



This is an approved North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board document and should not be edited in any way.

Safeguarding Young People affected by Domestic Abuse

Reference Number: NSSCB/LP/005

Target Audience: Multi Agency Professionals, Schools, Social Care, Family Support Workers, Registered Childcare Providers across the sector.

Sources of Advice in relation to this document: Louise Branch, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, Community Safety and Drug Action Team, North Somerset Council

Replaces if appropriate:

Type of Document: Local Protocol

Approved by: NSSCB and NSSCB P & P Sub Group

Date of review: 2014

Date displayed on NSSCB web site: July 2014

Date due to be reviewed by responsible person or body: July 2017

The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB) works to safeguard and promote local child welfare. It does this by:

- Coordinating the safeguarding work of member agencies so that it is effective.
- Monitoring, evaluating and when necessary, challenging the effectiveness of the work.
- Advising on ways to improve safeguarding performance.

In order to:

- Protect children and young people from maltreatment.
- Prevent their impairment of health and development.
- Ensure that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Enable them to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Contents

An Executive Summary of this document	3	Good Practice Points: working with young people who are experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationship	13
Domestic abuse jargon:	4		
Key facts	4	Good Practice Points: working with adults affected by domestic abuse	13
The definition	5		
The impact of domestic abuse	6	Good Practice Points: working with perpetrators of domestic abuse	14
Becoming aware of domestic abuse	8	Appendix 1	
Responding to domestic abuse	9	Safety planning	15
How to deal with a domestic abuse/violence disclosure by a child or young person	9	Developing a safety plan with a victim	16
If domestic abuse is suspected but there has not been a disclosure:	9	Sample personal safety plan	18
How to signpost to support where a parent/carer reports domestic abuse	10	Safety planning with children and young people	21
Support in North Somerset for families where there is domestic abuse	12	A young person's sample safety plan	23
Processes for high risk cases (14 and over ticks on the CAADA DASH or high risk based on professional judgement)	12	Appendix 2	
Processes for low to medium risk cases (less than 14 ticks on the DASH)	12	Additional options for agencies in tackling domestic abuse	25
Good Practice Points: working with children and young people living with domestic abuse	13	Appendix 3	
		At a glance contacts for domestic abuse support	26
		Appendix 4	
		The referral forms	27
		Appendix 5	
		Flowchart for information exchange	28

An Executive Summary of this document

Domestic 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 gender or sexuality”.

Its prevalence:

Over 2,000 domestic abuse incidents are reported to North Somerset police each year, children are present in the majority of the households affected.

Its impact:

Living with domestic abuse may impact on a mother’s or father’s parenting abilities. Children’s experiences can range from seeing their pets being ill-treated and toys damaged to being directly injured. Many report living in a constant state of fear and isolation.

Support:

Local services provide safe emergency accommodation as well as one-to-one community based support for women, men and children reporting domestic abuse.

In addition “Key to Change” and “My Kids and Me” courses help survivors to move on from their experiences and strengthen relationships with their children. Information on support and courses can be obtained via the DAFFs line 0800 694 9999 (9am–6pm). People affected by domestic abuse can call this number for emotional support and to discuss the best options for them to improve their situation.

If you become aware that a child is living with domestic abuse:

- **Follow your agency’s Child Protection Procedures**

If in doubt contact the Single Point of Access (SPA) **01275 888 808**

- **Contact the Domestic Abuse FreeFone Service (DAFFS)** to receive support and information from the local Domestic Abuse Service

0800 694 9999 (9am–6pm – outside these hours calls will go to the national helpline).

- **Visit www.endabuse.org.uk for information and referral forms**

- **Talk about Safety Planning**

Adults and children should be helped to consider their current situation and to think about measures which will increase their safety. Sample safety plans are available in this guide.



Domestic abuse jargon

CAADA	Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse A national charity which provides guidance on managing high risk domestic abuse.
DAFFS	Domestic Abuse FreeFone Service A helpline which is answered by Gemini Services, the local specialist domestic abuse service from 9am to 6pm. Outside these hours it is answered by the national helpline.
DASH	Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment form A form which allows the user to quantify risk.
IDVAs	Independent Domestic Violence Advisers Support workers for high risk domestic abuse
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences Monthly meetings where agencies involved in supporting someone at high risk of domestic abuse come together to discuss appropriate support.

Key facts

Nationally

- 12% of under 11 year olds, 18% of 11–17 year olds and 24% of 18–24 year olds are exposed to domestic abuse between adults in their homes during childhood. **NSPCC 2011**
- In a study of 268 serious case reviews, 34% of cases were found to have domestic abuse as a risk factor. **BRANDON, M., BAILEY, S. AND BELDERSON, P. 2010**
- Domestic abuse accounts for 18% of all violent crime. **(HOME OFFICE 201.) CRIME IN ENGLAND AND WALES 2010/11. LONDON: HOME OFFICE.**
- Children who experience severe maltreatment by a parent or guardian are between 2.7 and 2.9 times more likely to also have witnessed family violence. Under 11 year olds who had experienced physical abuse by a parent or guardian were almost 5 times more likely to have witnessed family violence. **NSPCC (2011)**
- Between 1994 and 2004, 29 children in 13 families were killed during contact (or in one case residence) arrangements in England and Wales. Ten of these children were killed in the last two years. **SAUNDERS, H. (2004)**
- Domestic abuse is frequently a factor in cases where children have been killed or seriously injured and is present in two thirds of cases of child deaths and serious injury **BRANDON, M., BELDERSON, P., WARREN, C., HOWE, D., GARDNER, R., DODSWORTH J., AND BLACK J. 2008**

In North Somerset

- In 2013–14 1512 domestic violence incidents were reported to the police.
- In 2013–14 the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors supported 197 residents who were at high or very high risk of domestic abuse. 157 of these had a measurable reduction in risk at exit from the service
- In 2012–13 39.4% of Initial Child Protection Conferences featured domestic abuse within the family.
- In 2013 the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) shared information and worked to reduce the risk of 252 high risk/very high risk domestic abuse cases. These cases involved 320 children.

The definition

The Home Office defines **domestic abuse** as:

“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 gender or sexuality”.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

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.

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

“Honour” based violence (HBV) is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims of ‘so called honour based violence’, which is used to assert male power in order to control female autonomy and sexuality.

“Honour” Based Violence can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Examples may include murder, un-explained death (suicide), fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse, child abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment, forced abortion. This list is not exhaustive. Such crimes cut across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities. They transcend national and international boundaries.

A **Forced Marriage** is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is a violation of human rights and is contrary to UK law, including the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, which states that a marriage shall be voidable if: **“either party to the marriage did not validly consent to it, whether in consequence of duress, mistake, unsoundness of mind or otherwise.”**

An arranged marriage is very different from a forced marriage. In an arranged marriage, both parties enter into the marriage freely. Families of each spouse take a leading role in arranging the marriage and this usually includes the choice of partner. However, the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangements remains with the prospective spouses.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of a girl’s external genitals. Her body is physically damaged when the healthy tissue of her genitals are cut away. There are no health benefits to FGM. Complex cultural and social reasons are often given about why it is practiced.

Young people are most likely to experience domestic abuse in their relationships. The British Crime Survey 2009/10 showed that 16 to 19 year olds are the most vulnerable group.

Adolescent to parent violence has remained under-explored and largely unarticulated within the fields of youth justice, domestic abuse, policing, and criminology, particularly in the UK. It is sometimes referred to as '**parent abuse**', '**child-to-parent abuse**' or '**child-to-parent violence**'. A commonly used definition of this problem is 'any act of a child that is intended to cause physical, psychological or financial damage in order to gain control over a parent'.

The impact of domestic abuse

How children can experience domestic abuse

- Being physically harmed or threatened with harm
- Being injured while trying to intervene
- Witnessing or overhearing the abuse of others
- Witnessing an assault or the outcomes of it
- Being encouraged and coerced to take part in the abuse
- Being threatened to remain silent or learning that you are expected to stay silent
- Seeing ill treatment of pets
- Seeing damage in the home or to toys

Possible effects of domestic abuse on children and young people

The effects on a child or young person of living with domestic abuse could be one or a combination of physical, sexual, and psychological impacts, and/or more general experiences of neglect. They can include:

- Physical injury, directly or in trying to intervene or protect
- Distress, anxiety and fear at witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent or sibling
- Effects of domestic abuse on parenting and ability to meet the child's needs
- Taking on an adult role to care for the person being abused
- Secretiveness, pressure to conceal the abuse
- Anger, aggression
- Living in a constant state of fear, and wanting protection from threats
- Sleep disturbance, bed wetting, nightmares
- Not meeting developmental milestones and missing health checks
- Inability to concentrate at school and getting into trouble
- Over-willingness to please and to avoid conflict
- Not being able to manage demands at school and home
- Lack of self-esteem, and feelings of guilt or self blame
- Lack of respect for the person taking abuse
- Siding with the abuser for survival reasons
- Difficulty in relating to other people and social isolation/exclusion

- Using alcohol and / or drugs as a way of coping
- Anti-social or offending behaviour
- Wanting to leave home prematurely
- Not able to trust adults
- Fear/rejection of non-threatening touch
- Using symptoms of illness to seek attention
- Sadness, depression, self harm, attempted suicide
- Disruption caused in leaving home, school, friends, community to escape the abuse
- Having to be absent from school or late
- Lack of money for school activities
- Making excuses to stay covered up and avoid showing any injuries i.e. changing for sports

Factors that can influence these effects

Mediating factors

- Age, gender, developmental stage.
- Economic and social disadvantage.
- Special needs irrespective of the abuse.
- Stability of their mother's mental health.
- Extent and frequency of abuse.
- Repeated separations and moves.

Protective factors

- End of the abuse and safety being a reality, including safety of parent/carer.
- Their own personal resources.
- Developmentally supportive routines.
- Protective and supportive network outside immediate family.
- Open communication about the domestic abuse and opportunities to rebuild family relationships.
- A positive relationship with the non-abusing parent may not protect the child but will aid the recovery process afterwards.
- Counselling/group work with other children who understand their experiences.
- The perpetrator accepting responsibility for the abuse and making reparations.

It is very important to remember that many children can and do recover from the long-term effects once they are no longer living with domestic abuse, but they may need help from others to do this. In some cases specialist therapeutic and/or group work will be useful to help them make sense of their experiences, and to reduce their isolation and sense of difference.



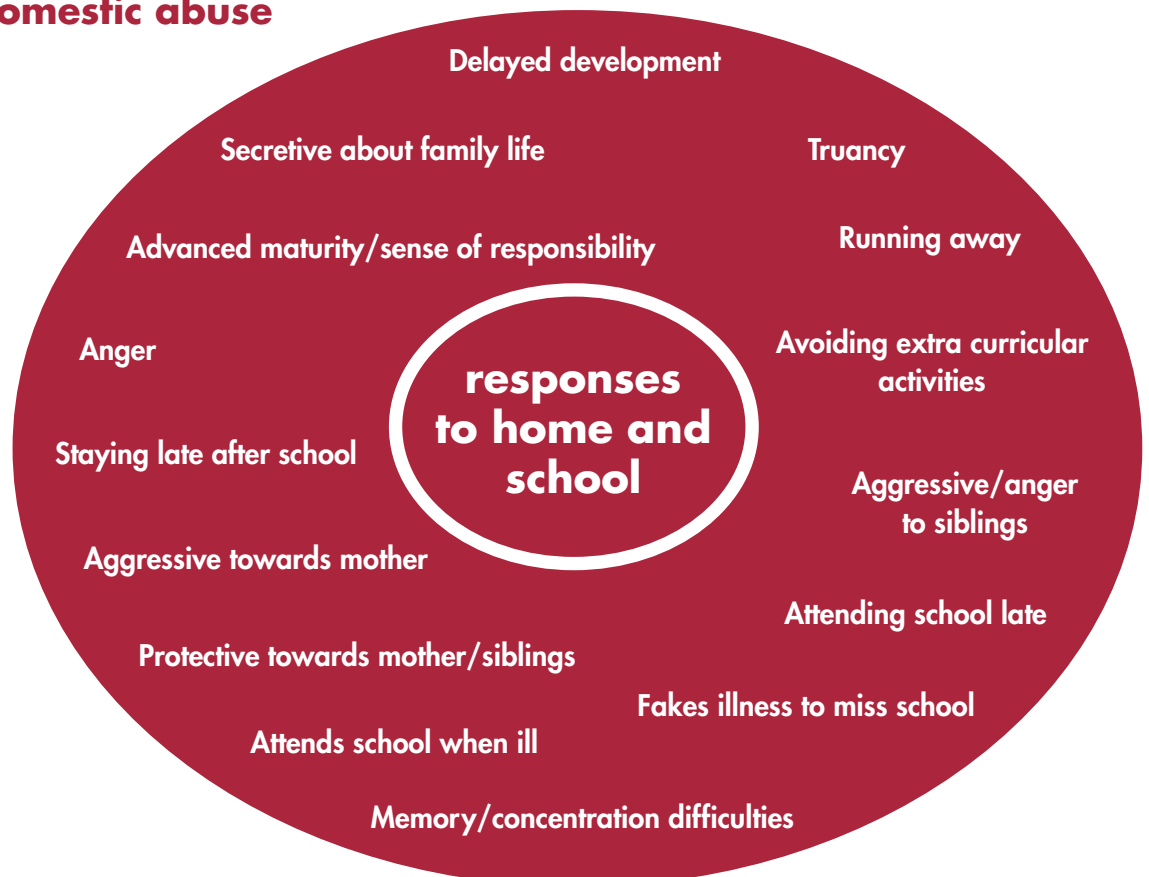
Becoming aware of domestic abuse

It is important to always consider living with domestic abuse as a possible explanation for any unusual behaviour exhibited by a young person or child. The following circles list some typical warning signs, however, it is not an exhaustive list and behaviours may be caused by other factors.

Some signs of domestic abuse

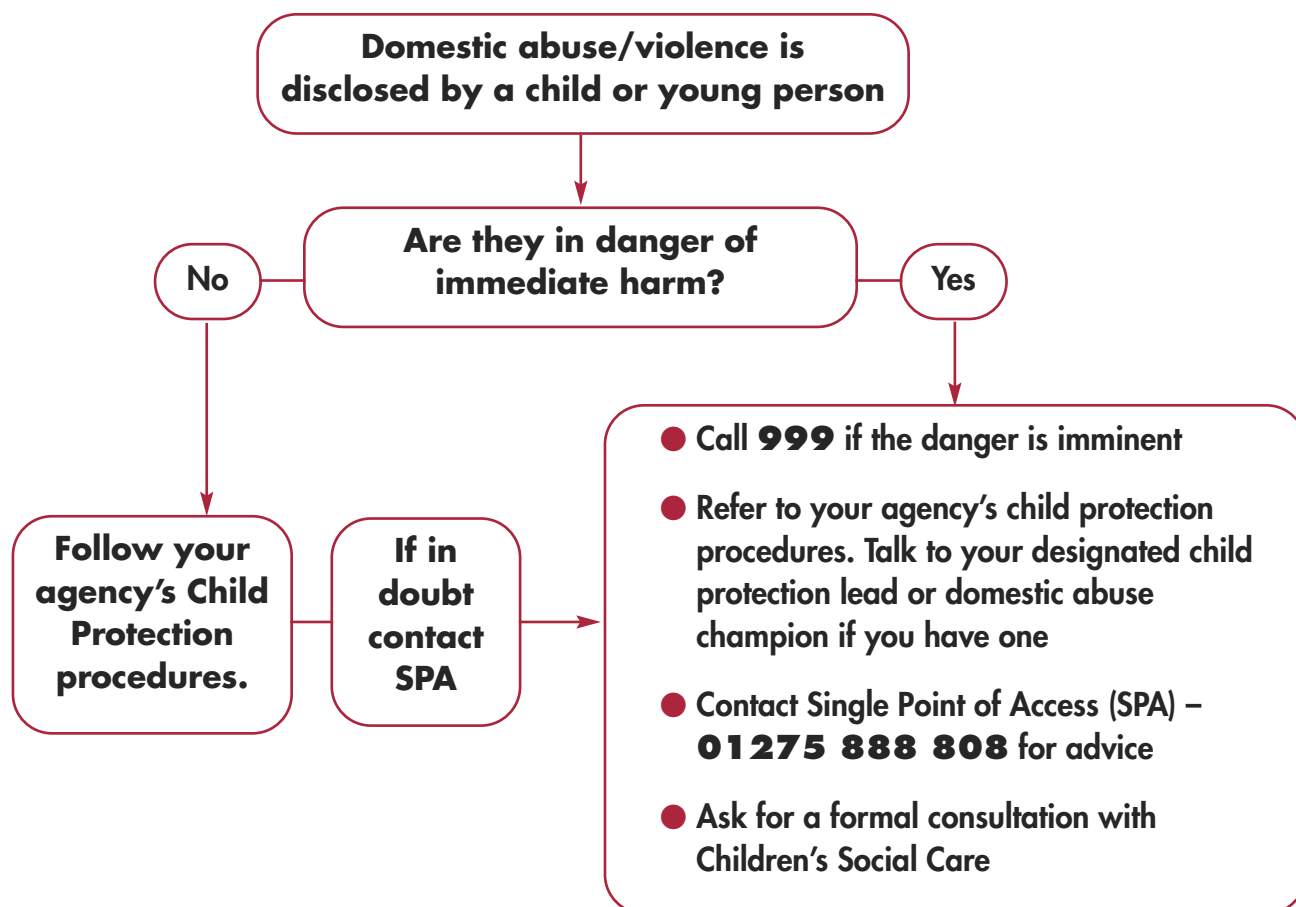


Some signs of domestic abuse



Responding to domestic abuse

How to deal with a domestic abuse/violence disclosure by a child or young person

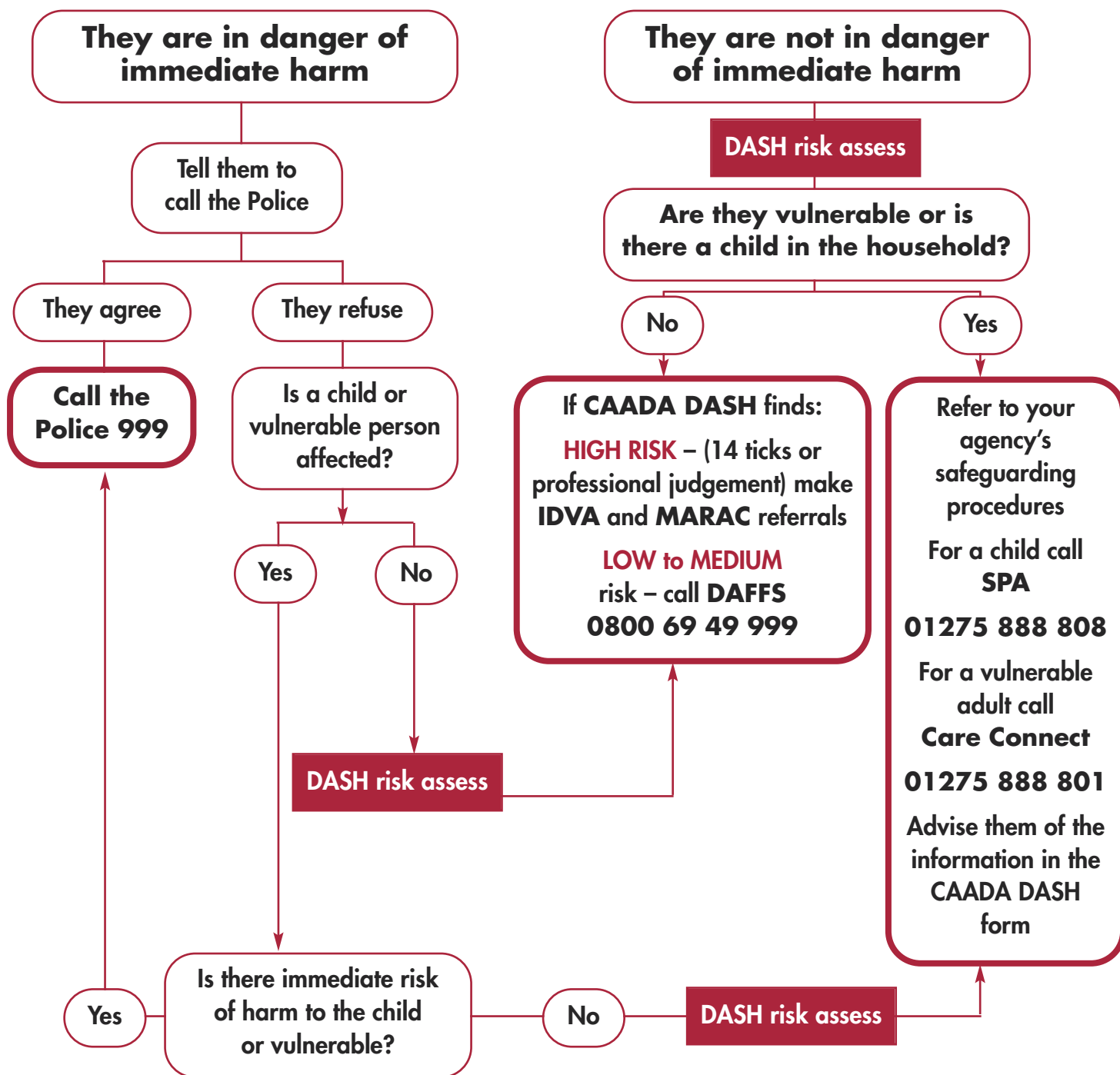


If domestic abuse is suspected but there has not been a disclosure:

- Provide the child or young person with opportunities, perhaps through play, to talk about home
- Offer the parent information including the DAFFS line details (leaflets available from community@n-somerset.gov.uk or downloadable at www.endabuse.org.uk) Leave an opportunity for her/him to raise the issue later
- Continue to offer support and be prepared to repeat this process several times
- At all times consider individual communication and cultural needs
- People who have lived with domestic abuse say they are glad when someone asks about their relationship: be brave, ask the question and open the dialogue
- Follow your agency's Child Protection Procedures

How to signpost to support where a parent/carer reports domestic abuse

If a worker becomes aware of domestic abuse through contact with an adult they should follow the following flowchart. The **CAADA DASH risk assessment form**, with guidance, is Appendix 3 in the Domestic Abuse handbook at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/da



Talk to your agency's designated child protection officer or Domestic Abuse Champion if you have one.

For **CAADA DASH risk assessment** forms and information on how to make **MARAC** and **IDVA referrals** visit www.endabuse.org.uk (click on “information for professionals supporting people suffering domestic abuse”). If you do not feel confident in completing a CAADA DASH risk assessment contact the DAFFs line for advice

DAFFS (Domestic Abuse FreeFone) 0800 69 49 999 for advice on supporting someone experiencing domestic abuse. From 9am–6pm on weekdays this is answered by Gemini Services (local domestic abuse agency), outside these hours the line is answered by the national domestic abuse helpline

Care Connect 01275 888 801 for all social care enquiries in North Somerset concerning safeguarding vulnerable adults

Single Point of Access (SPA) 01275 888 808 for social care enquiries concerning safeguarding children

For **further information** on processes, copies of forms and to arrange domestic abuse training contact the Community Safety and Drug Action Team community@n-somerset.gov.uk **01934 426 752**

Always record all instances of domestic abuse in a secure and confidential manner taking account of the risk of the perpetrator actively seeking disclosure of this information

Visit **the South West Child Protection and Procedures website** for information on child protection procedures



Support in North Somerset for families where there is domestic abuse

As in the previous flowchart, domestic abuse cases should be risk assessed using the CAADA DASH risk assessment form at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/da

- If the case is assessed as **high risk** a referral to MARAC and IDVA is appropriate.
- If the case is low to **medium risk** a referral to Gemini Services can be made.

Please see below for details of how to make these referrals.

Processes for High Risk cases (14 and over ticks on the CAADA DASH or high risk based on professional judgement)

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are a way for agencies involved in supporting someone at high risk of domestic abuse to come together to share information and plan appropriate support.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) support people at high risk of harm and act as the voice of the victim at MARAC.:

To make MARAC and IDVA referrals (both should generally be made at the same time):

1. Complete a combined **MARAC/IDVA referral form** which is at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/da.
2. Complete a **DASH** form

3. **Make the MARAC referral** by sending both the **DASH form** and **MARAC/IDVA referral form** securely to your agency's MARAC representative who will make the MARAC referral. If you do not know your MARAC representative or do not have secure email contact the MARAC co-ordinator or Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator for advice:
 - MARAC Co-ordinator: julie.crockett@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
01935 402203
 - Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator community@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 426343
4. **Make the IDVA referral** by sending the **DASH form** and **MARAC/IDVA referral form** to the IDVAs at northsomersetidva@chapter1.org.uk using a secure email address (GCSx, cjsm, nhs.net)

Processes for low to medium risk cases (less than 14 ticks on the DASH)

Gemini Services offer floating support and refuge accommodation for adults and children living with domestic abuse. They work with low to medium risk cases. To make a referral to Gemini Services use the **Gemini Services Outreach form** and **DASH form** at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/da and email to DAFSReferrals@chapter1.org.uk or contact Gemini on 08700 664 234 for advice.

Helpline for those experiencing domestic abuse

Women and men affected by domestic abuse can call the local helpline **DAFFS 0800 694 9999** for support and advice.

The line is answered by Gemini staff 9am–6pm on weekdays.

Outside these hours it goes through to the national 24 hour helpline.

Good Practice Points: working with children and young people living with domestic abuse

- Where children are involved you have a responsibility to share concerns about domestic abuse. Follow your agency's safeguarding and child protection procedures
- Recognise the limits of your role and know where to signpost and how to make a referral to services for adult and children where appropriate
- Keep your knowledge and understanding up to date
- Be realistic and honest about the limits of confidentiality
- Help the child or young person to understand that they are not to blame.
- Domestic abuse is never acceptable – no one has the right to bully or abuse any one
- Acknowledge and build on the child's resilience
- Try to obtain consent from the non-abusing parent, in the presence of the child, that they can talk about their experiences of domestic abuse, how it's affected them and the feelings it raises
- Be careful to acknowledge their experiences, but not to look shocked or upset by what they tell you – it may stop them talking
- Contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator for leaflets, posters and training
- Take things at the Child's or young person's pace, they may not wish to talk

Good Practice Points: working with young people who are experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationship

- Where children are involved you have a responsibility to share concerns about domestic abuse. Follow your agency's safeguarding and child protection procedures
- Help young people to recognise domestic abuse and that it can affect them even if they do not live with their partner
- Ensure that the young person feels that they are being taken seriously.
- Make sure that they understand that they are never to blame if someone has made them do something emotionally or sexually which they did not want to do
- Try to create an opportunity for the young person to talk alone. Recognise that teenagers are often unable to avoid their abuser because they attend the same school or college.
- Give them the website address www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Good Practice Points: working with adults affected by domestic abuse

- **Recognise that the risk actually increases when leaving and the abuse may not end**
- Think about how you make contact, a letter or text can be intercepted
- Response to any referral should be discreet to prevent further danger to the victim or children
- Be realistic and honest about the limits of confidentiality

- Direct questions should be asked although the term 'domestic abuse' may not be useful at first, for example **"Are you frightened of your partner?"** or **"Have you ever been hurt by your partner?"**
- Provide reassurance about being believed
- Talk about the impact that domestic abuse can have on children.
- Understand that people who are being abused want the abuse to stop but may not want to leave the relationship
- Know where to signpost for advice e.g. housing benefit or legal advice
- Accept that some negative behaviours, such as angry outbursts, alcohol or substance misuse, may be coping strategies
- Remember that their options may be restricted by cultural or language needs, mental health, learning difficulties and/or chronically low self-esteem
- Ensure that they are able to explore their options for changing their situation, are provided with accurate information, and consider ways of maximising their safety whether they leave or not – see Appendix 1
- Implement strategies for challenging the perpetrator's behaviour, whether they live with their victim and children or not.
- If possible discuss and risk assess the situation beforehand with the child and non-abusing parent.
- Ensure that you have good training and supervision to inform this area of work.
- Consider your own safety strategies when undertaking multi-agency work with perpetrators.
- Remember that children may have a genuine, if distorted, attachment to the perpetrator.
- Be aware that a child may be abused, or experience distress during contact arrangements with the perpetrator, e.g. may be manipulated to give the non abusive parent's whereabouts or to be abusive to them
- Be aware that the perpetrator may continue to control and abuse their ex-partner via contact with the children, for instance by arriving late, making unrealistic and inappropriate demands, misrepresenting themselves as the victim to the children, misrepresenting the relationship.

Good Practice Points: working with perpetrators of domestic abuse

- Where children are involved you have a responsibility to share concerns about domestic abuse. Follow your agency's safeguarding and child protection procedures
- Avoid colluding with domestic abuse or allowing further abuse by paying attention to the risks created by the perpetrator
- Make sure that child protection processes take seriously the risks posed by a non-resident parent *before* any serious contact-related incident – **be aware that the focus tends to be on who the children live with (the resident carer), do not overlook the risks posed by the non-resident parent**
- For services for perpetrators see www.respect.uk.net

Appendix 1 Safety Planning

Safety planning is a very practical process that practitioners can engage in with anyone affected by domestic abuse, including children or young people who have enough understanding to take part, in order to help them increase their personal safety.

The **National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) guidance on domestic abuse** suggests that safety planning should be a core element of working in partnership with victims, and with other agencies, taking into account the outcomes of risk assessment and risk management. It involves developing a crisis plan and a plan for the future to ensure safety in the short and longer term, and should aim to:

- Encourage victims and children to increase their own safety
- Assist in reducing the risk of further harm
- Reflect any risk assessment process and supply information to update this
- Build on existing coping strategies
- Reinforce the fact that violence is likely to be repeated and to escalate and increase understanding of the levels of danger the victim and children may face
- Assist victims to focus on their own needs, as opposed to the needs of the suspect or organisations providing services
- Give victims and children a wider range of options, particularly, for example, staying in their own home
- Be kept confidential from the alleged perpetrator
- Be part of a continuous safety and protection process, rather than a single task
- Be appropriate for all domestic abuse victims, irrespective of their level of contact with the perpetrator, including whether they are separated or living together

Victims are encouraged to report all incidents to the police, or any other agencies that will keep good records, including photographic evidence, body maps of injuries, and details of the psychological effects of the abuse. Professionals should check how the victim can be contacted safely, obtain their views about the ongoing levels of risk, and inform them about criminal and civil law provisions.

There is increasing awareness among practitioners of the additional measures that could be put in place by police, housing providers and others, such as **'target hardening'** to improve home security, personal alarms which link directly to emergency services, and more recently **'sanctuary schemes'** to create a secure room within the home, with a telephone link, where someone could hold out in a crisis until the police attend. The NCPE guidance states clearly, however, that it is essential to build on the safety measures developed by the victim, rather than insist on dramatic changes or make additional demands on them.

There is also acknowledgement that people with insecure immigration status, or from minority ethnic or socially isolated communities, as well as those with some forms of disability, may fear contact with the police and have additional barriers that need to be addressed in safety plans.

The Department of Health's ***Responding to Domestic Abuse: a handbook for health professionals***¹ suggests the following approach to **safety planning with women**. It stresses that the questions are meant as a guide or prompt, rather than as a form to be filled in, and that it may not be safe for the woman to take any written safety plan home with her. The plan is based on the victim being a woman, this is based on the fact that the vast majority of high risk victims are women, however, this is not meant to imply that men can never be victims and the approach is equally valid for a male victim.

1 http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4126619.pdf [accessed 23 June 2011]

Increasing safety in the woman's relationship

Think of two people you can tell about the abuse. Could they listen out for strange or alarming noises from your home and call the police on your behalf?

Increasing safety when a relationship is over

- Things that she may need to do straight away:
 - change and strengthen external locks
 - get stronger doors fitted, preferably metal or with metal reinforcement
 - get a security system (alarm, door chains, spy-holes, window locks etc)
 - get outdoor lighting
 - get smoke detectors
 - change landline and mobile telephone numbers
- Who will she tell that she no longer lives with her ex-partner?
- Who will she ask to call the police if they see her ex-partner near her home or children?
- Advise her to tell the people who care for her children who has permission to pick them up, give their names
- If she is working, who can she tell and can they screen her calls?
- What shops, banks and other places does she need to avoid?
- Who can she call if she's feeling down and is considering returning to her partner?
- Think about contact for the children with the abuser – is this safe/appropriate?

Important phone numbers

- Make a list of important phone numbers including friends (even familiar numbers can be forgotten in an emergency situation), the police emergency number, a helpline number and local refuge contact number (see appendix 3)

- Advise her that she can dial 141, before calling out, to withhold her number

The NCPE guidance encourages women to **include children and young people directly in the safety planning process** – this can also protect them from injury:

- Identify a safe place or person to go to if their parent is being attacked or gives them the signal to leave, from where they can ring the police.
- Rehearse escape plans, and make sure they know that it is not their role to protect
- Ensure that children know their own address and telephone number
- Teach children how to contact emergency services by ringing '999' and asking for the police – ideally they need to stay on the line until the police arrive. (Note: children may think the emergency number is '911' if they watch American TV).

Developing a safety plan with a victim

By raising the issue of domestic abuse, we create opportunities to explore ways in which women and children can be safe. A safety plan is a semi-structured way to think about steps that can be taken to reduce risk, before, during and after any violent or abusive incidents. It is important to stress that although a safety plan can reduce the risks of violence it cannot completely guarantee victim's and children's safety.

This safety plan has been adapted from a variety of existing plans. It should be used with victims who are escaping violence. Remember it may not be safe for a victim to fill in the plan and take it with them. Always offer to keep any information or documentation on your premises. Drug and alcohol agencies may wish to ask additional questions about how their perpetrator's substance use is affecting the violence they are experiencing.

People living with abuse should not keep the safety plan where it may be discovered by the abusive partner.

People experiencing violence will already have survival strategies they find effective. It is essential to acknowledge these and use them as guidance for your work. A safety plan is about allowing victims to identify the options available to them within the context of their current circumstances. Some questions to ask in drawing up a safety plan:

- Think of two people you can tell about the abuse. Could they listen out for strange or alarming noises from your home and call the police on your behalf?
- Do you have important phone numbers available e.g. family, friends, refuges, police? Do your children know how to contact these people, are the numbers always accessible?
- Try to think of four places you could go to
- What would you take with you if you left?
- Do you ever suspect when your partner is going to be violent? e.g. after drinking, on payday, after relatives visit.
- Can you go elsewhere if you suspect your partner is going to be violent?
- Can you keep a bag of spare clothes, some extra money, car keys at a friend's or family member's house?
- Are you able to keep copies of any important papers with anyone else? e.g. passport, birth certificates, benefits book.
- Which part of the house do you feel safest in?
- Is there somewhere for your children to go when your partner is being violent and abusive? (don't run to where your children are as your partner may harm them as well)
- What is the most dangerous part of your house to be in when your partner is violent?
- What parts of the house should you avoid when abuse starts? Which rooms have only one exit? Where are there things which could be used as weapons?
- Have you discussed with your children a safety plan for what they need to do during an incident (e.g. do not intervene, but get away and get help)?



Sample personal safety plan

Suggestions for increasing safety – in the relationship

- I will have important phone numbers available to my children and myself.
- I can tell.....and.....about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- If my children are hurt, I will tell.....
- If I leave my home, I can go to (list four places):

.....

.....

.....

.....

- I can leave extra money, car keys, clothes, and copies of documents with

.....

- When I leave, I will bring.....

- To ensure safety and independence, I can: keep change for phone calls with me at all times/ keep my mobile on me at all times: open my own savings account; rehearse my escape route with a support person; and review safety plan on(date).

- When the violence begins which areas of the house should I avoid?
For example, bathroom (no exit), kitchen (potential weapons)

.....

Suggestions for increasing safety – **when the relationship is over**

- I can: change the locks; install steel/metal doors, a security system, smoke detectors and an outside lighting system.
- I will inform.....and.....that my partner no longer lives with me and ask them to call the police if s/he is observed near my home or my children.
- I will tell people who take care of my children, and my children themselves, the names of those who have permission to pick them up. The people who have permission are:
.....
.....
.....
- When I make phone calls I can use 141 so my number cannot be traced.
- I can tell.....at work about my situation and ask
.....to screen my calls.
- I can avoid shops, banks andthat I used when living with my abusive partner.
- If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can call
.....for support.

Important phone numbers

Police..... Helpline **DAFFS 0800 694 9999**

Friends..... Other

Items to take checklist

- Identification
- Birth certificates for me and my children
- Benefit books
- Medical cards for me and my children (e.g. children's "red books", school immunisation records etc)
- Phone card, mobile or change for a pay phone
- Money, bankbooks, credit cards
- Keys – house/car/office
- Keys to a friend or relative's house
- Medicine or medication for me and my children
- Driver's licence
- Change of clothes for me and my children
- Passport(s), Home Office papers, work permits, national insurance numbers
- Divorce papers and legal orders
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed
- Mortgage payment book, current unpaid bills
- Insurance papers
- Address book
- Pictures, jewellery, items of sentimental value
- Children's favourite toys and/or blankets
- Any proof of abuse, notes, tapes, diary, crime reference numbers, names and numbers of professionals who know.

Safety planning with children and young people

Please note that the 'competency' of a child or young person must be ascertained, following the Fraser Guidelines.² For additional guidance in dealing with situations where forced marriage may be an issue please refer to the SWCPP website. The South West Child Protection and Safeguarding Review Group have adopted the multi agency practice guidelines – handling cases of forced marriage (June 2009)³

- This safety plan should not be kept by the child.
- Professionals should give the child no written material except telephone numbers. Children can use mobile phone and text messaging to seek help.
- The child needs to rehearse this safety plan with you as part of safety planning intervention.

Child's Safety Plan

This is my safety plan(name of child)
and.....(name of worker)

If there are any angry actions or words in my house – I can't stop it. This is what I can do:

1. **GET OUT OF THE WAY**
2. Find a safe place. In my house this is
3. If it's **SAFE**, phone the police:- The number is **999**
I will say:
My name
My home address
What's happening (i.e. someone is hurting my Mum)
4. I can also get help from(i.e. next door)
5. Later I can talk withabout what happened.
6. If I am hurt I will tell
7. It's ok to feel (e.g. scared, angry, etc.....)

2 <http://www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp/contents/managing-individual-cases/interviewing-children/competency/> [accessed 27 June 2011]

3 <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/3849543/forced-marriage-guidelines09.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2011]

8. The people that know about this plan are:

<p>Me (draw a picture)</p>	<p>Family</p>
<p>Others</p>	

Signed(Child)

Safe parent/carer.....

ProfessionalDate.....

A Young Person's Sample Safety Plan

This plan records how to keep.....safe.

- You have a right to be safe and cared for in a safe place agree
- Violent words and actions at home are not your fault agree
- You cannot stop the violence agree

To protect yourself you can break rules, like: say no, shout, kick and scream if you need help, also

.....
.....

- 1) The best thing you can do when there is violence at home is get out of the way. agree

To be safe I can do things:

- Get out of the room where the violence is occurring
- The room/place in my home where I feel safe is
- There is a lock on the door Yes No

- 2) The nearest telephone is

If it is safe I can telephone 999, ask for the police. I will need to say:

- My name
- My home address.....
- What's happening

- 3) People I can trust in an emergency are:

.....
.....

A code word so they know I need help is

- 4) My brothers and sisters:

- Have a safety plan too, that I know Yes No
- They know my safety plan Yes No

5) If we leave the house I would like to go to.....
.....

I have a bag of things that are important to me at (safe relative/friend's house)

6) If I am hurt I will tell (including telephone numbers)

.....
.....

If my mum/dad is hurt I will tell (including telephone numbers)

.....
.....

7) I can talk about how I feel with (including telephone numbers)

.....
.....

8) The people who know this plan are:

- Safe parent/carer
- Safe friend/relative.....
- Teacher.....
- Social Worker.....
- Others

9) I can't stop the violence but I can do these things to keep safe

agree

SignedDate.....

Safe parent/carerDate.....

PractitionerDate.....

Appendix 2 Additional Options for Agencies in Tackling Domestic Abuse

Options for all agencies which support children and young people experiencing domestic abuse:

- Staff attendance at training sessions on domestic abuse (available free of charge at CPD online <http://nsomersetcpd.webbased.co.uk/index.asp>)
- Requesting a briefing on domestic abuse at team meetings or in-service training days
- Displaying posters and leaflets with details of appropriate phone numbers and support services for pupils and staff (available free of charge from community@n-somerset.gov.uk)
- Providing support for staff who may be dealing with personal issues of domestic abuse (details of specialist support agencies can be provided)
- Fostering a 'zero-tolerance' attitude to all forms of violence and abuse

Options for schools to provide practical support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse:

- Providing uniform / text books / stationary to children living in refuges (who may have left their homes suddenly and were not able to take all school supplies)
- Support to children living in refuges to reduce isolation – transport assistance, providing a place to do homework...
- Emotional support, including individual informal support – teachers are often the adults children prefer to talk to
- Referral to support agencies including a child protection referral where necessary
- Facilitating peer support
- Providing lessons or sessions on domestic abuse and healthy relationships. Facilitators from local specialist services are available to help with this. Contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator for advice.

For more information on any of the above please contact Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator:

**community@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 426343**

Appendix 3 At a glance contacts for domestic abuse support

A domestic abuse handbook and leaflets are available at www.endabuse.org.uk

or by emailing community@n-somerset.gov.uk

Local Domestic Abuse FreeFone Service (DAFFs line) 0800 694 9999 24 hours

From 9am to 6pm on weekdays this is answered by Gemini Services who provide local specialist support and refuge accommodation. Outside these hours callers are put through to the national helpline.

Gemini Services

Provide safe emergency accommodation and support for adults and children who are fleeing domestic abuse. People can self refer or can be referred by an agency. Apart from self referrals, referrals should be made using the forms and guidance at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/da and completed electronically. If this is not possible, contact the following numbers for advice:

- **For Referrals** – the referral hub 08700 664 233
- **Self referrals** should be directed to the DAFFS helpline 0800 694 9999 (as above)
- **Non public enquires** – for advice on dealing with cases contact 08700 664 234

Courses for survivors

- Key to Change helps participants recover from their experiences and reduce isolation.
- My Kids and Me helps parents rebuild relationships with their children which may have been damaged through living with domestic abuse
- Both courses can be accessed through the DAFFS line.

DAFFs line

0800 694 9999 on weekdays from 9am to 6pm this is answered by Gemini Services, outside these hours by the national helpline

Useful Links

www.endabuse.org.uk

North Somerset website with referral information to local support for all ages

Websites aimed at young people

www.thehideout.org.uk

Women's Aid website aimed at children and young people offering information and advice on domestic violence.

www.thisisabuse.direct.org.uk

Information service for young people offering practical advice on teenage relationships.

www.respectnofear.co.uk

Website designed by Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Forum offering information and advice on Domestic Violence.

www.tender.org.uk

Charity website aimed at promoting healthy relationships.

www.thinkyounow.co.uk

Website offering information and advice on internet safety aimed at children, young people, parents and teachers.

www.missdorothy.com

Website designed for children and young people following the adventures of Dorothy and her friends covering safety on the internet, in the home and on the street.

www.childline.org.uk/CyberBullying.aspx

Website offering young people information and advice on all aspects of bullying.

Appendix 4 The referral forms

See page 10 "How to signpost to support where a parent/carer reports domestic abuse" of this guide for information on when and how to make a referral.

The forms are:

1. CAADA DASH risk assessment
2. MARAC and IDVA referral form (high risk cases)
3. Gemini Services referral form (low to medium risk)

and are available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/da

If in doubt call:

Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator **01934 426 343** or

Gemini Services **08700 664 23** (non public number)

There is a downloadable handbook of services at www.endabuse.org.uk

Any queries or updates on this document should be addressed to the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator
community@n-somerset.gov.uk **01934 426343**

Appendix 5 Flowchart for information exchange

Information exchange with children's services which have an information sharing agreement with the police

Practitioners should always follow their agency's safeguarding procedures

Possible actions following a notification include:

- Monitor (e.g. for behaviour changes)
- Initiate an Early Help Assessment
- Refer to an outside agency
- Assess appropriate level of contact between agency and parents (e.g. check for injunctions).
- Offer emotional / practical support to the family

For information and advice:

Contact DAFFS line

0800 694 9999

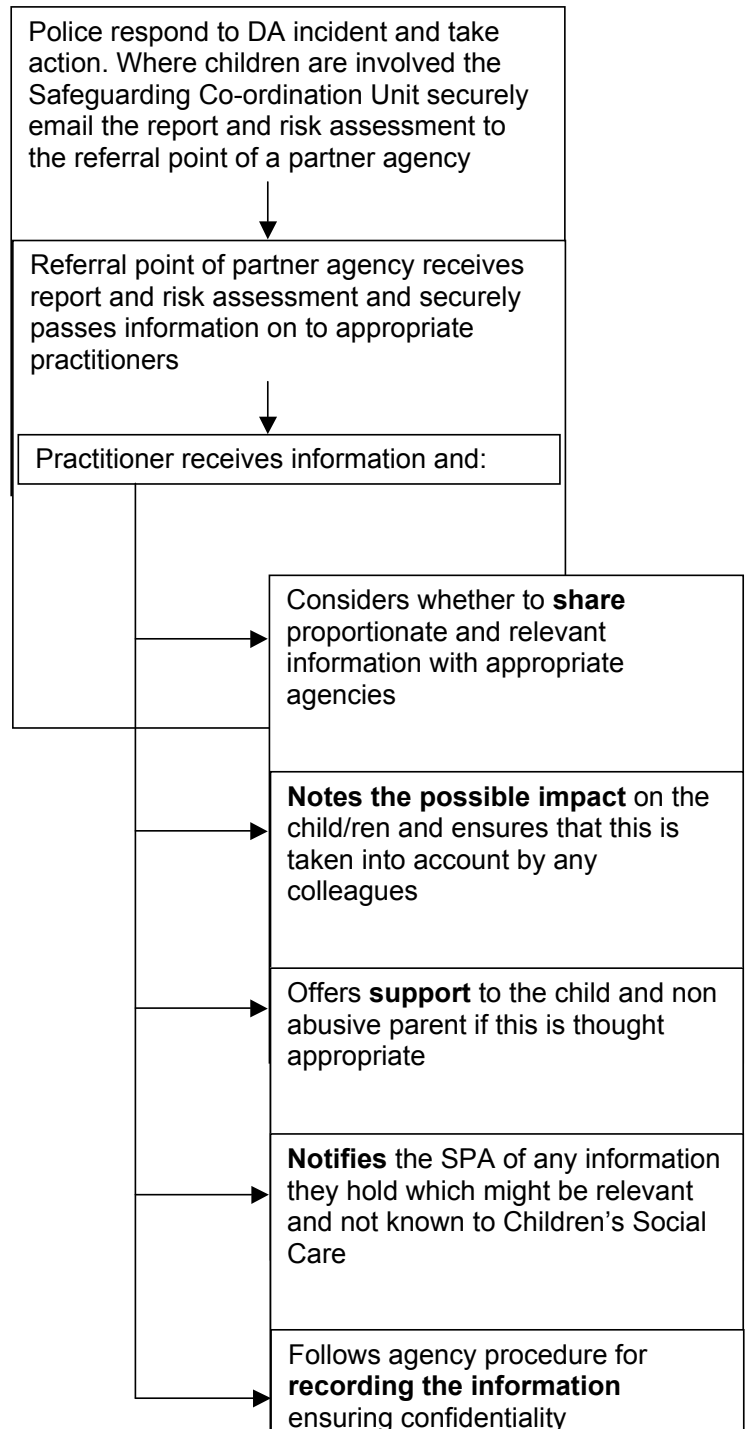
(10am-6pm weekdays this is answered by **Gemini Services**, outside these hours by the national helpline)

visit

www.endabuse.org.uk

refer to

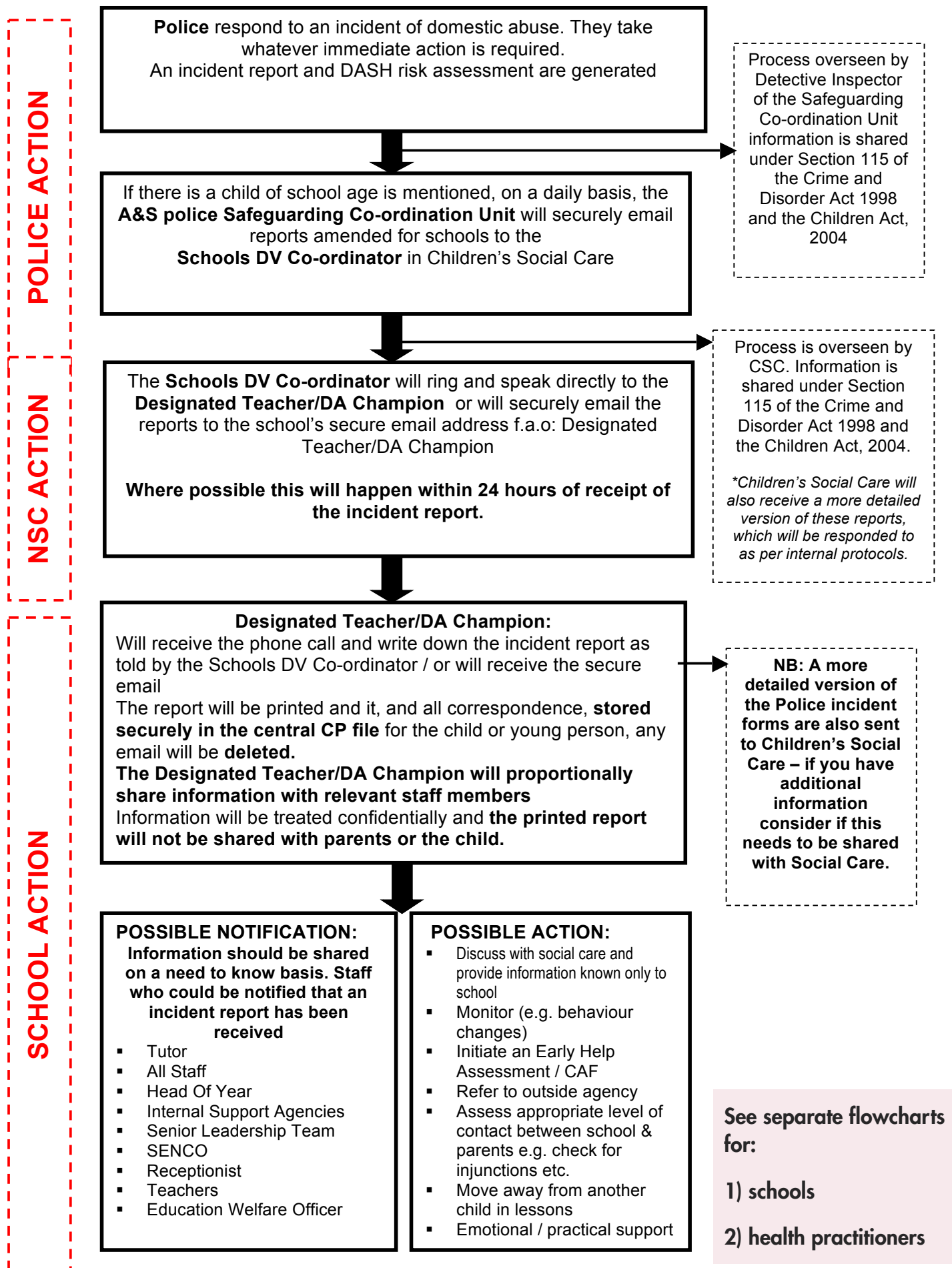
- **Domestic abuse handbook and referral forms**



See separate flowcharts for:

1) schools and 2) health practitioners

Flowchart: Information sharing between police schools and MARAC



Confidentiality of information within schools

The information contained in the Police incident report remains the property of Avon and Somerset Constabulary and is shared with North Somerset schools for the purpose of protecting and supporting children and young people. Families are informed by the police that, for the purposes of child protection, the information about the incident may be disclosed to relevant agencies.

As illustrated in the above flow diagram, the report should be printed by the designated officer/DA Champion at the school and the electronic version deleted. The hard copy should then be securely stored in the Child Protection file for the child or young person and under no circumstances should hard copies of the report be circulated. Staff can be notified that an incident report has been received and signposted to the secure file or designated officer for more information.

Responding to students and parents

This report is likely to be a trigger for staff to make welfare enquiries with a child or young person but, in order to retain confidentiality, the approach to these enquiries should be general and receipt of a domestic incident report must not be given as a reason for making these enquiries.

Furthermore, under no circumstances should a copy of the report be shown to the child or young person or their parents. In order not to increase risk to the victim and any children, under no circumstances should staff of the school notify the person identified as the perpetrator that they are in receipt of the incident form or the detail contained within this.

North Somerset schools' and education involvement in Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are regular multi agency meetings that provide a forum for sharing information and taking action that will reduce harm to high-risk victims of domestic abuse and their children. Meetings are attended by key agencies from the statutory and voluntary sector who have a role to play in supporting families affected by domestic abuse. These include police, housing, health, social care.

Key aims of MARAC are:

- To share information to increase the safety, health and well being of victims – both adults and their children
- To determine whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual
- To jointly construct and facilitate a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm
- To reduce repeat victimisation
- To improve agency accountability
- To provide a framework to support the victims involved in high-risk cases

Cases where the perpetrator is under the age of 16 are not automatically accepted at MARAC, their inclusion is subject to the discretion of the Chair of the MARAC

The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individual agencies; it is not transferred to the MARAC. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety.

MARAC meetings are attended by representatives from children's services, including a staff member of the Referral and Assessment team. Information is also shared with the Education Welfare Service and a team member attends the MARAC whenever possible. Actions arising from the MARAC as part of the risk management plan might include some which a school is best placed to carry out. When this is the case the information will be shared by the Education Welfare Service with the school's Designated Teacher/Domestic Abuse champion.

Referrals to MARAC

MARAC referrals are made via each agency's MARAC representative and are in respect of adults who are at high risk of domestic abuse. If a school becomes aware of domestic abuse affecting a student they should contact the **SPA 01934 888808** for advice. It is not anticipated that schools will generally make a referral to MARAC but, wherever possible where a case involves a child of school age then a representative from the school will be invited to the MARAC to discuss. If a school does feel best placed to make a MARAC referral as they have information on high risk domestic abuse they should do this via the Education Welfare Service using the form in appendix 5.

For further information about MARAC meeting schools can contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator 01934 426343 louise.branch@n-somerset.gov.uk

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact:
community@n-somerset.gov.uk
or tel: 01934 426 752

