

1. Background

Domestic Abuse is 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: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

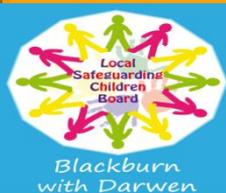
It also includes so called honour based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnicity.

2. Why it matters

The impact on children, young people and adults can be devastating with experiences of poor mental and physical health, isolation, substance misuse (often as a coping mechanism) and for some this can result in serious injury or death.

For those with care and support needs the above may be exacerbated alongside feelings of self-blame and shame or a reluctance to use services where personal care or medical services are provided.

Professionals should acknowledge and respect the choices victims make but also ensure they fulfil their statutory requirement to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.



Domestic Abuse

3. Information

A significant proportion of children/young people subject to child protection and Child in Need plans in BwD live in households where domestic abuse is taking place.

Domestic abuse affects ALL ages in one way or another and it is imperative that practitioners/staff are aware of both safeguarding and domestic abuse policies and guidance.

This includes recognition, risk assessment (if your role allows), support (which includes safety planning) and/or referral. Not doing so could result in significant risks not being identified or addressed properly.

Research has shown that there are specifically strong links between domestic abuse in those with mental illness, learning disabilities, older people and people who misuse substances. Carers and vulnerable adults themselves may also perpetrate domestic abuse unintentionally or intentionally.

4. What to do

Do you know your domestic abuse policy/Local Safeguarding Board's multi agency policy?

Do you know how to refer to domestic abuse services?

If you work regularly with children, adults and families do you know how to use the SafeLives Dash tool to assess risk?

Have you completed any training relevant to your role on this topic?

Staff: must follow safeguarding procedures for referring children and adults at risk.

MASH: 01254 666400

Adult Safeguarding Team: 01254 585949

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 01254 587547

Changing Lives: 01254 311181 WISH/BDDWA 01254 260455