

We hope you find this information pack useful.

In it you will find details about The Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and the valuable work that we carry out – alongside our county wide partners – to tackle domestic abuse throughout Worcestershire.

This information pack is about domestic abuse, what you can do about it and where you can get help, advice and support if you, or someone you know, is experiencing domestic abuse. The pack is for anyone who is - or has been - in an abusive relationship. It also provides an essential source of information for professionals in supporting and working with victims.

Tackling Domestic abuse is a priority for all agencies across Worcestershire; however, no one agency can achieve this on their own. We are "Stronger Together" working in partnership in seeking to make a difference to some of the most vulnerable persons within our communities.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will sometime in their lifetime experience domestic abuse. Domestic abuse has a devastating effect on children. 2 women are murdered every week by a current or previous partner in the UK. This statistic has been the same for the past 20 years. We need to change this. This information pack seeks to raise awareness of how you can help break this cycle and better identify, support and signpost victims to the range of excellent services across Worcestershire. We need to remember that it takes tremendous courage to ask for help and need to get it right first time.... there may not be a second chance.

And remember! If you are in an abusive relationship:

You are not the only one

You are not to blame

You cannot change your abuser's behaviour

Ignoring abuse is dangerous

There is life after an abusive relationship

Don't suffer in silence - tell someone...



**WORCESTERSHIRE FORUM
AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE
& SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Stronger Together

0800 980 3331

worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse - also known as domestic violence, spousal abuse, or intimate partner violence (IPV) - can be broadly defined 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 dependant 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 pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Who are we?

The Worcestershire Forums against Domestic and Sexual Abuse are independent inter-agency partnerships that bring together a range of voluntary and statutory organizations and individuals to work on tackling issues related to domestic abuse and sexual violence across Worcestershire. The Forums work closely with Worcestershire County Council and the District Councils of Worcester, Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove and Redditch.

The Forums aim to reduce domestic abuse and sexual violence by strengthening inter-agency working, raising public awareness and changing attitudes. This is achieved through multi-agency meetings, policy development, lobbying, awareness-raising campaigns and training. Both forums work closely with Women's Aid, Stonham and Worcestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre and other domestic abuse and sexual abuse service providers to ensure that policy work is practice-based, consistent and up to date, and to provide resources to support the effective delivery of services.

Our vision

The Forums have the ultimate goal of preventing and reducing the incidents of domestic abuse and sexual violence in all its forms. The Forums approach in promoting their strategies will be to strive to benefit all communities, to end abuse and the social attitudes and tolerance which condone it.

Everyone in our society has a part to play in raising awareness about both Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, its prevention and protection for those affected. Our message is clear and simple to victims/survivors, **"Please don't suffer in silence"**.



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Recognising domestic abuse

There are many signs of domestic abuse. If you think you are in an abusive relationship ask yourself this question:

Are you afraid of your partner?

Fear is the main way an abusive partner will control you and continue with their abuse unchecked.

If you are suffering from emotional abuse you may feel afraid, you may avoid doing certain things for fear of angering your partner, you may feel that you cannot do anything right or that you deserve to be hurt or abused.

Another sign of domestic abuse is control. Your partner may be abusing you through controlling and manipulative behaviour - checking up on you, demanding to know where you've been and the conversations you've had.

Your partner may deny you money or force financial control on you while undermining your ability to cope.

Your partner may be violent towards you sexually or physically forcing you to do things against your will or degrading you.

They may even blame you for their abusive behaviour and treat you more as an object than a human being.

Signs of domestic abuse can often go unnoticed, listed below are 16 signs that may indicate someone is affected by domestic abuse.

Injuries

Bruising, cuts or injuries occurring frequently, or in areas that can be hidden by clothing, or perhaps walking stiffly or appearing sore. Sometimes victims give explanations for injuries that just don't fit.

Excuses

Victims often minimise or excuse injuries, perhaps blaming a 'clumsy' nature or giving the same explanation each time.

Stress

Victims often display physical symptoms related to stress, other anxiety disorders or depression, such as panic attacks, feelings of isolation and an inability to cope. Victims may even talk about suicide attempts or self-harming.

Absent from work

Often off work, taking time off without notice or frequently late.

Personality changes

You may notice personality changes when around the partner or the appearance of 'walking on eggshells' when in his or her company. A victim may be jumpy or show nervous mannerisms. Such personality changes may become evident over time, even when the partner is not around.

Low self-esteem

A victim of domestic abuse often has low self-esteem when talking about the relationship or life in general and may seem sad, cry or depressed.



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Lack of opportunity to communicate independently

Perhaps the partner talks over the victim, or for him or her, and he or she may be reluctant to speak. The partner can often appear controlling or make disparaging remarks.

Self blame

You may notice that he or she may take the blame for anything that happens, whether it's at work, with the children or with friends. A victim of domestic abuse often blames him or herself for the abuse.

Lack of money

Perhaps he or she never seems to have any money on because her partner is withholding money as a form of control.

Stopping socialising

He or she may make excuses for not going out with friends, or suddenly pull out of social get togethers at the last minute.

The abuser displaying irrational behaviour

A victim may say that his or her partner is jealous, irrational or possessive, accusing him or her of having affairs or flirting.

Unwanted pregnancy/termination

Pregnancy often triggers the start of domestic abuse. A woman may be unhappy at being pregnant, not wish to continue with the pregnancy, or be forced into having a termination.

Substance abuse

Victims may use alcohol or drugs to cope or even prescribed drugs such as tranquillisers or anti-depressants.

Lack of assertiveness

Perhaps he or she can't make decisions, stick up for him or herself, give an opinion or displays a lack of interest.

Damage to property

Damage in the home or even harm to pets.

Unwillingness to give out personal details

He or she may not give friends and colleagues an address or telephone number and may insist that he or she contacts you, so that you don't turn up on their doorstep.



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Make a plan

Admitting to yourself and others that you are experiencing domestic violence may seem very difficult but it is an important step in the journey towards seeking protection for yourself and your children, if you have any.

Remember! It is not your fault. You are not alone. You have the right to live your life free from fear.

Sometimes victims of domestic abuse leave home in a hurry in order to escape from assault or to make a break for safety and sanity.

It can help if you make some plans

Making a crisis plan is a way of feeling more in control, more positive and confident. Here is a suggested plan of action that you can add to or change to suit your circumstances:

- If you don't have a mobile phone, find somewhere with quick and easy access to a telephone, such as a neighbour or a close friend
- Make – and always carry with you – a list of emergency numbers. Include friends, relatives and local police as even well known numbers can be forgotten in a panic
- Try to save some money for bus, train or taxi fares
- Have an extra set of keys cut for your home and car
- Keep the keys and a set of clothes for you and your children packed and ready in a bag somewhere easily accessible
- Explain to your children - if they are old enough to understand – that you might have to leave home in a hurry. Assure them you will take them with you or arrange for them to join you as soon as possible. Discuss your crisis plan with them.
- Leave when your partner is not around
- Take all your children with you



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If you have more time to plan, do as much as possible of the following:

- Leave when your partner is not around
- Take all your children with you
- Take legal and financial papers, marriage and birth certificates, court orders, national health cards, passports, driving licence, child benefit books, address book, bank books, cheque book, credit cards and all other important documents
- Take any personal possessions that have sentimental value such as photographs or jewellery
- Take your children's favourite toys
- Take clothing for at least several days
- Take any medicines you or your children might need
- If you have pets and are worried about them arrange for someone to care for them. An animal charity may be able to help
- If you do leave and realise you have forgotten something important you can always arrange for the protection of a police escort to return home to collect it.



Who to contact

West Mercia Police

101 (Non-Emergency) **999** (Emergency)

Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Service and 24 hour Helpline

0800 980 3331

www.westmerciawomensaid.org

The Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Service is delivered in partnership by West Mercia Women's Aid and Stonham. The service delivers free, confidential advice and support to female and male survivors, young people and children.

The helpline deals with any queries from people who have or are experiencing domestic abuse, or from those who may be worried about someone experiencing it. You can call if you need a listening ear, advice, access to refuge accommodation, support, advocacy and/or someone to talk to.

The service provides the following support:

- One to one outreach support
- Emergency Refuge and safe house accommodation in Worcestershire
- Group support and recovery programmes
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors
- Survivor Networks and Peer Support
- Training for professionals

Referrals and enquiries for all aspects of support can be made via the 24 hour helpline: 0800 980 3331

If you would like to find out more about our organisations you can also visit our websites:

Women's Aid: www.westmerciawomensaid.org

Stonham: www.homegroup.org.uk

National 24hr Domestic Abuse Helpline **0800 2000 247**

There is a national helpline, which is provided in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge to offer a listening ear, advice, referrals and support.

Men's Advice Line **0808 801 0327**

www.mensadvice.org.uk

Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members). They help by: giving you time to tell your story; offering emotional support; providing practical advice; signposting you to other services for specialist help.

Worcestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WRSASC)

01905 724514 www.wrsasc.org.uk

WRSASC is a free, confidential and non-judgemental service for men, women and children (aged 11 years or over) who have experienced rape, sexual assault, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment or any form of sexual attack, whether physical, verbal or emotional. Our services include telephone support for survivors and their family or friends via our telephone helpline and face to face counselling support for women aged 16 years and over. We have an Independent Sexual Advisory Service which provides practical and emotional support to men, women and children aged 11 years and over.

National Rape Crisis Helpline

(Freephone) **0808 802 9999**

Broken Rainbow **0300 999 5428**

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.

National Centre for Domestic Violence (NVDV) **0844 8044 999**

Provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation.



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**Sexual Assault Referral Centre
(The Glade)**

0808 178 2058

24hr Self-Referral Number

01886 833555

(Office Hours for professionals)

www.theglade.org.uk

The Glade in West Mercia offers a free and confidential service to men, women and children who have been victims of rape or sexual assault. The services that The Glade offers can be accessed via a police or self-referral (by calling 0808 178 2058). Where appropriate clients will be offered a forensic medical examination to gather evidence, advice about pregnancy and sexual health, medication where appropriate, referrals for ongoing and long term support and/or to the client's GP and counselling. The Glade offers a safe and welcoming environment to victims of sexual violence.

Karma Nirvana 0800 5999 247

www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Providing support and advice around Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Karma Nirvana believes that cultural acceptance does not mean accepting the unacceptable and acknowledges that often there remains a lack of professional confidence. Our work equips professionals so that they do not fear offending communities when tackling forced marriages and honour related abuse as we deal with these abuses within a Child and Public Protection framework. One of our key principles is that we never talk to or engage with your family. Our commitment and loyalty is to you and as we understand the fears when family members become involved.

National Stalking Helpline

0808 802 0300

www.stalkinghelpline.org

The Helpline provides guidance and information to anybody who is currently or has previously been affected by harassment or stalking. The Helpline can provide guidance on:

- The law in relation to stalking and harassment in the United Kingdom
- Reporting stalking or harassment
- Effective gathering of evidence
- Ensuring your personal safety and that of your friends and family
- Practical steps to reduce the risk

Childline 0800 555 111

www.childline.org.uk

ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people. Whenever children need us, ChildLine will be there for them - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

**Paladin (National Stalking
Advocacy Service) 0207 840 8960**

www.paladinservice.co.uk

Paladin assists high risk victims of stalking throughout England and Wales. A number of Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) ensure high risk victims of stalking are supported and that a coordinated community response is developed locally to keep victims and their children safe.

Victim Support (Local)

0300 303 1977

Victim Support is here to help anyone affected by crime, not only victims but their friends, family and any other people involved. Because we're an independent charity, you can talk to us whether or not you reported the crime to the police. If you want, we can support you without the involvement of the criminal justice system, and we won't contact them about you unless we feel someone is at risk. We are here just to support you.



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MARAC

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

What is MARAC?

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented by the IDVA, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. In Worcestershire MARAC meets twice a month, once in North Worcestershire and once in South Worcestershire.

Referral Criteria

- Professional Judgement
- Visible High Risk
- Potential Escalation
- Repeat victimisation

Referral Process

- Complete a Referral Form
- Inform victim and obtain consent
- If appropriate, complete DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Harassment) Risk Assessment
- Liaise with your agency MARAC representative
- Agency Representative refers to MARAC

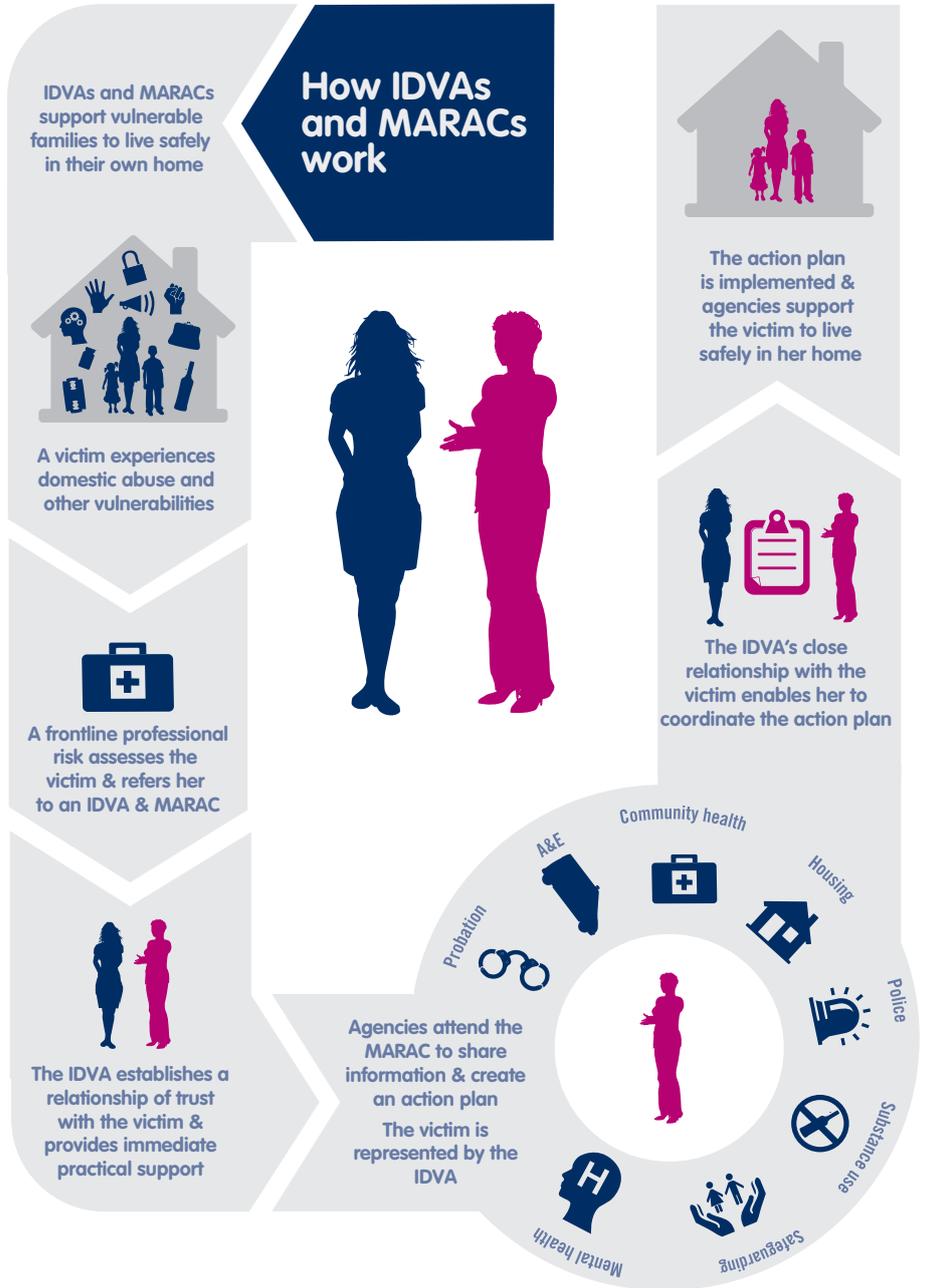
MARAC Coordinator:

worcestershiremarac@westmercia.pnn.police.uk



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AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE
& SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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DASH Risk Assessment

(Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Harassment)

The DASH risk assessment is based on research and lessons learnt and seeks to identify and assess levels of risk at a given time by asking the below series of questions. It seeks to identify those at the highest risk for referral into MARAC to collectively manage that risk down. **REMEMBER** : circumstances can change and the risk assessment should be subject of regular review. Dynamic assessments save lives.

1. Has the current incident resulted in injury?
2. Are you very frightened?
3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence?
4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends i.e. does (name of abuser(s) [redacted]) try to stop you from seeing friends/family/doctor or others?
5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?
6. Have you separated or tried to separate from (name of abuser(s) [redacted]) within the past year?
7. Is there conflict over child contact?
8. Does [redacted] constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you?
9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)?
10. Is the abuse happening more often?
11. Is the abuse getting worse?
12. Does [redacted] try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous?
13. Has [redacted] ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?
14. Has [redacted] ever threatened to kill you, your children or someone else and you believed them?
15. Has [redacted] ever attempted to strangle/choke/suffocate/drown you?
16. Does [redacted] do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else?
17. Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of?
18. Do you know if [redacted] has hurt anyone else?
19. Has [redacted] ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?
20. Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on [redacted] for money/ have they recently lost their job/other financial issues?
21. Has [redacted] had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life?
22. Has [redacted] ever threatened or attempted suicide?
23. Has [redacted] ever broken bail/an injunction and/or formal agreement for when they can see you and/or the children?
24. Do you know if [redacted] has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history?



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Am I in an Abusive Relationship?

Self Assessment Questionnaire

There are many signs and indicators that you may be in an abusive relationship. Below are a series of statements that may indicate that you are. This list is not definitive but provides some indicators of an unhealthy relationship. If you are concerned then contact the helpline on 0800 980 3331 for further advice and support. Do not attempt to tackle the abuse without speaking to the helpline as this may put yourself at increased risk of harm.

My partner teases me in a hurtful way in public

My partner calls me names such as stupid..... or worse

My partner acts jealous of my friends and/or family

My partner checks up on me by phone or coming to my home/work

My partner gets someone else to check up on me

My partner insists I tell them who I am on my phone with/interacting with

My partner blames me for their bad mood or problems

My partner gets angry easily, I walk on eggshells

My partner throws or destroys things when they are angry

My partner hits walls/drives dangerously or does other things to scare me

My partner drinks a lot or takes drugs

My partner insists that I drink or take drugs when they do

My partner accuses me of being interested in someone else

My partner reads my texts/emails and goes through my bag

My partner keeps my money from me

My partner has threatened to hurt me



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My partner has threatened to hurt my family or friends

My partner has hurt me

My partner has hurt someone who is my family or friend

My partner has threatened to harm my or someone else's pets

My partner has actually hurt my or someone else's pets

My partner has threatened suicide if I leave

My partner has struck me with his hands or feet (punched/slap/kick)

My partner has struck me with an object/threatened me with a weapon

My partner has given me visible injuries (bruises/welts/cuts)

I have had to administer first aid to myself due to injuries from my partner

My injuries from my partner have meant I needed medical treatment

My partner forces me to have sex when I don't want to

My partner forces me to have sex in ways that I don't want to

My partner has been in trouble with the police

My partner acts one way in front of others and another way when we are alone

My partner is secretive or lies about past relationships

I feel isolated or alone and have no one I can really talk with

I have lost friends because of my partner or some of their actions

I no longer see my family or friends because of my partner

I have thought about calling the police because my partner scares me

I have thought about calling the police because my partner has been violent

I have actually called the police on one or more occasions because of my partner

I am afraid to call the police because of threats from my partner



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& SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Local and National Schemes

Visual Evidence for Victims (VEV)

Visual evidence for victims (VEV) is a West Midlands project designed to take approved photographs of injuries or things that have been damaged.

Examples being;- Physical injuries, such as bruises, cuts, scratches or pulled out hair. The project can also store photographs securely so that they will be available if you decide to report the crime later on. Images are stored securely for up to 6 years allowing the victim time to decide what to do whilst securing that vital evidence.

VEV is run by Victim Support with the help of other local organizations independent of the police. Across Worcestershire there are a range of agencies trained as VEV champions.

Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (Sarah's Law)

Threats to a child's safety are more likely to originate from a family member or a friend of a family than a complete stranger. Around 75 per cent of child sex offenders are related to or known to their victim. The Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme has been developed to respond to this.

The scheme allows members of the public - parents, carers, guardians or interested third parties - to ask the police to tell them about a person's record of child sex offences if they are concerned about that person's access to a child.

The police already disclose information about registered sex offenders and violent offenders in a controlled way to a variety of people, including head teachers, leisure centre managers, employers, landlords and parents. The disclosure scheme is an additional tool that the police can use to keep children safe.

For more information go to www.westmercia.police.uk/child-sex-offender-disclosure-scheme/

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Claire's Law)

The aim of this scheme is to give members of the public a formal mechanism to make enquires about an individual who they are in a relationship with or who is in a relationship with someone they know, and there is a concern that the individual may be abusive towards their partner.

If police checks show that the individual has a record of abusive offences, or there is other information to indicate the person you know is at risk, the police will consider sharing this information with the person(s) best placed to protect the potential victim. Advice and guidance is available at your local police station.

The scheme aims to enable potential victims to make an informed choice on whether to continue the relationship, and provides help and support to assist the potential victim when making that informed choice.

Domestic Violence Protection Notice / Orders (DVPN's & DVPO's)

A Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) is a notice served by the police against a person (an alleged perpetrator) where the police reasonably believes that the alleged perpetrator has been violent or has threatened violence. When considering whether to serve a DVPN, the police will have talked to all of those involved, including the victim. The police will serve a DVPN if they believe that a threat of violence by the alleged perpetrator exists and that it is necessary to protect you in your home.

The DVPN lasts for up to 48 hours. It will prohibit the alleged perpetrator from returning to, entering and being within a certain distance of your home, or face arrest; it will prohibit the alleged perpetrator from molesting the victim.

After 48 hours the alleged perpetrator will appear before the court and this can be extended for up to 28 days. It provides "breathing space" and time for agencies to work with the family and individuals.



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AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE
& SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

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Information Sharing

The Golden Thread of working in partnership

Effective Information sharing is at the very heart of partnership working. It is the "golden thread" in identifying, supporting and reducing risk to vulnerable people, both adults and children. Information sharing is a vital element in improving outcomes for all. It is therefore vitally important that practitioners share information appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice and do so confidently. Information sharing is like doing a jigsaw puzzle. We all have different pieces and it's not until we share then that we start to realise the significance of what we have and how we can reduce "collective risk" and protect victims. Don't underestimate the power and significance of your pieces of the jigsaw!

It's important to remember there can be significant consequences for not sharing information. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether to share or not, and what information is appropriate to share. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.

There are three simple things to consider:-

- ✓ **Is it necessary to share the information?**
- ✓ **Is it justified to share the information?**
- ✓ **Is it proportionate to share the information?**



Remember... BE BOLD, No child or Adult has ever died as a result of sharing information but sadly plenty have as a result of not - your information could be the missing piece

Where possible it is desirable to obtain the consent of the person to share information. However, it may not be appropriate to inform a person that information is being shared, or seek consent to this sharing. This is the case if informing them is likely to hamper the prevention or investigation of a serious crime, or put any child or adult at significant risk of serious harm

Below are some key links to helpful documents that underpin information sharing, providing practical advice and guidance.

www.caada.org.uk/marac/Caldicott%20guidance%20-%20Striking%20the%20Balance.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf

webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/

www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/dcsf-00807-2008



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& SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

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Domestic Abuse Traits

Domestic abuse is the use of power and control to restrict your rights and direct your will in the direction that an abuser wishes for it to go. Understanding how this power and control is used in your day to day life is pivotal to the first step of your recovery so the following are some of the dynamics that you may be experiencing. When reading these descriptors, please bear in mind that you may experience one, some or all of these at any one time and to varying degrees. This does not mean that this is any less abusive and there does not have to be physical violence for you to be suffering abuse. If you are experiencing any of the following, please use the resources in this pack to find out where and how to access the support and assistance available to you.

The Tyrant

The Tyrant is the side of the abuser who will use physical strength to hurt you. They will use their stature or size to make you feel afraid and will not be worried about being a bully towards you and others in public. The tyrant will make your friends and family feel afraid and will feel powerful when you and they are afraid. The tyrant will hurt you physically and will often use weapons to hurt you. The tyrant believes that you are their property and that they are superior to you and most other people. The tyrant believes that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems and will always blame you or others for their behaviour. The tyrant will believe that their behaviours are reasonable and justified.

The Manipulator

The manipulator is the devious part of your abuser who will erode your self confidence and self esteem. They will blame you for every small perceived problem and will chip away at your confidence by using insults and putting you down. The manipulator will tell you lies about your friends and family and may even seduce them so that your relationship with them is disrupted or destroyed. The manipulator thinks that you should be grateful that they have shown an interest in you. The manipulator makes you feel as though you are going mad but they will always blame you for their behaviour and they will believe that their behaviour is reasonable and justified.

The Confiner

The confiner imprisons you in many ways and they will do everything in their power to prevent you from leaving your home without them. They may try to stop you working or may even stop working themselves to make sure that you are at home where they monitor your every move. The confiner will restrict your finances so that you cannot do what you want and they will believe that they have to do this because you will do bad things when you are not with them. The confiner may restrict your access to basic items that you need on a daily basis to prevent you from leaving the home. The confiner will constantly text and call you when you are out, to the extent that you often return home because you are fed up with the hassle! The confiner controls what you wear and who you see. The confiner believes that you are responsible for their behaviour and that their behaviour is reasonable and justified.

The Convincer

The Convincer will use all of the abuse tactics described above and below in an effort to stop you doing something that they don't want you to do, particularly leaving them. This can range from threats to kill you, your children, family or friends or they may try to coerce you to believe that they are 'changing' for the better and that they are sorry, stating that, of course, the abuse will never happen again. The convincer believes that their victim has no right to complain about the violence as they are responsible for it. The convincer believes that you are responsible for their behaviour and that their behaviour is reasonable and justified.



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The Sexual Abuser

The sexual abuser believes that you are there to satisfy their sexual desires which often goes against your wishes. The sexual abuser may rape you or force you to commit acts that you are uncomfortable with. The sexual abuser may take images or video of you in situations that you would not like to be made public and blackmail you with exposure if you do not do what they want. The sexual abuser may make you sleep with their friends or with other people for money or goods. On the flip side of this abuse, the sexual abuser may also withhold sexual contact from you or make you feel unattractive. Many victims of domestic abuse struggle with this tactic the most. The sexual abuser relies on this fear and shame to control you. The sexual abuser believes that they are entitled to abuse you and that their actions are justified and reasonable.

The Head of the House

The Head of the House believes that their partner's sole purpose is to do things for them. They believe that housework is inferior and therefore so are you. They have very high standards and nothing is ever 'right'. You could spend all day cleaning and cooking but the Head of the House would find the one tiny detail that you have overlooked. As the partner to the Head of the House, you may also have to be pristine as well as your children, or, the Head of the House may not appear to care what you wear or look like and then abuse you for not being as well presented as they expect you to be. The Head of the House will use threats, bullying and violence to make sure that you do as they wish. They believe that all of their behaviours are reasonable and justified and that the abuse is your fault.

The Deceiver

The deceiver will blame anyone and anything for their behaviour. They will tell you that they are being violent or abusive because of their work or drink. They may tell you that they behave the way that they do because of how they were brought up. The liar will deny anything that you say if it does not fit with their reality and they often do not see the world the same way that we do. The liar will believe that their behaviour is justified and reasonable and is your fault.

The Bad Parent

The bad parent will use your children against you. They may undermine you as a parent or they may even encourage your children to abuse you directly. They may use the courts and contact as a reason to continue to harass and harm you and they may also threaten to inform agencies such as children's social care that you are a bad parent. The bad parent may also directly or threaten to harm your children to make you do as they wish. The bad parent will blame you for their behaviour and feel that their actions and behaviour are justified.



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Support and Recovery

Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Service

A partnership between West Mercia Women's Aid and Stonham

West Mercia Women's Aid and Stonham are working in partnership to deliver one support service in Worcestershire. Together we work to ensure we can continue to deliver a wide range of specialist individual and family support to manage and reduce risk for children, young people, women and men affected by Domestic Abuse. We aim to enhance wellbeing and quality of life for all clients.

Our referral pathway will ensure that you only need to know one phone number (the Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Helpline) and there will be a single point of access for the wide range of support available in the county.

Outreach support

We support clients to address the practical and emotional issues that may arise from domestic abuse such as; housing, financial, legal, alcohol/ substance misuse and health issues among many more. We provide group support through programmes and peer support, however we recognise that not everyone is comfortable receiving support as part of a group so we also offer individual support.

Refuge and safe house accommodation

We can provide temporary accommodation in Worcestershire for women or men and their children.

We also provide:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA)
- Recovery Programmes and Group Support
- Survivor Networks and Peer Support
- Training for professionals to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse

Worcestershire Recovery Pathway

The service provides a comprehensive recovery pathway of programmes for women who are affected by domestic abuse.

The Freedom Programme

A 12 week programme which supports women to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse. It assists women to understand the beliefs of an abuser and supports women to understand and recognise those beliefs that we all share.

Power to Change

A 12 week programme that supports women to rebuild themselves after their experience of domestic abuse.

Parenting Through Domestic Abuse

An 11 week programme which helps women to understand how children are affected by domestic abuse, supports women to learn strategies to support children effectively and shows women how to build a stronger and healthier bond with their children.

Recovery Toolkit

A 12 week programme that empowers women to recognise the psychological impact of domestic abuse.

Crush Programme

This is a structured programme of group support and empowerment for young people of both sexes in the age range of 13-19 years old who have witnessed, experienced or are at risk of domestic abuse. It is suitable for those vulnerable to domestic abuse and those who are beginning to show signs of controlling behaviour.

Rejuvenate

The service has a dedicated male support worker who is able to offer specialist support for male survivors. This is a recovery programme for men who have experienced domestic abuse. The programme explores the dynamics of domestic abuse and how men are affected by an abusive partner, former partner or family member.

The 24 hour Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 980 3331

The helpline deals with any queries from people who have or are experiencing domestic abuse, or from those who may be worried about someone experiencing it. You can also call the helpline to enquire about and access all aspects of the service



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SupportWorks Foundation

For further information please email info@supportworksfoundation.org.uk
Visit our website supportworksfoundation.org.uk
or call **07580 680765**

Our services include:

Recovery programmes for women survivors of domestic abuse - Any woman who has completed the Freedom Programme and no longer living with the perpetrator can attend at venues in Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest, Malvern or Redditch

Freedom Program - Stourport & Redditch

Programme for children who have witnessed domestic abuse - For Children aged 5-18 years the opportunity to talk about their experiences and break the 'secret' of abuse. They will understand they are not alone and not responsible for the abuse.

Training for Professionals - 2 day Freedom Programme for Professionals Workshop. You do NOT need to have attended the 1 day Freedom Course to attend.

Prevention programmes for boys and girls aged 11-19 years of age - We will provide professionals with the skills and knowledge required to successfully deliver the Coaching Healthy & Respectful Masculinity Programme (CHARM) to boys and young men aged 11-19 years and/or the girls' programme We are Valued, Equal and Safe (WAVES) to girls aged 11-19 years of age.

Asha Women's Centre

Visit www.ashawomen.org.uk
Email ashaproject@btconnect.com
or phone **01905 767552**

Asha Women's Centre, based in Worcester, offers support to women from all over Worcestershire. Our support includes 1:1 individual sessions, weekly groups and courses and volunteering and mentoring opportunities, to help deal with domestic abuse, confidence building, mental health, substance misuse, isolation, housing and finance. We deliver the Freedom programme, Mood Masters, legal advice drop in surgery, Employability, Computers and other courses that help self-development and build confidence.



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AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE
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Worcestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre

Call **01905 724514** or visit www.wrsasc.org.uk

Worcestershire Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WRSASC) is a free, confidential and non-judgemental support service for survivors of any form of rape or sexual abuse. Whilst WRSASC encourages individuals to self-refer, we also accept referrals from other agencies or representatives if this makes it easier for individuals to access our services.

WRSASC offers a comprehensive training package to professionals working with survivors of sexual abuse. Training can be tailored to the meet the specific needs of an agency or individual.

Telephone helpline

This service offers telephone support and information for male and female survivors, their carers and supporters, as well as to professionals seeking information.

Counselling (counselling@wrsasc.org.uk)

We offer counselling to female survivors. Counselling may be long or short term depending on the individual's needs. All women aged 16 and over can access this service whether they are a survivor themselves or are a relative or partner of a survivor.

Swanswell Alcohol and Drug recovery service

Swanswell, now based across Worcestershire, provide community-based alcohol, drug and support services. Providing services to both adults, young persons and families. They can offer free, confidential help. We know alcohol and /or drug use can quickly move from being an enjoyable activity to something that can damage your health and happiness. It can affect friends, family and the local community. We understand people need different support to change. If you want help with cutting down, giving up, staying safe or are concerned about someone else, we can offer you help and advice. We'll support you on a one-to-one or group basis and decide together how to help you. We can provide medical support directly or in partnership with your GP.

For Information Call **0300 303 8200**

Email: (to make a referral) worcsref@swanswell.org

Admin contact : worcsadmin@swanswell.org

0800 980 3331

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Asking the question Routine Enquiry



It's acknowledged that routinely asking the question around domestic abuse for professionals can be challenging and sometimes uncomfortable. But we know that it saves lives and although it may feel awkward and take us out of our comfort zone, lessons learnt tell us that, many silent victims are just waiting to be asked, in the hope of sharing their secret to access help and support. Victims are sworn to secrecy by the actions and consequences of their abuser. It's vitally important that we give victims the opportunity to share this secret by asking the question.

There is a strong likelihood that a person living in fear of domestic abuse may consider that the problem is their fault; that nobody will believe them; they may be too frightened to tell, may not understand that domestic abuse is more than physical violence and not perceive that they are in fact a victim or may continue to minimize or underestimate the risks to them and/or their child(ren).

An important aspect of asking the question is that staff recognise the legitimacy of their role in asking and are confident and competent in offering supportive responses, hence the importance of training, support and supervision for all staff. It should be emphasised that the person may not answer the question on the first occasion and it is vitally important to ask the question on future occasions. It takes tremendous courage to acknowledge that abuse is taking place and ask for help. We know that asking the question can save lives.

The role of the professional is not to be the specialist but to signpost victims to specialist services and provide resources providing information and support. It's important to understand that the victim is best placed to know when to make these calls and how to manage their safety on a day to day basis. Enquiry should be made in private on a one-to-one basis in an environment where the person feels safe, and in a kind, sensitive manner

Listed below are some examples of questions you might ask.

Initial questions:

- How are things at home?
- Do you feel safe?
- How are you feeling?
- Are you getting the support you need at home?

Follow up – here are some possible follow-on questions that may help you to develop a discussion following a disclosure of abuse. Remember that it is important to allow the victim to take things at their own pace.

- Do you ever feel frightened of your partner?
- Does your partner ever treat you badly such as shout at you, constantly call you names, push you around or threaten you?
- We all have rows at home occasionally. What happens when you and your partner fight or disagree?
- Has your partner ever: Forced sex on you, withheld sex or made you have sex in a way that you are unhappy with?
- Does your partner get jealous and if so, how does he/she then act?
- You mentioned that your partner uses drugs/alcohol. How does he/she act when drinking or using drugs?



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The impact on Children

Children can often be the forgotten witnesses and victims of domestic abuse and violence and are considered to be passive in the home situation. Parents can have an over optimistic view that their child does not know about the abuse, thinking the children have not been exposed to it. Sadly, this can also be an issue for professionals talking to parents. Prolonged or regular exposure to domestic violence and abuse can have a serious impact on a child's development and emotional well-being, despite the best efforts of the victim parent to protect the child.



Children and young people who live in families where domestic abuse occurs are likely to have an awareness of it, despite the fact that they may not be physically present in the room when the incident occurs. Children may be greatly distressed by witnessing and hearing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent, even if the children are young or unborn. There may be serious developmental effects on children who witness domestic abuse, which can result in behavioural issues, low self-esteem, depression, absenteeism, ill health, bullying, antisocial or criminal behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, self-harm and psychosocial impacts. Practitioners who work with adolescents are increasingly finding evidence of domestic abuse in intimate relationships between young people themselves.

The risks to unborn babies should always be considered if domestic abuse is suspected. It is a shocking statistic that 30% of domestic abuse starts during pregnancy. Therefore pregnant women are particularly susceptible to being victims of domestic abuse and practitioners working with pregnant women should be alert to this possibility.

Children and young people can 'witness domestic violence' in a variety of ways.

- they may be in the same room and may even get caught in the middle of an incident in an effort to make the violence stop
- they may be in the room next door and hear the abuse or see their parents physical injuries following an incident of violence

- they may be forced to stay in one room or may not be allowed to play
- they may in their bedroom and/or woken to hear to shouting or crying or hearing a parent in great distress and too scared to react.
- they may be forced to witness sexual abuse or they may be forced to take part in verbally abusing the victim

When responding to incidents, the agency in question should always find out if there are any children in the household. The Police/agency should see any children present in the household to assess their immediate safety and ascertain the whereabouts of any child normally resident in the household. **The voice of the child is vitally important; they should not be invisible to professionals.**

The agency responding needs to consider what support, services and safeguarding are needed for the family, focusing on the needs of the child. If you are worried about a child you can call the Early Help Hub and get advice on 01905 768054. If there are safeguarding concerns and you feel the threshold is met for Children's Social Care Services, a referral can be made by completing the referral form <https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/FrameworkiEHForm/AccessCentreForm.aspx> or follow the links on Worcestershire County Council website for 'If you are worried about a child' on www.worcestershire.gov.uk/



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