

# DOMESTIC ABUSE

## Opening closed doors Professionals Booklet



**Domestic abuse is:** physical, emotional, sexual or economic abuse and is all about control and power over another person aged 16 or over who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member. **The focus of the abuser is power and control over the partner or family member, regardless of gender or sexuality**



**Cambridgeshire  
& Peterborough**  
Domestic Abuse & Sexual  
Violence Partnership



## Types of Abuse:

Intimate Partner abuse (including ex-intimate partner)

Familial abuse

Adult Child to Parent Abuse

Child to Parent Abuse

Stalking & Harassment

Forced Marriage

Honour based violence

Elder Abuse

## Definition of domestic abuse

### Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

- (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- (b) the behaviour is abusive.

**(3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—**

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

**It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.**

### Personally Connected is defined as:

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- (g) they are relatives.



## Signs professionals need to look out for

- Abuser Insisting on being at all appointments with them or speaking for them or sabotaging appointments
- Victim deferring to their partner/ family member to answer any questions
- Victim changing their behaviour in front of their partner or family member
- Victim seeming nervous, as if they are walking on egg-shells
- Victim appearing less confident or frightened – not their usual self
- Receiving texts or calls constantly asking where they are or who they are with
- Cancelling appointments at the last minute, or making excuses not to book follow-ups
- Bruises or injuries with unconvincing explanations
- Changes in appearance, for example, dressing more conservatively or stopping wearing makeup
- Taking more time than usual off sick from work.
- Mentioning that their partner is jealous or possessive
- Abuser cutting victim off from friends and family – trying to isolate them from support services
- Abuser criticising victim or putting them down
- Abuser accessing social media accounts
- Abuser controlling the money or other resources in the relationship.





## What might a person who is being abused be feeling and experiencing?

**The list below is not exhaustive. Domestic Abuse happens to people of all genders and sexual orientation, to people of all ages and from all backgrounds**

- That no one will believe them
- They may not recognise the abuse or think of themselves as victims of abuse
- They might blame themselves for the abuse they are subjected to
- Overwhelmed by fear of what might happen if they try to change the situation, including threats to their own or others lives
- It is common for those subjected to abuse to feel guilt, shame and embarrassment about the situation
- They may want the relationship to continue as they love their partner or family member, and are wanting the abuse to stop
- They may wish to leave but cannot see how they would manage financially
- They may be concerned about there will be significant difficulties with co-parenting after separation
- If this is a same sex relationship they may be concerned the abuser will expose their sexuality to those who don't know about their sexuality
- Someone who is subjected to abuse may feel resigned to it, and feel hopeless that this will not change.
- They may find it incredibly difficult to make decisions about their future due to the control they have been subjected to.

**Anxiety is common, due to the ongoing abuse they have experienced.**



## Professional Guidance:

- Ask everyone, Ask early, and Keep asking – it may take a while to build trust
- Don't ask when the potential perpetrator is in the room or nearby
- If the abuser insists on being with the person, think of how you can ask them to leave – be inventive!
- Don't ask just as a tick box exercise – show genuine interest
- Ask open questions
- Don't side-line domestic abuse as not as important as other issues
- Respond positively – believe them, always
- Respond appropriately – ask what they would like you to do, ensure you know about signposting options. Remember that they are experts in their own lives and will know the consequence of potential actions
- Follow up – don't assume that it has gone away because you asked. – ask each time you meet if it is safe to do so
- Use independent translators if needed – a friend or family member may disclose information that puts the victim at risk



**NICE Domestic Violence and Abuse Multi-Agency Working for NHS staff**  
[www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH50](http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH50)



**Responding Effectively to Violence & Abuse (ReVA) Mental Health Guidance**  
[www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/responding-effectively-to-long-term-consequences-of-violence-and-abuse-\(reva\)/](http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/responding-effectively-to-long-term-consequences-of-violence-and-abuse-(reva)/)



**Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Boards procedures Adults**  
[www.safeguardingscambspeterborough.org.uk/adults-board/cpsabprocedures](http://www.safeguardingscambspeterborough.org.uk/adults-board/cpsabprocedures)



**Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Boards procedures Children**  
[www.safeguardingscambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/procedures](http://www.safeguardingscambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/procedures)

# Assessing Risk

**The DASH RIC (Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Honour-Based Violence Risk Assessment Checklist) is the tool used in Cambridgeshire to assess risk to victims of domestic abuse.**

**The DASH and referral forms can be found at:  
[www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/referral\\_forms/593292](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/referral_forms/593292)**

The purpose is to assess the risk of significant harm, including murder, to the victim (and any children) from the abuser.

Victims may not initially disclose all information but using the DASH RIC can help you to learn more information about what is happening to accurately determine risk.

The DASH consists of 27 questions about the abuse focusing on the most recent/current incidents. The answer options are yes/no.

The DASH can be used by any professional – if you are unsure about how to use it or want a refresher see p14 for training information.

The DASH should be completed with the victim on their own. Where the victim does not speak or understand English, friends and family must not be used to translate.

Be mindful that the victim may find it very hard to speak about some aspects of what is happening to them as you go through the questions. They

may also minimise the abuse.

If there are 14 “ticks” on the DASH, the client is at high risk and can be referred to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service (IDVA).

A score of 17 is very high risk and the case would be taken to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). Consent for the referral to an IDVA and MARAC is required.

**If you don't have consent but are concerned, please contact the duty IDVA on [IDVA.Referrals@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:IDVA.Referrals@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)**

Do not rely solely on the DASH score to determine risk – your own professional judgement is important and there is a section on the form to record your professional assessment of the situation.

For victims aged 60 or over, there are additional and specific risks. These include poor health, carer issues and familial abuse. We have an OP DASH that should be used for people 60+

**The older people's DASH can be found at:  
[www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/referral\\_forms/593292](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/referral_forms/593292)**



## Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service (IDVAS)

**The IDVA service covers Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.**

IDVAs support those being abused, this may include safety planning, assisting with housing and benefits, advocacy, and support with legal process

**IDVAs accept referrals from professionals only.**

**There are specialist IDVAs across the service:**

The **Young People's IDVAs** work with young people aged 13 and over who are experiencing abuse in an intimate relationship.

The **Health IDVAs** accept referrals from any Health professional – you can email them at [idvacamb@nhs.net](mailto:idvacamb@nhs.net)

The **A8 IDVAs** work with victims of all risk levels who originate from Eastern European A8 countries. The DASH Risk Assessment should be used

The **Stalking & Harassment IDVA** works with victims of Stalking

The **Minority Ethnic Background IDVA** works with victims from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds

The **Housing IDVAs** work with housing providers to help secure safe accommodation for survivors.

### What is MARAC?

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a meeting of professionals to agree actions to keep the victim, and any children, safe. MARAC meetings take place 3 times a week online. IDVAS and Police are at all MARAC meetings. Other regular attendees include Children's Social Care, Mental Health, Probation, Education Safeguarding.

If you make a referral to MARAC, you will need to attend the meeting online to present a brief summary of the issues. You will be sent information about how to do this.

**To make a referral to the IDVA Service please visit Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership [www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/referral\\_forms/593292](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/referral_forms/593292)**



## Refuges and Outreach Services

There are 4 women's refuges across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Victims are not usually placed in a refuge in their local area for safety reasons.

A Mobile Advocacy/Outreach Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) operates across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and accepts referrals from both professionals and self-referrals from victims/ survivors.

### DASS offers

- advice and information
- Individual support plans and safety plans
- Support to remain safely in their own home where appropriate or source accommodation suited to their financial means, safety needs and individual requirements,
- Support to get additional home security where required
- Help to assess financial capability / support with accessing benefits
- Support to set up utilities, source & purchase home furnishings / white goods etc.
- Signposting to specialist support (legal/ mental health/ drug & alcohol etc.), advocating where required

**Contact DASS on 0300 373 1073 or email [DASSReferrals@impakt.org.uk](mailto:DASSReferrals@impakt.org.uk)**

### Perpetrator Information

There are no perpetrator programmes in Cambridgeshire other than those provided by the National Probation Service as part of sentencing conditions.

**If someone is concerned that their behaviour may be abusive,  
the Respect Phonenumber can offer guidance and support 0808 802 4040  
or visit [www.respectphoneline.org.uk](http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk)**





## Sexual Violence

CAPRPC - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership work with victims and survivors of sexual violence.

The Independent Sexual Violence Advisory Service (ISVA) offers support to survivors of sexual violence and works across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

**There is also support available for children via the ChISVA.  
More information and referral forms can be found at: [www.caprcp.org.uk](http://www.caprcp.org.uk)**

**For professional enquiries only, please contact 01733 225937  
or email [isva@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk](mailto:isva@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk)**

**The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre supports victims of sexual  
violence and sexual abuse. The service is open 24/7 call on 01480 425003  
or email [theelms.sarc@nhs.net](mailto:theelms.sarc@nhs.net)**





## Protecting children

**All children and young people witnessing violence are victims under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Some may get caught up in physical violence, or be a direct target themselves. All children in a home where there is domestic abuse will be directly impacted by this. .**

Adults often think that children and young people aren't really affected by domestic abuse if they don't see physical violence. This is not true. Children may hear a violent incident from the next room (which can be worse than witnessing it). They might see injuries later, be affected by a parent's unpredictable or controlling behavior, or be neglected as a result of the abuse.

How much a child is affected by living with domestic abuse depends on many factors. This includes their age, the nature of the abuse, what they are aware of, whether they have a 'safe significant adult' who can emotionally protect them, and their own temperament or personality.

The long-term effects on children who have experienced domestic abuse are profound, and can include depression, guilt, self-harm and suicide; misuse of alcohol or drugs; post-traumatic stress and an inability to trust people.

### What can you do?

Embrace Child Victims of Crime support children aged 7-19 (24 with additional needs) who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse. This service is across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

**Referrals from professionals only via <https://embracecvc.org.uk/>**

**If you are concerned about a child's safety, report it to children's social care online at Concerned? | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board ([safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk))**



## Child to Parent Violence and Abuse

**There is currently no legal definition of child to parent violence and abuse. However, it is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic abuse.**

It is important to recognise that CPA is likely to involve a pattern of behaviour.

Abusive behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating language and threats, belittling a parent, damage to property, stealing from a parent and heightened sexualised behaviours as well as physical injuries.

Some families might experience episodes of explosive physical violence from their child with fewer controlling, abusive behaviours.

**Grandparents can also experience the abuse from grandchildren.**

Where a parent or carer is being abused by their child or children it is not an issue of discipline. There may be a number of issues contributing to these harmful behaviours, there may be no identifiable cause. Parents want to protect their children so involving professionals including police is a very hard decision to take.

They will also feel shame and embarrassment that they cannot deal with their child's behaviour.



**There are organisations that can help: Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Child to Parent Violence and Abuse**  
[www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/child\\_to\\_parent\\_violence\\_and\\_abuse/579957](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/web/child_to_parent_violence_and_abuse/579957)



# Safeguarding Adults

**Adults with physical or learning disabilities, older people and those in vulnerable situations may be unable to protect themselves from abuse.**

When working with someone with these additional vulnerabilities you may want to consider the following

## **Personal care may be withheld if the abuser is also a Carer**

For example refusing to provide assistance to use the toilet as a way of controlling the victim.

## **Economic abuse**

The abuser may use their status as carer to spend their partner's money inappropriately and/or without their consent or rely on the victim to fund substance misuse or gambling addiction

## **Psychological (Emotional) abuse**

The abuser may tell their partner that no one else will love them or that if they leave they will have to go into a care home.

The abuser may use children as a hold over the victim – telling them that their children will be taken away if they report the abuse because they will not be able to look after them on their own.

## **Sexual abuse**

The abuser may sexually assault or rape their partner who may not physically be able to stop them or understand what is happening to them.

## **Carers can be victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse**

This could be a long-standing situation or as a result of behaviour changes in their partner due to illness or disability.

**If you think someone is providing assistance with daily living tasks please refer them for a Carer's Assessment <https://www.caringtogether.org>**

## **What can I do?**

Adults with care and support needs, who cannot protect themselves from abuse, may be entitled to Safeguarding Adults support as an Adult at Risk.

**Concerned? | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board ([www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/concerned](http://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/concerned))**

If they don't meet the Adult at Risk criteria, you can still refer to IDVAs with consent or they can self-refer to Outreach



## Safety Planning

**A safety plan encourages people who are suffering from domestic abuse to think about ways to stay safe while still in the relationship, as well as if they decide to leave.**

### This may include:

- planning in advance how to respond in different situations, including crisis situations.
- keeping important and emergency phone numbers to hand, such as for local domestic abuse services, GP, social worker, school, solicitor.
- asking trusted neighbours to call police if they hear signs of an attack.
- rehearsing an escape plan, and
- agreeing a code word that can be used in normal conversation.
- packing an emergency bag and hiding it somewhere safe, such as at a neighbour's house, but avoiding mutual friends.
- Finding a low risk area of the house in case they need to escape but avoiding the kitchen and garage where there may be objects that can be used as weapons.

### Preparing to leave

**Sometimes abusers will increase the violence if they think their victim is planning to leave, and will continue to be abusive after they have left.**

- plan to leave at a time when their abuser is not around.
- try to take everything they need with them, including important documents.
- take their children with them, or they may find it hard to have them living with them in the future.
- tell children's teachers what is happening, as well as who will pick the children up from small amount of money each week

## The LAW

The offence of **coercive or controlling behaviour** came into force in December 2015, carrying a maximum 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both. The offence applies to relationships between intimate partners, former partners who still live together or family members.

**Domestic Violence Protection Orders/Notices (DVPO/N)** enable the police and magistrates to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident.

A perpetrator can be banned with immediate effect from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to consider their options and get the support they need.

Under the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** (also called Clare's Law) an individual can ask police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent past.

**For more info visit [www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse)**

### Training

Domestic Abuse Basic Awareness eLearning  
[www.cambsdasv.org.uk](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk)

The Cambridge & Peterborough Safeguarding Board provides several training courses around domestic abuse

Forced Marriage Awareness elearning (Forced Marriage Unit)  
[www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/resources/awareness-of-forced-marriage-resource-pack/](http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/resources/awareness-of-forced-marriage-resource-pack/)

Online briefings (SWAYS) on Domestic Abuse, Domestic Abuse & Adult Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse & Dementia, Completing a DASH  
[www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/home/availabletraining](http://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/home/availabletraining)

### Sign up to be a DASV Champion

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership holds quarterly training sessions on a variety of topics for DASV Champions.

**If you'd like to sign up to be a DASV Champion please email [DASVChampions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:DASVChampions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)**



## Why do people stay with an abusive person?

The most common question asked of survivors is ‘Why don’t you just leave?’

### There are many reasons why:

**Concerns about children** – the victim could be worried about putting the children in danger if they leave without them. If they leave with them, they need to consider that they might need to change school and lose their friends.

Many survivors still want their children to have a relationship with the abusive parent – they fear they will be accused of turning the children against the abusive parent and the family courts may order them to.

**Finding somewhere safe to go** – if they stay with family members or friends it could put them at risk too if the abuser finds out where they are.

The abuser may go to the home of family or friends and intimidate or cause harm to them in an attempt to find the victim.

**Finances** – They may have to leave their job and their house. Where economic abuse is happening, they

will be worried about how they can manage to pay bills.

**Care** – The victim may rely on their abuser for support with their daily life. This could be things like help with personal care, going shopping, taking medication. If they are alone, who would do this? Would they need to go into a home or have strangers providing their care?

**Social isolation** – The victim may be worried that friends or family members may not believe that the abuse is really happening. They may decide to ‘side’ with the abuser or to stop contact.

**Safety** – Evidence collected over many years shows that the most dangerous time for a victim of domestic abuse is when they leave or if the abuser finds out they are planning to leave. The abuser will feel they have lost control and is likely to increase the abuse – this could mean being more violent, stalking, or murder.

**Domestic Abuse Support Service (outreach)**

0300 373 1073 · email [DASSReferrals@impakt.org.uk](mailto:DASSReferrals@impakt.org.uk)

**Cambridge Women's Aid** 01223 361214

**Peterborough Women's Aid** 01733 894964

**Cambridge & Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership**

[www.caprcp.org.uk](http://www.caprcp.org.uk)

Cambridge Helpline 01223 245888 · Peterborough Helpline 01733 852578

**Sexual Assault Referral Centre**

0800 193 5434 · [www.theelmssarc.org](http://www.theelmssarc.org)

**Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Victims and Witness Hub**

0800 781 6818

[www.cambs.police.uk/information-and-services/Victims-and-Witnesses/Victim-and-Witness-Hub.aspx](http://www.cambs.police.uk/information-and-services/Victims-and-Witnesses/Victim-and-Witness-Hub.aspx)

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

0808 2000 247 · [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

**Men's Advice Line**

0808 801 0327 · [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

**Galop Support for LGBT people**

0800 999 5428 · [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

**Karma Nirvana (HBV/FM)**

0800 5999 247 [www.karmanirvana.org.uk](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk)

**Hourglass (abuse of older people)**

0808 80808141 · [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)

## Further information

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**Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership**

[www.cambsdasv.org.uk](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk)

**Home Office Domestic Abuse pages**

[www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse)

**Cambridgeshire Police**

[www.cambs.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse](http://www.cambs.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse)