



coreassets
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

DOMESTIC ABUSE AWARENESS HANDBOOK



For staff supporting pupils exposed to domestic abuse

in partnership with:



BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

t: 0800 587 4446 e: lancashire.daservice@coreassets.com

www.corechildrensservices.co.uk

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WHO ARE CORE ASSETS?



coreassets
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

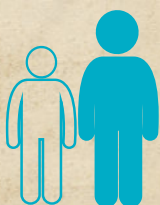
Core Assets Children's Services is part of the Core Assets Group, which has been working with vulnerable children and families in their communities for over 20 years. Our commissioning partners range from local authorities, government bodies, social care organisations, charities and even the Ministry of Defence.

80



In 2014, Core Assets Children's Services actively worked on over **80 distinct contracts**.

We delivered an average of **8000 hours of support to children and parents each month...**



and directly supported over **3,000 children and young people and over 3,000 parents and carers**

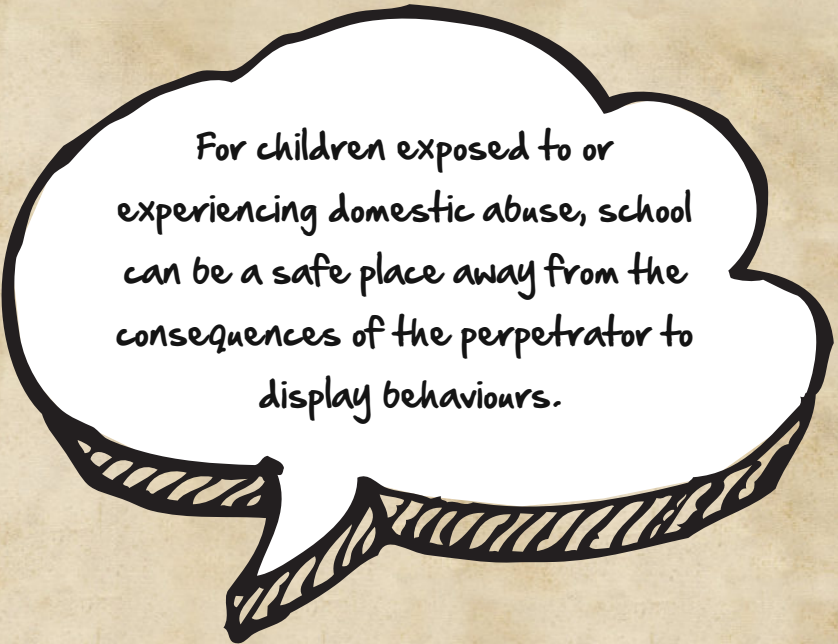
Our commitment to vulnerable children has always been key to the work that we do and enables us to build brighter futures for children and families.

For more information visit our website at
www.corechildrensservices.co.uk

INTRODUCTION TO DOMESTIC ABUSE



When a child is experiencing difficulties in school, have you ever considered they may be experiencing domestic abuse at home?



For children exposed to or experiencing domestic abuse, school can be a safe place away from the consequences of the perpetrator to display behaviours.

REMEMBER:

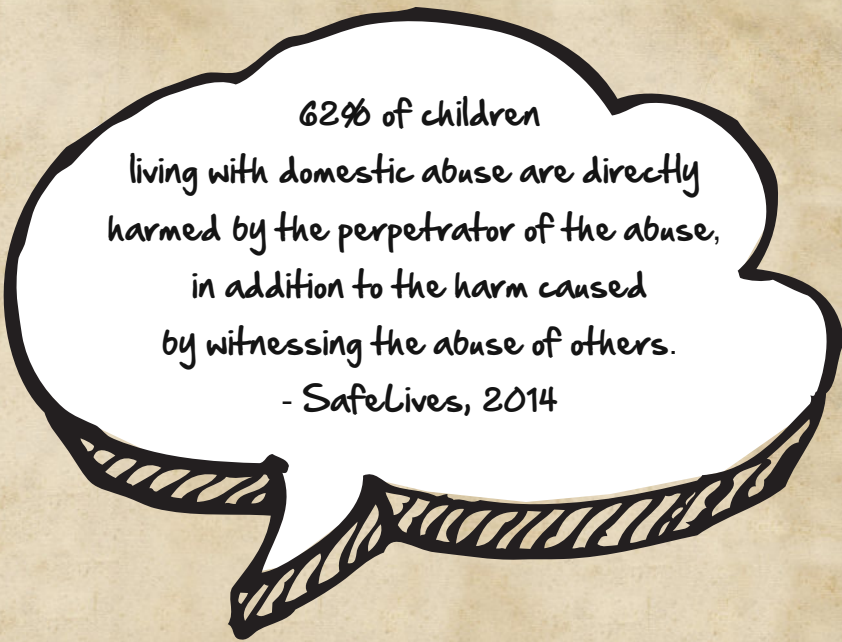
If you don't support a child or young person appropriately, they will not have the trust

“

Right now, 100,000 people in England and Wales are at risk of being seriously hurt or murdered by their partner. And they're not the only ones at risk - 130,000 children live with this risk too.

- SafeLives, 2015

”



62% of children
living with domestic abuse are directly
harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse,
in addition to the harm caused
by witnessing the abuse of others.

- SafeLives, 2014

“

3 to 5 children in a class of 30 are exposed to domestic abuse.

- Refuge, 2011

”

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse can be an incident, or pattern of incidents, where controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse is shown between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following:

> **Psychological**

> **Physical**

> **Sexual**

> **Financial**

> **Emotional**

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and victims are not confined to a gender or ethnic group.

“

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

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

”

- Home Office, 2013

TYPES OF ABUSE

There are many different types of domestic abuse, these can include:

> **Physical Abuse**

- Hitting
- Burning
- Breaking possessions
- Using objects as weapons
- Strangulation
- Kicking
- Creating drug or alcohol dependencies

> **Financial Abuse**

- Creating debts in the victim's name
- Pressurises the victim to sign property or possessions over
- Spends the victim's money without agreement
- Withholding access to money
- Not allowing access to work
- Controlling money unreasonably



Emotional Abuse

- Checking phones or social media accounts
- Telling the victim what to wear
- Isolating from family or friends
- Threatening violence
- Name calling
- Accusations of being unfaithful
- Forcing to miss school



Sexual Abuse

- Controlling contraception
- Unwanted sex
- Using degrading sexual acts
- Degrading sexual comments
- Forcing to watch pornography

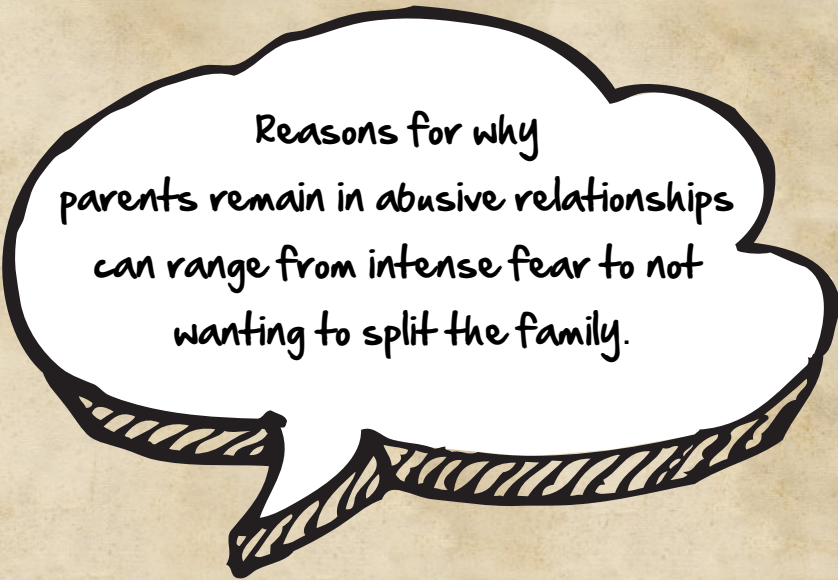


Psychological Abuse

- Reducing confidence
- Making the victim feel like they are mad
- Making the victim feel guilty
- Impacting on self esteem
- Creating dependency on the perpetrator

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON PARENTING


It is too easy for professionals to focus the blame on the non-abusive parent, especially when the abuse has continued for some time.



Reasons for why
parents remain in abusive relationships
can range from intense fear to not
wanting to split the family.

Children can be impacted by the behaviour of their non-abusive parent, but it is important to focus on resisting victim blaming and remembering that domestic abuse is a choice of the **abusive** parent.

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON PARENTING

 **The parenting capacity of the non-abusive parent can be impacted in a number of ways:**

- Not being allowed to appropriately parent the children by the perpetrator
- The perpetrator turning the children against the non-abusive parent
- Being constantly told they are a bad parent
- Threats that the children will be removed from their care if they report the abuse
- Not being allowed to spend time with the children, to play or do homework
- Isolation, making it harder to report abuse
- Mental health issues due to the abuse
- The perpetrator encouraging a drug or alcohol dependency
- Being emotionally drained and having little energy left to give the children

IF IT'S THAT BAD WHY DON'T THEY END THE RELATIONSHIP?

Imagine being in a relationship where you are in fear of your partner. You have been told that if you leave them, you will never see your children/family again, you will have no money and they will tell everyone your secrets.

Research indicates that the first two weeks after an abusive relationship has ended is when the victim is at the highest risk from the perpetrator. The perpetrator may subject the victim to high levels of abuse in an attempt to regain power and control. Conversely, the perpetrator may also try to win the victim, their friends and their family round by appearing charming and upset themselves.

- On average, victims experience 50 incidents of domestic abuse before getting effective help.
- SafeLives, 2015; Walby 2014
- On average, high-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.6 years before getting help.
- SafeLives, 2015
- 85% of victims see an average of 5 professionals in the year before they finally get effective support.
- SafeLives, 2015

IF IT'S THAT BAD WHY DON'T THEY END THE RELATIONSHIP?

For teenagers, some reasons why they are unable to leave their abusive relationships could include:

- Thinking no one will believe them
- Having no understanding that the abuse is wrong
- Lack of understanding around healthy/non-healthy relationships
- Having a sense of belonging/someone to love
- Fear that secrets, photos or information will be shared or posted on social media
- Believing that any partner is better than no partner
- Isolation from family/friends/school
- Not wanting to get their partner into trouble
- Fear of being labelled
- Broken relationships with their parents



IMPACT OF BEING EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE ON CHILDREN

> Trauma in children increases the risk of:

- Substance misuse
- Teen pregnancy
- Suicidal behaviour/self harming
- Criminal activity
- Re-victimisation

> Children can be impacted a number of ways by exposure to domestic abuse, both within the family and in their own teenage relationships. These impacts can range from:

- Believing it is their fault
- The pressure not to report to professionals due to threats and fear from the perpetrator
- Having no positive role model
- Missing sleep
- Being withdrawn or afraid of adults
- Missing education
- Missed health appointments
- Lack of self-esteem/confidence
- Confusion
- Lack of nutrition or eating disorders
- Risk of physical injury
- Hypervigilance
- Developmental issues
- Speech and language issues

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE NOT REPORT WHAT IS HAPPENING?

- Self blame
- They feel trapped
- Learned helplessness
- Guilt or shame
- They are labelled as a problem
- Any relationship is better than none
- Won't be believed
- Isolation from others
- Lack of confidence
- Peer pressure

“

When looking at research, there are attempts to explain why young people are at risk of teenage partner violence, but there is very little focus on the voice of the young person - their own explanations, experiences and solutions.

- Barter, 2009

”

SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Abuse in teenage relationships can be difficult to identify, some indicators of domestic violence are:



Behavioural

- Drop in school attendance
- Missing from home
- Withdrawing complaints
- Making excuses for injuries
- Not associating with their friends
- Spending all of their time with their partner
- Being secretive
- Constantly checking their mobile phone
- Receiving lots of new gifts



Financial

- Stealing money
- Having to do something in return for gifts
- Not having control of their own money
- Buying things for their partner
- Forcing to get a job or quit their job



Sexual

- Teenage pregnancy
- Being sexually active before the legal age of consent
- Lack in hygiene, e.g. not showering
- Becoming withdrawn
- Mood changes

SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Abuse in teenage relationships can be difficult to identify, some indicators of domestic violence are:

> **Physical**

- Self harm / attempted suicide
- Teenage pregnancy
- Low self esteem
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Covering up injuries
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Withdrawn
- Missing school
- Afraid to speak

> **Psychological**

- Mental health issues
- Suicidal
- Disassociation
- Depression
- Lack of sleep
- Withdrawn
- Missing school
- Afraid to speak

ADOLESCENT TO PARENT ABUSE

Adolescent to parent abuse can be categorised as the following:



The child or young person:

- Is the perpetrator of the abuse towards parents or other family members, including siblings
- Uses a pattern of behaviours to exert power and control over family members



Behaviours used can include:

- Physical Violence
- Damage to property
- Emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Degrading comments
- Threats
- Stealing
- Controlling behaviour



- > There could be a lack of reporting by parents due to:
 - Living in fear of their child
 - Shame
 - Guilt
 - Fear of being labelled as a bad parent
 - Parents not wanting to criminalise their children.

- > Parents could adapt their behaviour due to fear of the abuse from their child, for example, they may feel they are walking on egg shells.

- > It is too easy to blame the parent for the behaviour of their child, e.g being absent from school, however with the above information, you may be able to identify the core issue of the behaviour of the young person.

TEENAGE RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

One survey showed that one in five teenage girls has been hit by a boyfriend, one third of teenage girls say that cheating justifies violence, and over 40% of all girls said they would consider giving a boy a second chance if he hit them.
- Sugar and NSPCC, 2005

“

Emotional abuse was the most common type of abuse experienced with 73% of young people reporting this in a study by SafeLives (2015)

- 69% of the young people reported experiencing jealousy and controlling behaviours
- 57% reported physical abuse
- Sexual abuse - 7% of young mothers are reported to have become pregnant as a consequence of a partners' abusive and controlling behaviour.

- Wiggins et al, 2005

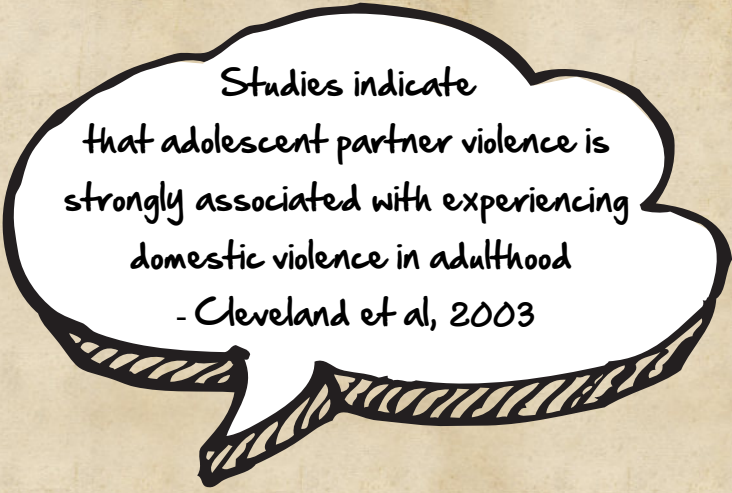
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These statistics indicate that there will be children in your school that are either victims of abuse within their relationships or perpetrators themselves.

RISK FACTORS

Although anyone can experience or be exposed to domestic abuse, there are certain groups of people where the risk of domestic abuse is higher. This includes those who are experiencing:

- Child protection concerns
- Parental domestic abuse
- Alcohol misuse
- Drug misuse
- Absence from school
- Social isolation
- Imbalance of power in their relationship
- Neglect
- Parental drug/alcohol abuse



Studies indicate
that adolescent partner violence is
strongly associated with experiencing
domestic violence in adulthood
- Cleveland et al, 2003

DOMESTIC ABUSE MYTHS

MYTH If it was that bad they would end the relationship.

FACT There are many reasons why a young person cannot simply end the abusive relationship. Like many adults in an abusive relationship, they may not realise that the relationship is abusive or may feel they do not have a choice to leave the relationship due to fear of the abuser. They may also develop psychological dependencies upon their abusive partner.

MYTH It only happens to vulnerable children from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

FACT Domestic abuse can happen in any socio-economic group. It is easier to hide the abuse in higher socio-economic groups due to financial and demographic factors.

MYTH They are both a victim and a perpetrator.

FACT An individual's behaviour may be directly influenced to their experiences of abuse. Rather than judging a young person, it is important to understand what they have been exposed to and that perpetrating behaviour may be retaliatory.

MYTH The young person does not engage with services.

FACT The young person may find it hard to trust and therefore they could reject support. It is important that the young person has access to a safe adult that they can trust who can offer them stability, support and advice.

MYTH Girls are victims and boys are perpetrators.

FACT

Boys can be victims too. It may be harder for boys to disclose abuse or access support as there is a societal view that boys are more able to protect themselves.

MYTH

Parents should identify what is happening in their child's life.

FACT

Parents may know that something isn't right, but they may feel powerless due to fear of interfering and breaking down the relationship with their child. The young person could be controlled by the perpetrator which will mean that they are unable to talk to their parents due to fear.

MYTH

They were so well behaved, but now they are badly behaved.

FACT

Someone who is experiencing domestic abuse may use their behaviour as a cry for help or behave differently to disguise the abuse due to fear from their partner.

MYTH

The child or young person is well behaved in school. They may be doing well in class and are quiet, they cannot possibly have been impacted.

FACT

For some people, school is a safe environment to excel and focus on something other than the abuse. They may want to do well at school to get away from the environment they are exposed to. This does not mean that they have not been impacted. They could be fearful of consequences if they underachieve. All victims respond differently to domestic abuse.

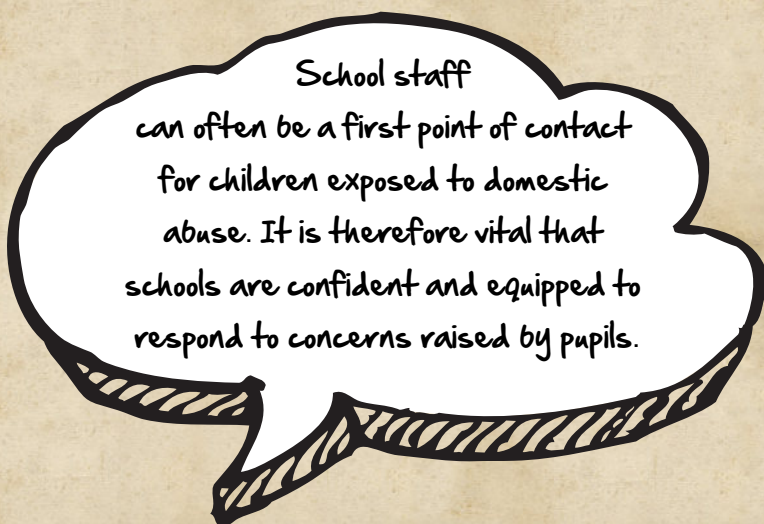
WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IN YOUR SCHOOL IS AT RISK



- > How is your relationship?
- > How are things going?
- > I have noticed you don't seem yourself recently, are you able to talk about it?
- > What would your boyfriend/girlfriend do if you did something they disagree with?
- > Have you ever felt scared of your boyfriend/girlfriend?
- > Would you like your relationship to be different?
- > Has your boyfriend/girlfriend ever hurt you?

Should you become concerned about a child in your school, you should always follow the school's Safeguarding Procedures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL STAFF



Despite the above, it is vital that schools and school staff do not feel that they have to deal with the concern alone. It is important that the risk is shared between appropriate agencies, with each agency dealing with their specialist area to support the family as a whole. It is not your responsibility to deal with risk alone.

It is not your responsibility to make decisions should you be concerned about a child or young person in your school. It is important that all concerns are shared with your line manager and a joint decision is made on how to progress. No matter what the decision may be, it is important that all concerns, decisions and reasoning for decisions are appropriately logged.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS IMPACTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Do not be afraid of speaking to a child or young person about domestic abuse.

Many children have a good relationship with the perpetrators and it is better to work with this view and not against it. It is important that you do not label the abusing parent as bad. Try to separate the person from their behaviour. For example, it is ok to still love your dad/mum but sometimes their behaviour may not be appropriate.

- Don't expect a child or young person to disclose straight away. For some children or young people, they will believe that if they tell people what is going on, they will be removed from the care of their parents.

- Allow the child or young person a space to be able to make disclosures and be creative about how they are able to do this as saying it out loud may be hard for them. Provide them with a pencil and paper, email, art materials.

- Do not put victims in further danger, for example sending them home with leaflets about domestic abuse.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD MAKES A DISCLOSURE TO YOU

- > Let the child or young person know exactly what you are going to do with their information and give them regular updates.
- > Record exactly what has been said, using factual information and not opinion.
- > Share the risk, discuss your concern with your line manager. This will help you to formulate a plan.
- > If there is an immediate risk call 999.
- > Contact Lancashire County Council to make a referral and back this up in writing.
- > Inform the non-abusing parent if safe to do so.
- > Agree what support the child and family need.
- > REMEMBER THE VOICE OF THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON.

School staff should allow children, young people and victims the opportunity to be seen alone. It may be good to think about whether this needs to be with a practitioner who is the same sex as the victim.
- > In cases of domestic abuse, it is too easy for professionals to focus on the adult victim and lose focus on the child or young person.
REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE ALSO THE VICTIM

WHAT TO DO IF A PARENT MAKES A DISCLOSURE TO YOU

Remember that person is the expert in their own situation and probably already has some kind of safety plan in place. Empower the victim by ensuring that their voice is heard throughout the whole process. Encourage them to do things for themselves where possible rather than doing things for them.

Remember that if this is the first time that a disclosure has been made, the victim may not wish to take immediate action. They may not be ready for this and this can be an anxious time for them.

Some people may make disclosures and retract them to test the waters. This could happen a number of times before the victim is ready to actually fully disclose. It can be frustrating as a professional when this happens, however it is important to not judge the victim and to take their disclosures serious each time.

When a disclosure is made it is important that this is logged every time, whether retracted or not. Sometimes victims report concerns just to get them logged in case the situation escalates in the future. Your logs can be evidence for the victim when they are ready to use it.

Ensuring there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, move at a pace that is appropriate to the person. Do not bombard them with a list of actions as this process can already be overwhelming.

Remember that the victim may not be ready to leave the abusive relationship. Disclosing what is happening to them may be a way of making sense of the situation. Ensure that you support the victim to stay safe whether they choose to leave or remain in the relationship (if it is safe to do so).

Remember that the time immediately after ending an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time.

Parenting capacity can be impacted by experiencing domestic abuse. Remember this and do not judge the parent. Instead, support them with ways in which they can increase their parenting capacity and increase their confidence.

Remember that some perpetrators of domestic abuse can use recording equipment and mobile phone tracking. Take this into account, for example, by providing a pad and pencil for the person to allow them to write down their concern rather than having to say it out loud. For some people, writing down their feelings is easier than saying it out loud.

Be creative about how you speak to a parent who is experiencing domestic abuse. Some victims are not allowed to leave the home without the perpetrator. Work out a safe way to reach the victim, for example having a talk with them when they drop their children off or pick them up from school. This is a common time when victims are available to speak. Remember that arranging lengthy meetings may put the victim at risk.

School staff should not assume that it is someone else's responsibility to deal with domestic abuse. School may be the only opportunity that victims have to disclose what they are experiencing. It may be a safe place away from the risk of the perpetrator.

WHAT ARE THE TRIGGERS TO ESCALATING CONCERNS?

The Barnardo's Risk Identification Matrix and the SafeLives DASH RIC are used to support professionals to identify the risk of the domestic abuse. Where school staff are not trained to use these, they should access support from a safeguarding lead in relation to domestic abuse.

You should be aware of some of the concerns that would need to be escalated. These include:

- Evidence that incidents are escalating in severity or frequency
- Physical injury
- Isolation / jealousy
- Access to weapons or other dangerous objects
- Stalking behaviour
- Look at additional risk factors, including additional needs, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health concerns
- Is mother pregnant or are there any young babies or children in the household?
- It is also important to look at what protective factors are in place for this family

It is important to remember that for some victims, there may be more than one perpetrator. For example if an interpreter is needed, it is important to ensure that this is done safely and not using a member of the family or community.

It is important that a risk assessment in relation to domestic abuse is an ongoing document. Risk needs to continually be assessed as the situation can quickly escalate.

The Barnardo's Risk Identification Matrix and the SafeLives Young Peoples Risk Assessment are good tools to use to help identify the level of risk in relation to children and young people.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Recording and logging events is important. Appropriate logs and records will allow you to identify level of risk in relation to domestic abuse. For example, if your records indicate that incidents of domestic abuse are happening more often or getting worse in severity, then this is an indication that the risk level is rising for the victims.

Appropriate recording of information will support school staff to ensure that relevant staff are aware and up to date with concerns and actions. This is especially the case with high schools where pupils will come into contact with a number of school staff each day.

It is beneficial if there is one staff member to be a key contact person for a young person. This will ensure that young people are not having to repeat their concerns to various staff members and have someone they feel able to trust.

SHARE THE RISK... WORKING IN ISOLATION CAN BE DANGEROUS

Ensure that you remain open and honest about how you are supporting the pupil (and the non-abusing parent if safe to do so). For example, "Thank you for letting me know what you are experiencing. I am worried about your safety/wellbeing so I am going to let (name person) know what is going on to make sure that we support you as much as possible. I am going to refer you/your child to access some further support that you may find helpful". Remember that this can be a worrying time for those exposed to domestic abuse, so make sure that you keep them updated as often as possible.

If there is an immediate safeguarding risk contact the Safeguarding lead in the school, the Lancashire County Council Duty Social Worker and the police if needed.

SAFETY PLANNING SUPPORT

Ask the victim how they safety plan themselves and build on their own strategies. Remember victims may already be safety planning their way through each day subconsciously.

Encourage the victim to keep a diary, this can be used for evidence. If it is not safe for them to do this, you can support this as a school and allow the school to keep this stored in a safe place. If possible, encourage the victim to record all injuries and, with their permission, help them record evidence, such as photographs. Let them be in control of their own diary.

Refer to a specialist domestic abuse support service who will support the victim to address safety, reporting to the police, giving statements and attending court for example.

Is it safe for the victim to return home or is a refuge an option for immediate safety? Encourage the victim to speak to their child in an age appropriate way about what is going on at home. Parents sometimes have difficulty speaking to their children about what is happening at home and as a result they try to avoid it. This can increase confusion and anxiety or children.

Look at how the victim can keep safe in their home should there be an incident, this may include thinking about:

- Moving to a low risk place in the home
- Having a code word with someone they trust to use if they are in danger
- Keeping their mobile phone on them fully charged and with credit or getting a secret mobile phone
- Having copies of important paperwork, such as birth certificates, passports, housing documents & benefit documents in a safe accessible place or held by a trusted person
- Encourage them to speak to friends and family or a neighbour
- The National Domestic Violence Helpline can support victims to access non-molestation orders within 24 hours

For more information on safety planning visit the SafeLives or Women's Aid websites.

TOOLS / DELIVERY

Work around domestic abuse can be completed by all staff in all subjects. This can be encouraged in the school environment - from challenging disrespectful behaviour to supporting victims directly in relation to domestic abuse.

There are a number of tools available online to support children and young people impacted by domestic abuse.

Core Assets will provide these tools at network meetings and training events and support school staff to be confident to use the tools.

School staff will be supported to use the tools through co-delivery of sessions and group work.

SafeLives and Women's Aid also have lots of useful resources to use in relation to domestic abuse.

National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247

Lancashire County Council Duty Social Worker
0300 123 6720

Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service
0207 840 8960

Karma Nirvana - Supporting victims of honour crimes and forced marriages
0800 5999 247

Childline **NSPCC**
0800 1111 **0808 800 500**

SafeLives
www.safelives.org.uk

ARE YOU EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT SCHOOL STAFF WHO ARE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?

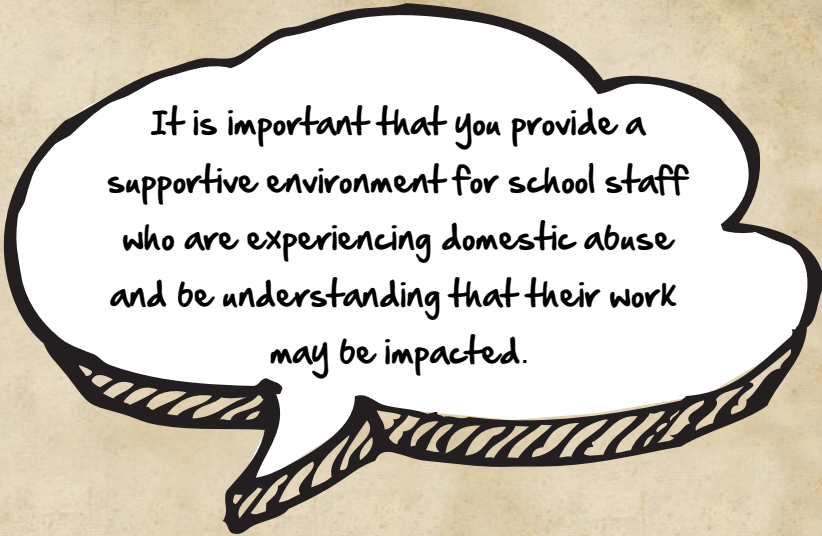
Did you know...

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- 75% of domestic violence victims are targeted at work
- 56% of abused women arrive late for work at least 5 times a month
- 28% leave early at least 5 times a month
- 53% miss at least 3 days of work per month

- devononline.org.uk

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It is important that you provide a supportive environment for school staff who are experiencing domestic abuse and be understanding that their work may be impacted.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- HM Government (2015) Call To End Violence Against Women and Girls: Progress Report 2010 – 2015. London. Home Office.
- SafeLives (2015) In Plain Sight. Bristol: SafeLives
- SafeLives (2015), Getting it right first time: policy report. Bristol: SafeLives.
- HM Government (2015) Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship. Statutory Guidance Framework. London. Home Office.
- Refuge – Starting in Schools
- HM Government (2015). Working Together To Safeguard Children.
- Barter Et Al (2009) Partner Exploitation and Violence in Teenage Intimate Relationships. NSPCC
- CAADA (2015) Young People and Interpersonal Violence: A year of data from the Young People's Programme. January to December 2014.

SUPPORT

Core Assets Children's Services have been commissioned by Lancashire County Council to offer early intervention around Domestic Abuse to schools.

The service is commissioned to offer:

- Awareness raising sessions in schools
- One to one support with pupils
- Group programmes with pupils
- Art therapy sessions for longer term recovery work
- Child Safety Planning.

School staff will be able to access:

- Network meetings offering support and training.
- Dedicated telephone support offering advice and guidance for school staff who are concerned about a young person. (0800 587 4446)

Parents will also have access to parents information evenings.

Each school will be asked to identify two staff members to be dedicated domestic abuse contacts and pupils who will be supported to be peer mentors, who will do awareness raising campaigns within the schools.

Should you become concerned about a child in your school, you should always follow the school's Safeguarding Procedures.

It is important to ensure that you are listening to the VOICE OF THE CHILD and DO NOT ASSUME.

Remember, the young person is the expert in their own situation.