

Domestic Abuse Practice Checklist



Best Practice Guidance for Frontline Practitioners



Better for everyone

Domestic Abuse Checklist

As a front line practitioner completing the actions highlighted on this checklist will help enhance your practice when working with anyone subject to Domestic Abuse (DA) and those who are causing harm. These actions will help identify risk and promote safety. Depending on your service area you might carry out all, most or some of these actions:

**Remember to always check immediate safety. If anyone is at risk of immediate Harm call 999.
Remember to always follow your agencies safeguarding procedures.**

Following the receipt of a referral into or contact with your service complete the following:

Service Checks

- ✓ Check with victim/survivor and/or perpetrator if they are working with or have worked with any specialist domestic abuse specialist service eg. Harbour www.myharbour.org.uk/contact-us or HALO www.haloproject.org.uk/contact If yes, make contact with the service for further information.
- ✓ Liaise with police regarding any criminal procedures or involvement with **MATAC (Multi-Agency Task and Coordination)** which aims to reduce offending amongst serial perpetrators of DA, with a focus on reducing the risks posed by perpetrators to improve victim safety, preventing DA offending and improving criminal justice outcomes. Referrals are based on a measure of harm the perpetrator has caused or is likely to cause, whether this is to one or multiple victims. Or involvement with **MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)** which provides a consistent approach to support victims of DA who are identified at risk of harm. It puts in place various plans and actions in relation to the safety and wellbeing of the identified person and if appropriate, their children.
- ✓ Liaise with other services regarding involvement, gathering information in relation to DA e.g. Mental Health Support: TEWV (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation) www.tewv.nhs.uk or Drug and Alcohol Service: CDDARS (County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery): www.codurhamdrugalcoholrecovery.co.uk/

Tools

- ✓ Complete DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Abuse Risk Assessment) with victim/survivor. This must be done in addition to the DARA (Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment). The DARA is a police only risk assessment to be used at the point of incident, it is not suitable for other services.

DASH Risk Assessment

www.durham-scp.org.uk/download/dash-risk-assessment/

- Ask **all questions** and explore positive answers for context.
- 14 or more ticks this is an automatic referral into MARAC, with or without consent.
- For assessments with less than 14 ticks but where professionals have significant concern use professional judgment to make a referral to MARAC.
- The questions highlighted in bold on the DASH are high risk indicators - if you tick any of these refer into MARAC.
- **If you don't gain consent you must inform the victim you are referring into MARAC and consider the consequences of this for the victims safety.**
- Forward MARAC referral form to marac@durham.police.uk
- MARAC telephone contact details: **0191 3752072**
- Include outcome of DASH in case recording.
- Use additional questions to explore Coercive Control and patterns of non-physical abuse

DASH must be reviewed following any further risk indicators and/or ANY change in circumstances that could impact on RISK including closure and de-escalation.

Remember, if you are referring a victim/survivor with care and support needs into MARAC, you should also refer into Adult Social Care. If you are a Local Authority practitioner you have a duty to take this action. To make a referral, contact Social Care Direct on 03000 26 79 79. Similarly, if you are referring a victim/survivor who has children in their care to MARAC, it is best practice to refer into First Contact so further support and/or assessment can be considered. To report concerns for a child make a referral to First Contact www.durham.gov.uk/firstcontact

If the concern is urgent and requires an immediate response telephone First Contact on 03000 26 79 79.

Support

- ✓ Support the victim/survivor to make a Clare's Law Application
www.durham.police.uk/Advice-Centre/Personal-safety/Clares-Law.aspx
- ✓ Consider and seek consent for a referral into a specialist service:
 - Harbour www.myharbour.org.uk/contact-us
 - HALO www.haloproject.org.uk/contact
Tel: 01642 683 045
- ✓ Consider appropriate support for those who are causing harm:
 - If you trained in the Engage Approach consider whether these sessions are appropriate.
 - Consider a referral into Harbour's Preventions Service.
- ✓ Consider victim/survivor's housing needs eg. do they feel safe in their home?
 - Liaise with Domestic Abuse Specialist Housing Team in Housing Solutions
Email: housingsolutions@durham.gov.uk or
Freephone: 0808 196 8406
 - Consider a Remain Safe referral - For further information about the Remain Safe scheme or to request a referral form
Email: hsstrategicsupport@durham.gov.uk
 - Liaise with victim/survivors Housing Provider regarding any additional support they can offer.
 - Refuge Support
www.durham.gov.uk/article/3573/Women-s-refuges
 - Complex Needs and Domestic Abuse Navigator Service (DAN)
www.durhamlocate.org.uk/Services/1134
Tel: 0191 386 2303
Email: Durhamreferrals@foundationuk.org
- ✓ Invite all relevant agencies to any meetings regarding or with the family/individual - including specialist services (Harbour/HALO) and housing.
- ✓ Assessments/reports/danger or wellbeing statements/case notes should reflect the lived experience of victim/survivor (adult) and co-victim/survivor (child).
- ✓ Safety Planning should be done collaboratively with the victim/survivor.

Further Good Practice Guidance when working with children/families and individuals subject to Domestic Abuse

Please Note: The term victim/survivor is used here for adults and children.

As a front line practitioner:

- ✓ Create safe opportunities for victim/survivors away from the perpetrator to talk about or disclose abuse.
- ✓ Show professional curiosity through your questioning.
- ✓ Use consequence thinking and what if questions, for example:
 - What would happen if you didn't answer the phone when the perpetrator rings?
 - What would happen if you decided to meet up with friends?
 - What would happen if you didn't let him in the house when he turns up?
 - What would happen if you didn't let him see the children?
- ✓ Always consider language, use non victim blaming language, language that holds the perpetrator to account and recognises that they are the risk.
- ✓ Consider how, through your practice you are ensuring that the children are being recognised as victims of Domestic Abuse in their own right.
- ✓ Consider how you are partnering with the non-abusive parent and holding the perpetrator to account.
- ✓ If you are safety planning with the victim/survivor:
 - Talk to them about what safety means and looks like to them and what support they need.
 - Ask about the safety strategies they already have in place, acknowledge these and build on them.
 - Make sure safety plans are realistic, workable and co-produced with the victim/survivor.
- ✓ If making a Clare's Law Application:
 - Support the victim/survivor to do this or you can make it on their behalf.
 - Understand and explain the process to the victim/survivor.
 - Ensure you think about safety, the safety around the information being given to the victim/survivor and also safety/support if the information given changes their perspective of the relationship.
- ✓ Consider how you are holding the perpetrator to account?
 - Acknowledging that the perpetrator is making a parenting choice to behave this way.
 - Name them and document the detail their patterns of behaviour.
 - Do not solely focus on the victim/survivor to engage and make changes.
 - The perpetrator should be reflected and included in any work you do with the family.
 - Consider what support the perpetrator has and/or needs? Eg. do they have a network of support? How is this been utilised?

Additional Resources

MARAC Referral Form <https://durham-scp.org.uk/download/marac-referral-form/> or email marac@durham.police.uk

County Durham Children and Families Practice Toolkit provides practitioners with practice guidance on a range of significant issues which are known to have a negative impact on a child's wellbeing. It also provides a range of resources of national and local evidence based intervention. Domestic Abuse is Headline 5 Staying Safe in Relationships
www.durham-scp.org.uk/download/county-durham-children-and-families-practice-toolkit/

The 8 Stage Homicide Timeline is a model which helps identify the patterns of behaviour displayed by perpetrators of domestic abuse and the risks associated with these behaviours. It is helping practitioners transform the way they think about Domestic Homicide: The Homicide Timeline - University of Gloucestershire www.glos.ac.uk/content/the-homicide-timeline/

Durham County Council Domestic Abuse Get Help Page for information on support services available for victims /survivors and those causing harm in County Durham visit www.durham.gov.uk/article/3386/Domestic-abuse-get-help

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted>) provides further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthening measures to tackle abusers. The Act became law in April 2021 and the Government released their draft statutory guidance in July 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance/domestic-abuse-draft-statutory-guidance-framework>