

County Durham & Darlington Multi-Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Procedural Flow Chart

Enabling disclosure

There are many reasons why victims won't, or feel they can't, make a disclosure so it's important to build trust to enable a possible future disclosure.

- Always be alert to the possibility that an individual is experiencing domestic violence and be prepared to offer support.
- Be aware of signs that could indicate abuse is taking place, e.g. physical injury (inconsistent explanations for bruises or other injuries, frequent bruises or injury), controlling behaviour (partner always present during appointments, won't allow person to talk for themselves, person has limited access to money) and environmental indicators (holes in doors/walls, broken furniture, tense atmosphere in the home).
- Ensure professional interpreters are used, **never** use family members, children or friends where abuse is known or suspected.
- Only ask questions about domestic abuse when victims are on their own and in a private place.

This guidance is applicable to all victims of domestic abuse Domestic abuse is predominantly perpetrated against women by men, however it can be perpetrated within same sex relationships, by women against men, and by other family members such as adult children against their parents or the extended family/community as in cases of honour based abuse. Domestic abuse impacts upon children and/or adults with care and support needs in the household whether they are abused directly by the perpetrators and by hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents.

Remember: domestic violence and abuse commonly **escalates** and increases in **severity** over time
Separation does not ensure safety; it often increases the risk. **Always** consult domestic abuse specialist agencies for safety planning advice if the victim wishes to separate (See over page)

Always use the [MARAC DASH Risk Assessment Tool](#) as a starting point (click link to access MARAC referral form and DASH risk assessment at end of MARAC form).

Deal with any immediate risks, including risks to others and yourself. Check records for risk information or warnings. Contact emergency services if required.

Never assume that someone else will take care of the domestic abuse issues. You should seek confirmation that other professionals/agencies have acted in a way which you would expect. You may be the victim's first and only contact. Remember that victims can deny abuse is happening and minimise the risk and/or harm. Discuss with your line manager, assess the threshold level and act accordingly.



Case meets MARAC Criteria (People aged 16 or over)	Case meets safeguarding adults criteria	Case does not meet MARAC or safeguarding adults criteria	Cases where children are involved (people aged under 18)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clear with the victim about confidentiality and MARAC procedures. 2. Complete the DASH Risk Assessment with the victim where possible. 3. Complete MARAC referral form. 4. Forward MARAC referral form directly to MARAC@durham.pnn.police.uk or contact your agency's single point of contact (SPOC) for MARAC to forward on your behalf <p>Your agency SPOC for MARAC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The MARAC Coordinator reviews the referral to ensure the high risk threshold is met 6. MARAC meeting takes place 7. Action plan is developed. <p>Where the case is visible high risk (14 'yes' ticks); or, based on your professional judgement, you have serious concerns about a victim's situation you must make a referral into MARAC.</p> <p>Contact details for MARAC: 0191 375 2072</p>	<p>Domestic abuse is a form of abuse covered by multi-agency safeguarding adults policy and procedures.</p> <p>A safeguarding adults referral must be made where the victim of domestic abuse is an adult at risk as defined by the Care Act 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aged 18 or over; and • has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met); and • as a result of those needs is unable to protect him or herself from the risk of, or experience of abuse or neglect <p>To make a referral:</p> <p>DURHAM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call Social Care Direct 03000 267979 or contact allocated Social Worker. <p>DARLINGTON</p> <p>Call First Point of Contact Team 01325 406 111 Out of Hours call 01642 524 552</p> <p>Following referral a decision will be made whether Safeguarding Adults Enquiry needs to progress and a Safeguarding Adults Plan developed.</p> <p>It is good practice to make a safeguarding adults and a MARAC referral if both criteria are met.</p> <p>Further practice guidance around safeguarding adults and domestic abuse is available from Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council.</p>	<p>You still need to take action and support the victim.</p> <p>Long term involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider immediate and long term risks. 2. Signpost/refer the victim to domestic abuse support services (see over). 3. Develop a safety plan with the victim (taking into consideration any dependents they may have). 4. Share information with other relevant agencies. 5. Regularly revisit level of risk in terms of MARAC and safeguarding actions. <p>Short term involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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 are concerned a child has been affected by domestic abuse:</p> <p>DURHAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public call Children's First Contact 03000 26 79 79 • Professionals complete and submit a Children's Services Referral Form <p>DARLINGTON</p> <p>Contact Children's Initial Advice Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals call 01235 406 252 • Public call 01325 406 222 • Out of Hours call 01642 524 552 <p>NB: This also applies to young people aged 16-18 experienced controlling and abusive behaviour in their own relationships</p> <p>IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document decision-making, actions taken to manage risk and rationale for sharing or not sharing information. • Be aware of your professional role and consult other partners to clarify their roles and responsibilities, share information and seek advice e.g. Police, health, housing, domestic abuse specialists • Follow up any referrals. • When signposting to other agencies always consider risks associated with the perpetrator finding leaflets / letters etc.

Domestic abuse support services In an emergency always call 999	Good practice guidance when responding to an adult victim of domestic abuse	Good practice guidance when responding to a child who is a victim of domestic abuse
<p>LOCAL SERVICES (inclusive of male victims and LGBT community)</p> <p>Harbour An independent registered charity which provides assistance to individuals and families affected by domestic abuse including those perpetrating abuse Tel: 03000 20 25 25 Email: info@myharbour.org.uk</p> <p>HALO Charity providing support to victims of Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Tel: 01642 2683045 Email: info@haloproject.org.uk</p> <p>Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Support for those who have experienced rape or sexual assault Tel: 0191 3729202 (Monday-Friday office hours)</p> <p>Darlington ARQ Counselling and mentoring services to people who identify as LGBTQ and the wider community. Tel: 01388 229516 Email: darlingtonarq@gmail.com</p> <p>NATIONAL SPECIALIST SERVICES</p> <p>GALOP Advice and support for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender victims Tel: 0300 999 5428</p> <p>National Stalking Helpline Helpline: 0808 802 0300</p> <p>LOCAL SERVICE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AGE 13 OR OVER</p> <p>Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (RSACC) Information, support and counselling for who have been raped, sexually abused or have suffered domestic abuse at any time in their life. Helpline: 01325 369933 (Monday-Thursday 6.30-9 pm)</p> <p>LOCAL WOMEN'S REFUGES</p> <p>Bishop Auckland Tel: 01388 600 094</p> <p>Darlington Tel: 01325 364486</p> <p>Derwentside Tel: 01207 282 193</p> <p>Durham City & Peterlee (Harbour) Tel: 03000 20 25 25</p>	<p>If you suspect that abuse is happening but it is not disclosed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When your suspicions are raised it is important 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. 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 others 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. <p>Responding to an initial disclosure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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. <p>Address immediate safety issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the immediate safety of the victim and anyone else in the family. Do not take any action that could put you or your colleagues at risk of violence. Seek emergency assistance if needed. <p>If the person doesn’t want you to take any action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider mental capacity, coercion, public interest, risks of serious or significant harm to the victim or others. A lack of consent to the safeguarding process does not always mean a practitioner should not take action to protect the victim or others at risk. 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”. <p>Prevention of abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a person is worried their partner may have been abusive in the past the CLARE’S LAW scheme allows people to make inquiries directly to the Police. Information can be shared with the potential victim where police checks show there is a record of abusive behaviour or other information to indicate there may be a risk. Applications are made via the Police 101 number. 	<p>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?”</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Professionals should not press a child for answers. Instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, Police and local domestic abuse services. Explain the limits of confidentiality and your safeguarding responsibilities. <p>For young people (16-17years old):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adult questioning techniques and refer to domestic abuse services. Safety plan with the young person Teenage pregnancy with domestic abuse is high risk. Both MARAC and child protection procedures should be initiated. <p>Good practice guidance when working with perpetrators of domestic abuse</p> <p>Whilst the majority of abusers will deny or minimise their behaviour professionals should be alert and prepared to receive and clarify a disclosure about domestic violence from an abusive person.</p> <p>Contact with a perpetrator may be directly or in the context of a family. They may present due to other problems such as substance misuse, stress, depression or aggressive or offending behaviour – without reference to abusive behaviour in the household or relationship.</p> <p>Before seeking to clarify the situation professionals should take into account their personal safety, the safety of the victim and any children and any other potential victims (such as ex-partners or extended family members).</p> <p>Anger management courses, couples counselling and / or mediation are not appropriate interventions for domestic abuse and should not be recommended.</p> <p>The most effective intervention for perpetrators of domestic abuse is a structured prevention programme which seeks to change controlling and abusive behaviour by educating the abuser and challenging their behaviours and beliefs about gender and relationships. Prevention programmes are available via Harbour.</p> <p>CHILD / ADOLESCENT TO PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE (CAPVA) If the child is 16 or over this may fall under the Government’s definition of domestic abuse. For further information see the government’s guidance and/or the CAPVA procedural flowchart for Darlington</p>

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.