuse, children witness about three-quarters of incidents. About half the children in such families have themselves been badly hit or beaten. Sexual and emotional abuse are also more likely to happen in these families. **(S. Walby and A. Myhil 'Assessing and Managing Risk', in J. Taylor Browne, *What Works in Reducing Domestic abuse? A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals* [London: Whiting Birch, 2001]; J. L. Edleson, The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering. *Violence Against Women*, 5(2), pp. 134 to 154 (1999); C. Humphreys and R. Thiara, *Routes to Safety: Protection issues facing abused women and children and the role of outreach services* [Women's Aid Federation of England: Bristol, 2002]).**
- Where there is abuse of a woman by a male partner there is sometimes also child physical and sexual abuse involving the same abusive partner. Estimates of the overlap vary but range from 40-60%. **(Homelessness Statistics: September 2002 and Domestic abuse (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2002).**
- Domestic abuse causes 16% of homelessness. **(Janet Bowstead, *Mental Health and Domestic abuse: Audit 1999* [Greenwich Multi-Agency Domestic abuse Forum Mental Health Working Group, 2000]).**
- An audit in Greenwich found that 60% of mental health service users had experienced domestic abuse, and a separate survey of women using mental health services in Leeds found that half of them had experienced domestic abuse. **(ReSisters, *Women Speak Out* [Leeds: ReSisters, 2002]).**

- A 2003 survey from the BBC found that 29% of men and 22% of women felt that domestic abuse was acceptable in some circumstances.
(*Hitting home: Domestic abuse Survey* [BBC, 2003]),
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2753917.stm>
- One third of all female suicide attempts can be attributed to current or past experience of domestic abuse,
(Stark and Flitcraft *Women at risk: Domestic abuse and Women's Health* (London: Sage, 1996); Audrey Mullender, *Rethinking Domestic abuse: The Social Work and Probation Response* [London: Routledge, 1996]).
and 50% of women of Asian origin who have attempted suicide or self-harm are domestic abuse survivors.
(K. Chantler et al; *Attempted Suicide and Self-harm: South Asian Women* [Manchester: Women's Studies Research Centre, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2001]; Newham Asian Women's Project, *Young Asian Women and Self-harm: A mental health needs assessment of young Asian Women in East London* [London: Newham Inner City Multifund and NAWP, 1998]).

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Useful Websites

1. The Home Office

The Home Office website provides a significant range of relevant information for practitioners working in the field of domestic abuse.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/?view=Standard>

The link below provides a very wide range of resources and publications which can be downloaded.

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv08.htm>

This specific link is to the Home Office 'Domestic Violence Mini Site' which provides an expanded range of information and advice.

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv01.htm>

Copies of '*Domestic abuse: Break the Chain Multi Agency Guidance for Addressing Domestic abuse*', published jointly by the Home Office and the Women's Unit are available from the following link -

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ERORecords/HO/415/1/domesticviolence/mag.pdf>

2. Women's Aid

Women's Aid is one of the key national charities supporting over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

http://www.womensaid.org.uk/?gclid=CKyfi4auq5ICFQTPXgod_j6zHA

3. Barnados

Barnados is one of the leading UK charities and provides through its web site specific information relating to domestic abuse and the protection of children,

http://www.barnados.org.uk/what_we_do/work_with_families/domestic_violence.htm

4. Stop Domestic Abuse – Scotland's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Domestic Abuse Project.

This website is for service providers who work with people who have experienced, or are currently experiencing, domestic abuse and abuse. It has information specific to the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people.

<http://www.lgbtdomesticabuse.org.uk/>

5. **Direct Gov.**

This link provides a useful source of advice and information for young people and provides links to other providers of support for young people.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/CrimeAndJustice/TypesOfCrime/DG_10027680

6. **Citizen's Advice Bureau.**

This link is to the specific Domestic abuse section of the CAB website and provides a wide range of links to national resources.

http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/family_parent/family/domestic_violence.htm