

# Newcastle Multi-Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Procedural Flow Chart - Adults

## Enabling disclosure

There are many reasons why victims won't, or feel they can't, make a disclosure so it's important to build trust to enable a possible future disclosure.

- Always be alert to the possibility that an individual is experiencing domestic violence and be prepared to offer support.
- Be aware of signs that could indicate abuse is taking place, e.g. physical injury (inconsistent explanations for bruises or other injuries, frequent bruises or injury), controlling behaviour (partner always present during appointments, won't allow person to talk for themselves, person has limited access to money) and environmental indicators (holes in doors/walls, broken furniture, tense atmosphere in the home).
- Ensure professional interpreters are used, **never** use family members, children or friends where abuse is known or suspected.
- Only ask questions about domestic abuse when victims are on their own and in a private place.

**This guidance is applicable to all victims of domestic abuse** Domestic abuse is predominantly perpetrated against women by men, however it can be perpetrated within same sex relationships, by women against men, and by other family members such as adult children against their parents or the extended family/community as in cases of honour based abuse. Domestic abuse impacts upon children and/or adults with care and support needs in the household whether they are abused directly by the perpetrators and by hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents.

Remember: domestic violence and abuse commonly **escalates** and increases in **severity** over time  
Separation does not ensure safety; it often increases the risk. **Always** consult domestic abuse specialist agencies for safety planning advice if the victim wishes to separate (Please see over page)

**Always use the [MARAC Risk Checklist \(SafeLives DASH Risk Checklist\)](#) as a starting point.**

Deal with any immediate risks, including risks to others and yourself. Check records for risk information or warnings. Contact emergency services if required.

Never assume that someone else will take care of the domestic abuse issues. You should seek confirmation that other professionals/agencies have acted in a way which you would expect. You may be the victim's first and only contact. Remember that victims can deny abuse is happening and minimise the risk and/or harm. Discuss with your line manager, assess the threshold level and act accordingly.



Case meets MARAC Criteria (People aged 16 or over)	Case meets safeguarding adults criteria	Case does not meet MARAC or safeguarding adults criteria	Cases where children are involved (people aged under 18)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be clear with the victim about confidentiality and MARAC procedures.</li> <li>2. Complete the <a href="#">MARAC Risk Checklist (SafeLives DASH Risk Checklist)</a> with the victim where possible.</li> <li>3. Complete MARAC referral form.</li> </ol> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>Contact your agency's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for MARAC. <b>Your agency SPOC:</b></p> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Make referral to NIDAS for an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) or Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA).</li> <li>5. Agency SPOC sends referral to MARAC Coordinator.</li> <li>6. IDVA or ISVA will contact the victim.</li> <li>7. MARAC meeting takes place and victim's views are presented by IDVA/ISVA.</li> <li>8. Action plan is developed.</li> </ol> <p>Where the case is visible high risk (14 ticks); or based on your professional judgement you have serious concerns about a victim's situation you <b>must</b> make a referral into MARAC.</p>	<p>Domestic abuse is a form of abuse covered by multi-agency safeguarding adults policy and procedures.</p> <p>Where the victim of domestic abuse is an adult at risk as defined by the Care Act 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aged 18 or over; and</li> <li>• has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met); and</li> <li>• as a result of those needs is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">A safeguarding adults referral must be made.</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Telephone Social Care Direct (0191 278 8377) or contact allocated Social Worker.</li> <li>2. Complete a written referral (Safeguarding Adults Initial Enquiry Form, Adult Concern, IR3 etc) or Initial Enquiry form on CareFirst.</li> <li>3. Decision made whether Safeguarding Adults Enquiry need to progress and a Safeguarding Adults Plan developed.</li> </ol> <p>It is good practice to make a safeguarding adults and a MARAC referral if both criteria are met.</p> <p>Further <a href="#">practice guidance</a> around domestic abuse and safeguarding adults is available.</p>	<p>You still need to take action and support the victim.</p> <p><b>Long term involvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider immediate and long term risks.</li> <li>2. Develop a <a href="#">safety plan</a> with the victim (taking into consideration any dependents they may have).</li> <li>3. Signpost/refer the victim to domestic abuse support services (see over).</li> <li>4. Share information with other relevant agencies.</li> <li>5. Regularly revisit level of risk in terms of MARAC and safeguarding action.</li> </ol> <p><b>Short term involvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider immediate and long term risks.</li> <li>2. Review any previous risks/decision-making in relation to domestic abuse or safeguarding adults – do not assume it remains the same.</li> <li>3. Discuss basic safety plan with alleged victim – ensure they know where to go for help if they need it.</li> <li>4. Signpost/refer to domestic abuse support services (see over).</li> <li>5. Share information with other relevant agencies.</li> <li>6. Consider whether case needs allocating to a longer term worker.</li> <li>7. Ensure recording is clear for future workers who may become involved.</li> </ol>	<p>Remember that children are always impacted by domestic abuse. They are at risk of significant harm by direct abuse and from hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents. This will be dealt with under multi-agency safeguarding children procedures.</p> <p>If you have a concern that a child has been affected by domestic abuse:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Telephone <a href="#">Children's Social Care Initial Response Service</a> (0191 277 2500).</li> <li>2. Complete referral and initial information record.</li> </ol> <p><b>In all circumstances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Document</b> decision-making, actions taken to manage risk and rationale for sharing or not sharing information.</li> <li>• Be aware of your <b>professional role</b> and consult with other partners to: clarify their roles and responsibilities, share information and seek advice e.g. Police, health, housing, domestic abuse/violence specialists</li> <li>• <b>Follow up</b> any referrals.</li> <li>• When <b>signposting</b> to other agencies always consider risks associated with the perpetrator finding leaflets/letters etc.</li> </ul>

Domestic violence and 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 their gender and sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, financial, sexual and emotional.

Domestic abuse support services In an emergency always call 999	Good practice guidance when responding to an adult victim of domestic abuse	Good practice guidance when responding to a child who is a victim of domestic abuse
<p><b>Services for victims</b>  <a href="#">Northumbria Domestic Abuse Helpline</a>            (all victims)            Advice and Support            0800 066 5555</p> <p><a href="#">Newcastle Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS)</a>            An integrated service for anyone aged 16+; single point of contact 24 hour phone service, supported accommodation, outreach, IDVA, ISVA, specialist support for children and young people            0191 214 6501</p> <p><a href="#">Angelou Centre</a>            (Black, Minority, Ethnic women and children, women with no recourse to public funds)            Outreach, advice and support 0191 226 0394</p> <p><a href="#">The Safe Project</a>            (all victims)            Advice and support including specialist forced marriage and honour based abuse            0191 273 4942</p> <p><b>Services for victims</b>  <a href="#">Broken Rainbow</a>            (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender victims)            Advice and support            0300 999 5428</p> <p><a href="#">MESMAC North East</a>            (Gay and bi-sexual male victims, not specialist domestic abuse service)            0191 233 1333</p> <p><a href="#">Sexual Assault Referral Centre</a>            (all victims)            Medical and counselling service following a sexual assault, do not have to report to Police.            0191 221 9222</p> <p><a href="#">Rape Crisis</a>            (Female victims)            Information, support and counselling for women aged 16 and over who have been raped or sexually abused            0191 222 0272</p> <p><a href="#">Men's Advice Line</a> (male victims)            0808 801 0327</p> <p><b>Services for Perpetrators</b>  <a href="#">DVPP Perpetrator Project</a>            (male perpetrators) Barnardo's            0191 284 7198</p> <p><a href="#">Respect</a>            (male and female perpetrators) Helpline            0808 802 4040</p> <p><b>Safe Newcastle</b>            Offer domestic violence and abuse training for professionals            0191 277 7832</p>	<p><b>If you suspect that abuse is happening but it is not disclosed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When your suspicions are raised it is important that you act on them. You could provide the only opportunity for the victim to tell someone.</li> <li>Remember it can be dangerous to ask about domestic abuse in front of anyone else, particularly a partner. A later opportunity should be identified to speak to the person alone or pass your concerns onto another professional who could also attempt to ask.</li> <li>Ensure privacy – you are unlikely to receive a disclosure if someone might overhear.</li> <li>Show the person you have time to listen – if you appear rushed or uninterested you are less likely to receive a disclosure.</li> <li>Reassure about confidentiality and explain the limits of this, e.g. “I’m going to ask you a question and I want you to know that whatever you tell me will go no further without your permission, unless I believe a child or others at risk.”</li> <li>Begin with open questions, e.g. “tell me how things are going”.</li> <li>Follow up with direct questions, e.g. “I notice that you seem anxious/have some bruises/often miss appointments (whatever your concern is), is there anything happening at home that you are worried about? Is anything happening in your life that is making you feel unsafe? Is someone hurting you?”.</li> <li>It may be necessary to ask more than once, as many victims do not identify that they are experiencing abuse if it is not physical.</li> </ul> <p><b>Responding to an initial disclosure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be sensitive, respectful and listen carefully to what you are being told.</li> <li>Seek to empower victims, not to take over or make decisions for them. Ask them what they want you to do.</li> <li>Remain non-judgemental – never imply that the victim is to blame for the abuse.</li> <li>Validate the victim’s experience; tell them you are glad they told you.</li> <li>Give key messages, e.g. you are not alone, you do not deserve to be treated like this, there is help available for you.</li> </ul> <p><b>Address immediate safety issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the immediate safety of the victim and anyone else in the family.</li> <li>Do not take any action that could place you or your colleagues at risk of violence.</li> <li>Seek emergency assistance if needed.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the person doesn’t want you to take any action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider mental capacity, coercion, public interest, risks of significant harm.</li> <li>Always leave the door open for future discussion e.g. “You can contact me in the future if you feel you need further help and support”.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Domestic abuse framing question for children (under 16):</b> “We know that in many families, mums and dads have arguments and disagreements, does that ever happen in your family?”</p> <p>To obtain accurate and reliable information from a child regarding a domestic abuse situation the language and questions must be appropriate for the child’s age and developmental stage.</p> <p>Professionals should not press a child for answers. Instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen and believe what the child says;</li> <li>Reassure the children that the abuse is not their fault, and it is not their responsibility to stop it from happening;</li> <li>Give several telephone numbers, including Childline, Northumbria Police and local domestic abuse services.</li> </ul> <p>Explain the limits of confidentiality and your safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p><b>For young people (16-17years old):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the adult questioning techniques and refer to domestic abuse specialist services.</li> <li>Safety plan with young person</li> <li>Teenage pregnancy with domestic abuse is high risk. MARAC and child protection procedures should be initiated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Good practice guidance when working with perpetrators of domestic abuse</b></p> <p>Be alert to and prepared to receive and clarify a disclosure about domestic violence from an abusive person. However, remember that the majority of abusers will deny or minimise the domestic violence which they are perpetrating.</p> <p>You may have contact with a perpetrator directly or in the context of a family. They may present with a problem such as substance misuse, stress, depression or aggressive or offending behaviour – without reference to abusive behaviour in the household or relationship.</p> <p>Before seeking to clarify a disclosure from an alleged perpetrator, professionals should first of all take into account their own safety, the safety of any children, the safety of the victim and the safety of any other potential victims (such as ex-partners or extended family members).</p> <p>The most effective way to alter abusive behaviour is for the perpetrator to attend a structured perpetrator programme which includes education, as well as challenging behaviours and beliefs about gender and relationships in order to change their behaviour.</p> <p>Do not refer perpetrators to anger management courses and do not recommend couples counselling, mediation or restorative justice. In Newcastle, the only accredited perpetrator programme is the DVPP which is delivered through Barnardo’s (see contacts).</p>

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