

## General Practitioner quick reference guidance when asking and responding to Domestic Abuse

The term 'domestic violence and abuse' is used to mean any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling behaviour, coercive behaviour or threatening behaviours, violence of abuse between those aged 16 or over who are family members or who are, or have been, intimate partners. This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. It also includes 'honour'-based violence and forced marriage.

### Raising the question

- Have or are you experiencing someone hurting you, either physically, emotionally or sexually?
- I notice you have a number of bruises, did someone hurt you?
- Are you frightened? What are you afraid of?
- Ever made threats, used weapons/ objects to hurt?
- You mention your partner loses their temper, what happens when they lose it?
- Have you recently separated from your partner within the past year? Do you feel harassed?
- Is there conflict over child contact?
- Are there any children living in the home?

If YES – complete the following risk assessment 

### HARKS

**HUMILIATION:** Within the last year, have you been humiliated or emotionally abused in other ways by your partner or your ex-partner?

**AFRAID:** Within the last year, have you been afraid of your partner or ex-partner?

**RAPE:** Within the last year, have you been raped or forced to have any kind of sexual activity by your partner or ex-partner?

**KICK:** Within the last year, have you been kicked, hit, slapped or otherwise physically hurt by your partner or ex-partner?

**STALKING AND COERCIVE CONTROL:** Have they harassed you, including loitering, following, unannounced contact or has your property been vandalised or destroyed?

**IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS MAKE A REFERRAL TO IDAS by calling 01226 320112 or 03000 110 110 or making an online referral at <https://www.idas.org.uk/contact/>**

### What to do next

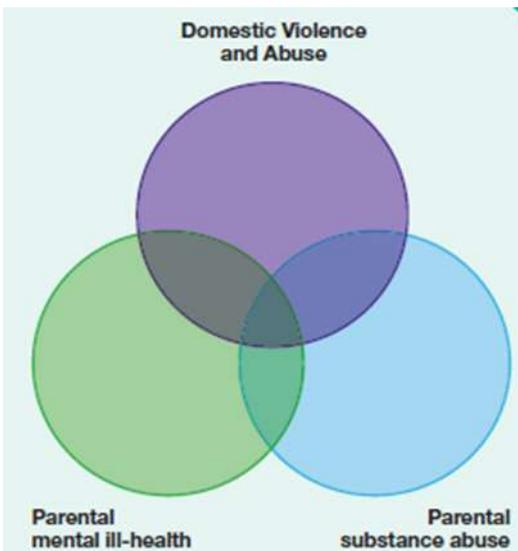
- If a victim does not disclose but you suspect otherwise, accept what is being said but offer other opportunities to talk and consider giving information
- Immediate safety – could the victim and/or children be at risk if they return home? If yes contact local police on 999 or 101
- Safety of the victim can be supported through domestic abuse support services – if they give consent make a referral or signpost to **IDAS** who will assess the level of risk by completing a DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence Risk Assessment)
- If you believe a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering, telephone a referral through to Social Care on 01226 772423– followed up by e-mail referral
- If you believe that the victim presents with such vulnerabilities that they meet the criteria for Safeguarding adults – make a referral via **the Adult Social Services Customer Access Team on 01226 77 33 00 or for urgent concerns out of hours the Emergency Duty Team on 01226 787 789.**
- Encourage consent for information sharing – if consent given, share and exchange information with other professionals working with the victim and/or children

### Purpose

This guidance outlines how to ask and respond to domestic abuse. GP's as frontline practitioners are ideally placed to identify or have someone disclose that they are suffering domestic violence or abuse. This quick reference guidance provides information to increase knowledge and skills when responding to domestic violence or abuse.

### Scope

This guidance is a brief overview of the issues relating to domestic violence and abuse. It encompasses best practice set out by NICE guidance (Feb 2016) and raises awareness and signposts to local and national support services. The guidance applies to adults and young people aged 16 years and over.



Issues that identify domestic abuse, Mental ill-health and drug or alcohol use are often referred to as the 'Toxic Trio'. They are viewed as indicators of increased risk of harm to children and young people.

### Key Principles and Actions

- Respect the right to live without violence (zero tolerance to violence and abuse in the family)
- Right to safe and positive family life
- Safety is a priority
- Consider the need of the perpetrator as this can increase the safety of the victim
- Initiate assessment and assessment of risk factors at the earliest point. i.e. pregnancy
- Ask the question sensitively but clearly
- Consider the rights of the child and young person and ensure that every intervention is child focused whilst providing support for the family
- Work to clear local protocols, policies and procedures and referral pathways
- Consider rights of family to remain a whole
- Support if child is in care following domestic violence
- Support seamless transition between services
- Be aware of when to share information with other agencies

### Key components of Effective Practice

- Never assume someone else is addressing the domestic violence and abuse issues
- Be familiar with and give relevant information about domestic abuse support services
- Be aware of and provide information on Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding
- Accurate documentation is critical as may be used in court

### Key Facts:

More than one in four women has experienced at least one incident of domestic violence in England and Wales since age of 16 = 4.8 million women.

In a year 1 million women a year experience at least incident of domestic violence, nearly 20,000 a year

On average a woman will have experienced 35 assaults before reporting to the police  
2 women a week are killed by their current partner

1 in 7 males will experience domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence often intensifies or starts during pregnancy

3.7 million Women in England and Wales have been sexually assaulted at some point since the age of 16

Around 2,000 women are raped a week, 34% of rapes are committed against children under the age of 16

One in four lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have experienced domestic violence and abuse in their relationship

Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence and abuse as non-disabled women and over a longer period of time, suffering more severe injuries as a result of the violence

Research suggests that women between ages of 16 and 25 are at highest risk

Safeguarding Children [cypassessment&jit@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:cypassessment&jit@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk) ☎ 01226 772423  
Safeguarding Adult – Customer Access Team BMBC ☎ 01226 773300 or 01226 787 789 (urgent out of hours concerns)  
Early Help (children) <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/early-help-for-families/> or ☎ 0800 0345 340  
e-mail – [earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@barnsley.gcsx.gov.uk) (checks to see if known to Early Help)  
South Yorkshire Police: Emergency ☎ 999 or Local non-emergency ☎ 101

### Barnsley and National Support Services:

IDAS 01226 320112 or 03000 110 110 or making an online referral at <https://www.idas.org.uk/contact/>

[Samaritans](#) ☎ 01226 202222 ☎ 116 123

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

[Men's Advice Line - support for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse](#)

☎ 0808 801 0327

[ManKind Initiative - helping men escape domestic abuse](#) ☎ 01823 334 244

[National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) ☎ 0800 999 5428

# Process for responding to domestic abuse in GP Practices

## CONSIDER DOMESTIC ABUSE IN PATIENTS WHO CONSULT WITH:

- Unexpected symptoms/Non-specific symptoms
- Tiredness
- Self-harm/Depression/anxiety
- Delay in injury presentation

- Injuries with inadequate explanations
- Chronic pain
- Genital injuries/STIs
- Frequent attendances (A&E/GP)

These are just some examples of health markers of domestic abuse. Visit the RCGP's [website](#) for a complete list or if you have specific concerns about a patient.

### DISCLOSURE

Is the patient currently experiencing domestic abuse?

- "No", trust your professional judgment; if you have doubts contact IDAS for advice.
- "Yes", continue with flow chart.

### ASK

Make an explicit enquiry such as: "Is someone you live with/or have lived with hurting you and/or frightening you?"  
**ONLY ASK WHEN THE PATIENT IS ALONE.**

### IMMEDIATE ACTION

Contact local police on **999** or **101** AND initiate child protection /adult safeguarding procedures.

Is the patient, any child or other at risk of immediate harm?

Are they at risk if they go home?

YES

YES

### TALK TO PATIENT ABOUT THE RISK TO CHILDREN

If the children are at risk: Initiate child protection procedures; <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/safeguarding-families-in-barnsley/safeguarding-children-in-barnsley/>

Have a discussion about how they can keep safe.

Does the patient have children or other dependents? Is the patient a vulnerable adult?

YES

### SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

Consider mental health & mental capacity. Consider protective actions and/or initiate safeguarding adult procedures [www.barnsley.gov.uk/safeguardingadults](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/safeguardingadults)

NO

NO

### RESPOND

If not in immediate risk, you need to have the level of risk assessed. Contact IDAS on **01226 320012** or **03000 110110** or make an online referral at <https://www.idas.org.uk/contact/> to arrange a risk assessment for the patient. **Always take a safe phone number and time that the patient can be contacted.** If you believe the risk may be high, and the patient does not give consent to referral you should discuss this with your manager or safeguarding adult lead.

### RECORD

- Consent to share information (or not) and ensure information is shared appropriately.
- Explain the need to document domestic abuse and document any injuries for purposes of evidence.
- Ensure patient is seen alone at future appointments.
- Use a code in patient notes to indicate a disclosure of Domestic abuse – indicate risk level if known (S1 XaN21 or EMIS 14XD)

Local numbers/information which you may find useful can be found at:

**BSCB website** <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/safeguarding-families-in-barnsley/safeguarding-children-in-barnsley/>

**RCGP website** <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/clinical-resources/domestic-violence.aspx>

**Home Office** <https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

**Domestic Homicide Guidance** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>

This flowchart is based on: Responding to domestic abuse: Guidance for general practices

© 2014 SafeLives and IRIS.

[www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)

[www.irisdomeesticviolence.org](http://www.irisdomeesticviolence.org)

28/01/2019\_V2.0 - Review Date: 28/01/2021