County Durham Multi-Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Referral Pathway

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<td>(People aged 16 or over)</td>
<td>Domestic abuse is a form of abuse covered by multi-agency safeguarding adults policy and procedures. Where the victim of domestic abuse is a Vulnerable Adult as per “No Secrets” definition: aged 18 or over; and who is or maybe eligible for community care services because of age, disability or illness; and who is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.</td>
<td>You still need to take action and support the victim. Long term involvement 1. Consider immediate and long term risks. 2. Signpost/refer the victim to domestic abuse support services - Harbour (03000 20 25 25) for safety planning advice if the victim wishes to separate. 3. Regularly revisit level of risk in terms of MARAC and safeguarding action. 5. Consider a referral to the Multi Agency Intervention Service (MAIS) where there are other issues, for example ASB, crime and other underlying problems. Always assess the history and not just each incident in isolation Short term involvement 1. Consider immediate and long term risks. 2. Review any previous risks/decision-making in relation to domestic abuse or safeguarding adults – do not assume it remains the same. 3. Discuss basic safety plan with alleged victim – ensure they know where to go for help if they need it. 4. Signpost/refer to domestic abuse support services (see over). 5. Share information with other relevant agencies. 6. Consider whether case needs allocating to a longer term worker. 7. Ensure recording is clear for future workers who may become involved.</td>
<td>Remember that children are always impacted by domestic abuse. They are at risk of significant harm by direct abuse and from hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents. This will be dealt with under multi-agency safeguarding children procedures. If you have a concern that a child has been affected by domestic abuse: 1. Telephone Children’s First Contact (03000 26 79 79). 2. Complete referral and initial information record. In all circumstances  • Document decision-making, actions taken to manage risk and rationale for sharing or not sharing information.  • Be aware of your professional role and consult with other partners to: clarify their roles and responsibilities, share information and seek advice e.g. Police, health, housing, domestic abuse/violence specialists  • Follow up any referrals.  • When signposting to other agencies always consider risks associated with the perpetrator finding leaflets/letters etc.</td>
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### Case meets MARAC Criteria

1. Be clear with the victim about confidentiality and MARAC procedures  
2. Complete the CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist with the victim where possible  
3. Complete MARAC referral form  
4. Forward MARAC referral form either direct to MARAC at MARAC@durham.pnn.police.uk or contact your agency’s single point of contact (SPOC) for MARAC who will forward to MARAC coordinator

### Case meets safeguarding adults criteria

Domestic abuse is a form of abuse covered by multi-agency safeguarding adults policy and procedures.  
Where the victim of domestic abuse is a Vulnerable Adult as per “No Secrets” definition:  
- aged 18 or over; and  
- who is or may be eligible for community care services because of age, disability or illness; and  
- who is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.  
- raising a safeguarding alert must be considered for all those persons meeting the above criteria where the MARAC route is not being followed.

To make a safeguarding adults alert:  
1. Telephone Social Care Direct (03000 26 79 79) or contact allocated Social Worker if you are aware they have one  
Social Care Direct will decide whether safeguarding procedures need to be invoked.  
Further practice guidance around domestic abuse and safeguarding adults is available online.

### Case does not meet MARAC or safeguarding adults criteria

You still need to take action and support the victim.

#### Long term involvement

1. Consider immediate and long term risks.  
2. Signpost/refer the victim to domestic abuse support services - Harbour (03000 20 25 25) for safety planning advice if the victim wishes to separate.  
3. Regularly revisit level of risk in terms of MARAC and safeguarding action.  
5. Consider a referral to the Multi Agency Intervention Service (MAIS) where there are other issues, for example ASB, crime and other underlying problems. Always assess the history and not just each incident in isolation

#### Short term involvement

1. Consider immediate and long term risks.  
2. Review any previous risks/decision-making in relation to domestic abuse or safeguarding adults – do not assume it remains the same.  
3. Discuss basic safety plan with alleged victim – ensure they know where to go for help if they need it.  
4. Signpost/refer to domestic abuse support services (see over).  
5. Share information with other relevant agencies.  
6. Consider whether case needs allocating to a longer term worker.  
7. Ensure recording is clear for future workers who may become involved.

### Cases where children are involved

People aged under 18

#### Your agency SPOC:

1. Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) or Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) will contact the victim  
2. MARAC meeting takes place and victims views are presented by IDVA/ISVA  
3. Action Plan is developed

Where the case is visibly high risk or based on your professional judgement you have serious concerns about a victim’s situation you MUST make a referral into MARAC.

Contact MARAC – 0191 3752072

Domestic violence and abuse is: 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 their gender and sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, financial, sexual and emotional.
# Domestic abuse support services

**In an emergency always call 999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Durham Police</td>
<td>Tel: 03000 20 25 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Countywide Domestic Abuse Outreach Services for women, men &amp; children</td>
<td>Tel: 03000 268840 or 03000 268840</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Refuges: Derwentside</td>
<td>Tel: 0191 386 5951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durham Women's Refuge</td>
<td>Tel: 0191 386 5951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victim Support - County Durham Area</td>
<td>Tel: 01388 664 111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broken Rainbow</td>
<td>Tel: 0191 386 5951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men's Advice Line (male victims)</td>
<td>Tel: 0808 801 0327</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing issues: Durham County Councils Housing Solutions Service</td>
<td>Tel: 03000 268840 or 03000 268840</td>
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## Good practice guidance when responding to an adult victim of domestic abuse

- **If you suspect that abuse is happening but it is not disclosed:**
  - When your suspicions are raised it is important that you act on them. You could provide the only opportunity for the victim to tell someone.
  - Remember it can be dangerous to ask about domestic abuse in front of anyone else, particularly a partner. A later opportunity should be identified to speak to the person alone or pass your concerns onto another professional who could also attempt to ask. Also, children who are able to speak may later mention the conversation.
  - Ensure privacy – you are unlikely to receive a disclosure if someone might overhear.
  - Show the person you have time to listen – if you appear rushed or uninterested you are less likely to receive a disclosure.
  - Reassure about confidentiality and explain the limits of this, e.g. “I’m going to ask you a question and I want you to know that whatever you tell me will go no further without your permission, unless I believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk.”
  - Begin with open questions, e.g. “tell me how things are going”.
  - Follow up with direct questions, e.g. “I notice that you seem anxious/have some bruises/often miss appointments (whatever your concern is), is there anything happening at home that you are worried about? Is anything happening in your life that is making you feel unsafe? Is someone hurting you?”
  - It may be necessary to ask more than once, as many victims do not identify that they are experiencing abuse if it is not physical.

## Responding to an initial disclosure

- Be sensitive, respectful and listen carefully to what you are being told.
- Seek to empower victims, not to take over or make decisions for them. Ask them what they want you to do.
- Remain non-judgemental – never imply that the victim is to blame for the abuse.
- Validate the victim’s experience; tell them you are glad they told you.
- Give key messages, e.g. you are not alone, you do not deserve to be treated like this, there is help available for you.

## Address immediate safety issues:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the victim and anyone else in the family.
- Do not take any action that could place you or your colleagues at risk of violence.
- Seek emergency assistance if needed.

## If the person doesn’t want you to take any action:

- Consider mental capacity, coercion, public interest, risks of significant harm.
- Always leave the door open for future discussion e.g. “You can contact me in the future if you feel you need further help and support”.

## Domestic abuse framing question for children (under 16):

- “We know that in many families, mums and dads have arguments and disagreements, does that ever happen in your family?”

To obtain accurate and reliable information from a child regarding a domestic abuse situation the language and questions must be appropriate for the child’s age and developmental stage.

Professionals should not press a child for answers. Instead:

- Listen and believe what the child says;
- Reassure the children that the abuse is not their fault, and it is not their responsibility to stop it from happening;
- Give several telephone numbers, including Childline, Durham Police and local domestic abuse services.
- Explain the limits of confidentiality and your safeguarding responsibilities.

## Good practice guidance when working with perpetrators of domestic abuse

- Be alert to and prepared to receive and clarify a disclosure about domestic violence from an abusive person. However, remember that the majority of abusers will deny or minimise the domestic violence which they are perpetrating.

You may have contact with a perpetrator directly or in the context of a family. They may present with a problem such as substance misuse, stress, depression or aggressive or offending behaviour – without reference to abusive behaviour in the household or relationship.

Before seeking to clarify a disclosure from an alleged perpetrator, professionals should first of all take into account their own safety, the safety of any children, the safety of the victim and the safety of any other potential victims (such as ex-partners or extended family members).

### Clare’s Law

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is designed to provide victims with information that may protect them from an abusive situation before it ends in tragedy. The scheme allows the police to disclose information about a partner’s previous history of domestic violence or violent acts. Please ring 101 to make an application.

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