

Domestic abuse toolkit for professionals working with children and young people



The South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse is co-ordinated and funded by South Gloucestershire Council to improve the lives of all South Gloucestershire residents.

Introduction

This toolkit has been produced to assist professionals to support the children and young people they work with who may be affected by domestic abuse; helping them to have healthy relationships and to prevent them from living in silence if they are experiencing abuse in their lives.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

The South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse considers that:

“ Domestic violence/abuse is the use, attempt, or threat of violence-whether physical, emotional, sexual, mental or economic, within an intimate or family relationship. Domestic violence/abuse forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. ”

Domestic violence/abuse occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. Research shows however, that the majority of this behaviour consists mainly of violence by men against women and it is not necessary for partners to have cohabited.

Why is awareness of domestic abuse so important?

Organisations that work with children and young people are in a privileged position to identify those who may be experiencing domestic violence/abuse, both at home and within their own relationships. They are key to raising the issue of domestic abuse in a safe and structured environment. In particular they should:

- Be able to identify the signs of abuse
- Support children and young people to seek help and safety
- Model and promote healthy, non-violent relationships
- Challenge the myths that perpetuate domestic abuse including the variety of behaviours involved
- Safeguard children and young people from the harm caused by domestic violence/abuse (Children's Act, 2004).

The affects on children and young people:

Children and Young People who live with domestic abuse can be at increased risk of behavioural problems, emotional and physical trauma and long lasting effects.

What you may observe if a child or young person is living with domestic abuse:

Pre-School Children (0-4) may:

- Have an anxious attachment with primary care giver
- Show emotional distress
- Be in a constant state of anxiety
- Might not go to adults for help
- Seem distracted and struggle to concentrate
- Display emotional and angry behaviour
- Have poor nursery attendance
- Have problems socialising with other children
- Cry excessively
- Have speech delay
- Be regressive in their behaviours
- Be soiling
- Blaming themselves for the home situation
- Be withdrawn
- Be over tired and not sleeping

“ I'm determined that my future won't be scarred by my past ”

Young person from Back on Track programme.

School aged children (5-16) may:

- Be engaging in risk-taking behaviours
- Be withdrawn
- Have increased impulsive & aggressive behaviours
- Be exhausted and having sleep difficulties
- Be experiencing sadness, depression and mood swings
- Have a decline in school performance
- Have high non-attendance
- Not be doing their homework
- Have problems with concentration & attention
- Be anxious to leave parent at home
- Be being bullied or bullying
- Have low self esteem & therefore risk associated with this (self harm, substance misuse etc)
- Have no hopes or ambitions
- Be isolated; not many friends
- Be throwing themselves into school work as an escape from home life
- Not be allowed to attend clubs or local groups
- Be unable to have school friends visit them at home
- Have limited money for food/schools items.

Many young people may also display behaviours that cause concern for abuse occurring within their own intimate relationships. Some of these signs and symptoms may be similar to those displayed by adults within abusive relationships such as:

- Falling out with friends or family
- Unexplained injuries
- Low self esteem
- Always being with their boyfriend/girlfriend
- Receiving constant text messages/emails/calls
- Afraid of making partner angry
- Frequent pregnancies
- Being unreliable
- Worrying about spending money
- Using alcohol and drugs to cope
- A change in personality
- Being asked to do things sexually they are not comfortable with
- Fearful of the consequences of sharing their experiences
- Be protective of the abusive partner
- Minimise their experiences
- Fear they are to blame for their experiences.

“It's good to talk about things without feeling embarrassed or judged”

Young person from Back on Track programme.

The warning signs of domestic abuse are varied depending on the child or young person and the situation. Not all children and young people will display challenging behaviour and it is important for them not to be labelled if they do. Some of the behaviours listed may be signs of other issues but it is important to always be aware of the possibility of domestic abuse. The behaviours listed are not an exhaustive list and you may therefore observe other behaviours which cause concern. Professionals working with children and young people are crucial in identifying those experiencing domestic abuse. They are the people who have regular contact and established relationships with children and young people and can therefore identify even subtle personality or behavioral changes.

What you can do if you are worried about a child or young person

If you have identified behaviours which may indicate that a child or young person is experiencing domestic abuse you should discuss your concerns with an appropriate senior manager or your agency's safeguarding lead to agree an appropriate response.

If a child or young person has disclosed domestic abuse to you, try not to appear shocked, listen to what they tell you and explain that you will have to share information to keep them safe but you will tell them what is going to happen and make sure they know and understand what is going on.

If you have immediate safeguarding concerns or are worried someone is likely to be harmed, call the police on 999 and/or contact **South Gloucestershire Council Department for Children and Young People on First Point: 01454 866000 or 01454 864380.**

Schools/agencies/practitioners should use their professional judgement in discussing issues of domestic abuse with children and young people. These discussions should be conducted in an appropriate manner and in line with school/agency protocols on confidentiality.

You should avoid asking open and non-directive questions to ensure you do not interfere with any formal investigations. Instead try to assess the immediate risks and safeguarding concerns, e.g. is it safe for them to go home?

Document any key information shared with you (including dates and times) and what action you took – including who you shared the information with, what referrals you made.

It is key that the child or young person feels that in talking to you they will be believed, understand that it is not their fault and can be made aware that support can be provided.

Professionals are advised if they have further concerns about a child or young person, which are not immediate safeguarding concerns, they should contact the relevant social care team or initiate a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in order to appropriately identify and respond to their needs.

Supporting a child or young person:

Various types of support can be offered to children and young people, much of which can be very straight forward, simple to put in place and can be invaluable to a child or young person experiencing domestic abuse

There may be practical support options that can be put in place, such as:

- contacting outside agencies to offer support
- consider peer support
- look into ways to support with the cost of uniforms etc.
- finding a safe place for them to eat lunch, complete homework
- ensure they do not feel isolated or left out

- ensure that any support offered is discreet and does not further isolate them
- ask the child or young person what they feel will help them in terms of support, or any changes to their school day that may help.

Other considerations:

When considering domestic abuse and Children and Young People it may also be important to consider issues such as:

Forced Marriage:

“ A marriage without the consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. ”

Duress is:

“ [when] the mind of the applicant has been overborne, howsoever that was caused. ” Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

An arranged marriage is very different from a forced marriage. An arranged marriage is entered into freely by both people, although their families take a leading role in the choice of partner.

If you are concerned that a child or young person may be forced to marry, you should discuss this with your safeguarding lead. You can also contact the **Forced Marriage Unit (national Home Office number 020 7008 0151)** for advice and support. Please also ensure you contact the **police (101)** and the **South Gloucestershire Council Department for Children and Young People on First Point: 01454 866000 or 01454 864380.**

“ Back on Track helped me to understand more about domestic violence and how to cope ”

Young person from
Back on Track programme.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

FGM is illegal and a form of child abuse; if you suspect a child may be at risk of this practice or has already undergone FGM you must take action immediately and discuss with your safeguarding lead. You should also contact South Gloucestershire Council Department for Children and Young People on First Point: 01454 866000/01454 864380 or the police on 101.

FGM generally affects girls, but forced marriage can affect both genders. It is also important to be aware that both practices are not linked to religion, but are a result of cultural influence. Further training on these issues is available. Please contact the community safety team for more information: email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk / Tel: 01454 868751.

Making your agency 'Domestic Abuse Aware'

Developing a 'Whole Agency/Whole School' approach to Domestic Abuse is key to ensuring that professionals working with children and young people, and the agency as a whole can:

- recognise the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse.
- implement relevant policies to ensure that clear guidance is provided to professionals working with children and young People in how to respond to domestic abuse.
- implement relevant policies to address the effects of domestic abuse on children and young people, and also employees.

- ensure training is provided to all employees to heighten awareness and knowledge.
- identify a lead for domestic abuse within your agency that can develop more specialised knowledge and become a single point of contact for concerns.
- ensure children and young people are aware of where they can seek support, and provide a safe environment to them to discuss their experiences.

“ You really changed my life forever and I can never repay you ”
Young person from Back on Track programme.



Training:

South Gloucestershire 2 day training on **'Identifying and Responding to families experiencing domestic abuse'**
Enquiries and booking to: HRworkforcedevelopment@southglos.gov.uk

'Domestic Abuse Awareness Training for Professionals'

Training provided by Survive on either a whole day or half day basis, and can be tailored for specific needs upon request.
Enquiries and booking to: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999

'Preventative workshops for children and young people'

Provided by Survive as part of PSHE or anti crime days, and can be tailored for specific needs upon request.
Enquiries and booking to: info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999

'Tailored sessions and assemblies'

Provided by Survive and the Police

Enquiries and booking to: South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:
communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 868751

Survive:

info@survivedv.org.uk Tel: 0117 9612999

South Gloucestershire Council bespoke **domestic abuse awareness sessions available to cover any specific needs** within your agency. These sessions can be tailored to specific needs and can run from anything from 2 hours to a whole day.

Enquiries and booking to: South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:
communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 868751

“ The importance of communication within schools was highlighted and I now realise that all the small things put together can signpost to abuse ”
Teacher after attending bespoke training session

“ Really interesting course that gave me lots to think about and pass on. Domestic abuse is more common than i thought ”
Parent link worker after attending bespoke training session

National Advice and Support:

Women's Aid:

The key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

Freephone 24 hour Helpline: **0808 2000 247**

Website: **www.womensaid.org.uk**

Email: **info@womensaid.org.uk**

The Hide Out:

Women's Aid linked website that provides children and young people with information to understand domestic abuse and how they can take positive action if they are experiencing it.

Website: **www.thehideout.org.uk**

ManKind:

The leading charity in the UK for male victims of domestic abuse.

National Helpline: **01823 334244**

Website: **www.mankind.org.uk**

Forced Marriage Unit:

Provides advice and support relating to possible forced marriage.

Tel: **020 7008 0151**

Email: **fmufco.gov.uk**

Website: **www.fco.gov.uk**

Forced marriage helpline: **0800 5999 247**

This is Abuse:

Website for young people experiencing abuse within their own relationships which offers information and advice.

Website:

<http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>

Men's advice line:

Advice and support for men in abusive relationships.

Freephone: **0808 801 0327**

Email: **info@mensadviceline.org.uk**

Website: **www.mensadviceline.org.uk**

Broken Rainbow:

The leading charity for LGBT People experiencing domestic abuse.

Email: **help@broken-rainbow.org.uk**

Helpline: **0300 999 5428**

Website: **www.brokenrainbow.org.uk**

Barnardo's:

National charity that aims to transform the lives of vulnerable children, including those affected by domestic abuse.

Tel: **0208 550 8822**

Website: **www.barnardoes.org.uk**

Respect:

National charity providing information for domestic abuse perpetrators, partners and practitioners.

Tel: **020 7549 0578**

Email: **info@respect.uk.net**

Website: **www.respect.uk.net**

“ I learned how to cope with my feelings ”

Young person from Back on Track programme.

Teaching Resources:

Expect Respect Educational Toolkit:

A toolkit which provides lesson plans for each year group within schools from reception class to year 13 and is based on themes that have been found to be effective in tackling domestic abuse. The toolkit is mainly aimed at teachers, but can be used by other professionals working with children and young people.

The toolkit is available on the Women's Aid website:
www.womensaid.org.uk alternatively click [here](#) for the direct link

Spiralling DVD and Toolkit:

Educational toolkit and film to help prevent domestic abuse in the next generation, with activities for Children and Young People.

The toolkit is available from the Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum website:
www.bdaf.org.uk
alternatively click [here](#) for the direct link

Teacher's Guide to violence and abuse in teenage relationships:

Resource available for teachers to raise awareness and understanding of teenage relationship abuse. This resource may also be useful for other practitioners working with children and young people.

Resource is available from the Home Office Website:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk
alternatively click [here](#) for the direct link

Back on Track DVD:

DVD produced by young people working with Survive's Back On Track programme for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. This can be used to support any specific lesson plans around domestic abuse.

For a copy of the DVD, please contact:

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:
Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk
Tel: **01454 868751**

Bespoke lesson plans:

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team and Survive can be contacted to assist in developing specific lesson plans or educational resources to suit the needs of your school or organisation.

For further enquiries please contact:

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:
Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk
Tel: **01454 868751**

Survive:

Email: info@survivedv.org.uk
Tel: **0117 9612999**
Website: www.survivedv.org.uk

The police can also be contacted to support schools assemblies and work with your organisation to support lesson plans.

Local Domestic Abuse Advice and Support:

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:

This team coordinates the South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse and the local MARAC and can therefore be contacted for any advice or support and to discuss any specific agency needs you may have.

Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk
Tel: **01454 868751**

Wish for a Brighter Future:

Offers support to young people who are using violence, and also experiencing violence within their own personal relationships.

Email: info@withforabrighterfuture.org.uk
Website: www.wishforabrighterfuture.org.uk
Tel: **0117 9038632**

Next Link:

Bristol based charity that works with women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Their services often link to South Gloucestershire and they can be contacted for advice and support.

Email: enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk
Tel: **0117 925 0680**

Victim Support:

Providing support and information to individuals and families and signposting on to their agencies.

Tel: **0845 45 66 099**
(mon-fri: 8am-8pm, sat: 9am-5pm)
Email: southwest.vcu@victimsupport.org.uk
Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Survive:

Survive is a specialist charity in South Gloucestershire offering support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Services offered by Survive include:

- back on Track programme for children aged 7-11 years. Support group that allows children to talk about their experiences and have some fun with their peers. For information on the programme for 11-17 year olds, please contact Survive
- a dedicated 'Children and Young People's team', offering group programmes, 1:1 support and parenting support
- information sessions in the community and schools
- group support sessions for young people who have experienced domestic abuse
- Freedom Programmes providing group support for women aged 16 and over. There is also a dedicated group for 16-24 year olds
- refuge supported accommodation
- educational work in schools including training for staff and educational sessions with young people
- male mentors for young boys or men to support them in their recovery from domestic abuse.

Email: info@survivedv.org.uk
Tel: **0117 9612999**
Website: www.survivedv.org.uk

Useful Documents:

South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Domestic Abuse has produced many useful documents that could help your agency in dealing with domestic abuse.

South Gloucestershire Best Practice Guidance for Identifying and Responding to Domestic Abuse:

This guide has detailed advice and guidance on how to:

- Identify domestic abuse in terms of signs and symptoms and risk factors.
- Respond to domestic abuse through the use of safety actions, onward referrals and practitioner's safety.
- Complete the DASH risk assessment to determine the level of risk.

This document also provides useful guidance on safety planning, including safety planning with children and young people.

South Gloucestershire MARAC Operating Protocol:

This provides a step by step guide to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process for high risk victims of domestic abuse. The MARAC is a multi-agency meeting to share information and formulate a risk management plan for the highest risk victims of domestic abuse and their families. The protocol provides guidance on risk assessing, making referrals, information sharing and a guide to the meeting itself.

South Gloucestershire Joint Procedures for Sharing Information on Domestic Abuse with South Gloucestershire Schools:

This protocol outlines the process for sharing personalised information in terms of police incident reports being shared with South Gloucestershire schools, and the information sharing process of schools linking into the MARAC process. This document provides clear guidance on the role and responsibility of schools in terms of dealing with domestic abuse.

South Gloucestershire Directory of Domestic Abuse Services:

An electronic directory is available detailing all services in South Gloucestershire. A small pocket-sized directory can also be requested in hard copy from the South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team.

South West Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures:

This provides information on the statutory guidance for child protection for the whole of the South West for hard copy reference: www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp/

For a copy of any of the listed documents, or to request leaflets please contact:

South Gloucestershire Council Community Safety Team:
Email: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk
Tel: **01454 868751**

Alternatively, please visit the South Gloucestershire Council website for more information: www.southglos.gov.uk search for domestic abuse/violence

Confidentiality is important, however please remember that Safeguarding overrides confidentiality, and you have a duty of care to share information and ensure the safety and wellbeing of those children and young people for whom you are responsible, in accordance with The Children Act 1999 and Children Act 2004. This duty also extends to sharing information for the prevention of crime, under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and may apply to adults eg parents.

