



North Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse *Toolkit*

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Introduction

This toolkit is aimed at multi-agency practitioners working with children, young people, families and vulnerable people who may be or are living with domestic abuse in North Lincolnshire. It is supplementary to the [Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding \(MARS\) Board](#) and [Local Safeguarding Adults Board](#) policies and procedures.

This toolkit outlines:

- the definition of domestic abuse
- signs and indicators of domestic abuse and coercive control
- how professionals can facilitate disclosure through making safe enquiries at the earliest point
- the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment, Honour Based Abuse DASH 'Risk Indicator Checklist' (called the DASH) when assessing a victim's level of risk
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) criteria
- safety planning
- how professionals should respond to an adult or child / young person victim of domestic abuse
- local specialist domestic abuse support services available and how to make a referral
- how to make a referral to statutory services
- how professionals should respond to perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) meeting
- Re:Form non-convicted perpetrator programme
- legal orders
- other help, advice and support agencies
- further reading

It includes practice guidance when working with victims, children and perpetrators. It covers safety planning advice and links to a range of local and national help and support agencies.

It also provides advice on what intervention approaches are most appropriate according to the stage of change the victim may be at. At every stage during the domestic abuse disclosure it is important to inform the victim of your concerns, involve them in the process and explain to them what the next steps may be.

In terms of outcomes, it will help you to enable a disclosure of domestic abuse by safely and confidently asking about domestic abuse and making safe enquiries.

This toolkit can be used to support professionals in their work with children and families and to enhance **reflection** and **supervision** between staff, their peers and managers. It is particularly important for support workers to remain tenacious in their approach on those occasions when they suspect (but do not have direct evidence to support) that there is domestic abuse within the family environment.

The toolkit gives contact details for both local and national support agencies that can be accessed by children and families independently. This is important as research shows that children, young people or adults do not necessarily contact statutory services for help and protection. It can be dependent upon the point that they are at within their journey or wider circumstances as to whether they may tell someone about the domestic abuse and therefore all sources of support should be made available to children, young people and families.

Key Messages

The key messages from the multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse: Prevent, Protect, Repair, (2016) were:

- domestic abuse is persistent and widespread. It is the most common factor in situations where children are at risk of serious harm in this country. It can have a detrimental and long-lasting impact on a child's health, development, ability to learn and well-being.
- there are 6.5 million adults estimated to have directly experienced domestic abuse from the age of 16. If estimates included experience of domestic abuse in childhood, this number would be considerably higher
- domestic abuse is the most commonly cited factor when children are assessed by children's social care services to determine whether they need support. In 2015-16, there were around 222,000 episodes where domestic violence was cited as a factor. This translates into around 28 new episodes every week in every local authority in the country.
- domestic abuse causes long-term suffering to partners/family members and children. More thought needs to be given to how local areas can collectively supply the emotional, psychological and practical support that is needed to help children and victims – or families that have stayed together – get safe, stay safe and move on to reach their full potential
- the pattern of domestic abuse is that it starts small. At this stage, the level of intervention needed to halt it becoming more serious is much less challenging for the perpetrator to engage with and much less costly for the public purse. The best long-term outcome for any child is that the abusive parent changes their behaviour. An abuser who stops abusing can have a safe relationship with that child, but also no longer poses a threat in any other future relationship. Moving children out of harm's way will always be

needed in some cases, but if we have to move children out of harm's way after a serious incident, one or more opportunities to prevent or end abuse may have been missed

Context of this toolkit

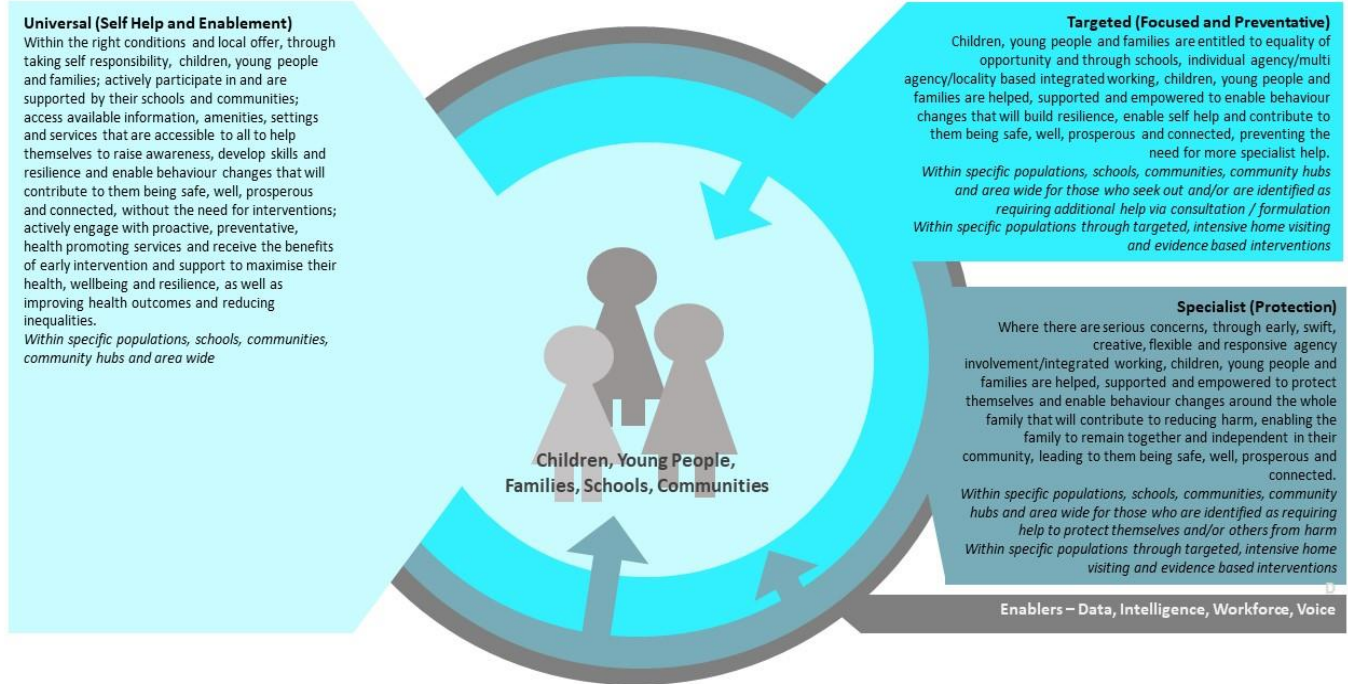
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 places a statutory responsibility on all partner agencies to work together to identify children who need early help to reach their developmental milestones, experience emotional wellbeing, and be safe in their home, school and community.

This toolkit is set within the context of the [Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire Document 2020/24](#). It sets out how services support children, young people and families to participate, find help online and in their networks and communities, to be resilient, stay safe and independent.

As partners take a One Family Approach across North Lincolnshire, we want children, young people and families to be able to build upon their strengths and their resilience to find or be enabled to find solutions when things are not going so well. They should be able to access available information, advice, guidance and be enabled to maximise their potential and enhance their life chances. We want all children and families to have a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity and through our integrated working, we will address inequalities and enable those more in need to achieve positive outcomes. Where there are significant concerns, we want children, young people and families to be able to access swift, creative and flexible help so they can remain independent. We will protect children and young people with an aim to build resilience and help them live within their family, attend their school and be a part of their community.

The North Lincolnshire organisational model places children, young people, and families at the centre of a system that works for all, where the earliest help is to enable families to access information and self-help, in their communities. For those more in need, targeted early help prevents escalation and enables resilience and independence, to achieve positive outcomes. Where required, specialist agency involvement and protection is swift, responsive, and effective, leaving the child's family and network stronger.

The levels of needs are shown below:



Definition of domestic abuse

The terms ‘domestic violence’ and ‘domestic abuse’ are often used interchangeably, but in this guide ‘domestic abuse’ is used as it is thought to be a more inclusive way to describe a range of behaviours, which include violence as well as all other forms of abuse.

Throughout this toolkit, where the term domestic abuse is used, it refers to all forms of domestic abuse that would fall under the statutory definition:

‘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 of 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.

‘Controlling behaviour’ is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent 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 a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

This definition includes so-called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. It is made clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

This guidance is applicable to all victims of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is predominantly perpetrated by men against women, however it can be perpetrated within same sex relationships, by women against men, and by other family members such as older children against their parents or the extended family/community as in cases of honour based abuse.

Domestic abuse impacts negatively on children and/or adults whether they are abused directly by the perpetrator and/or by hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents.

Indicators and signs

The [NICE Domestic abuse quality standard](#) highlights symptoms or conditions which are indicators of possible domestic abuse:

- symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders
- suicidal tendencies or self-harming
- alcohol or other substance misuse
- unexplained chronic gastrointestinal symptoms
- unexplained gynaecological symptoms, including pelvic pain and sexual dysfunction
- adverse reproductive outcomes, including multiple unintended pregnancies or terminations
- delayed pregnancy care, miscarriage, premature labour and stillbirth or concealed pregnancy
- genitourinary symptoms, including frequent bladder or kidney infections
- vaginal bleeding or sexually transmitted infections
- chronic unexplained pain
- traumatic injury, particularly if repeated and with vague or implausible explanations
- problems with the central nervous system – headaches, cognitive problems, hearing loss
- repeated health consultations with no clear diagnosis. The person may describe themselves as 'accident prone' 'silly'
- intrusive 'other person' in consultations, including partner or spouse, parent, grandparent or an adult child (for elder abuse)

Witnessing Domestic Abuse is child abuse. Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse can include:

- aggression or bullying
- anti-social behaviour, like vandalism
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking
- bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
- drug or alcohol use
- eating disorders
- problems in school or trouble learning
- tantrums
- withdrawal

Indicators and signs of coercive control

The types of coercive control being used will differ from victim to victim. Perpetrators will often use a combination of tactics and/or take advantage of any perceived weaknesses or insecurities in order to maximise the victim's distress.

Some examples might include:

- controlling or observing the victim's daily activities, including: making them account for their time; restricting access to money; restricting their movements (including being locked in the property)
- isolating the victim from family and friends; intercepting messages or phone calls
- constant criticism of victim's role as a partner, spouse or parent.
- threats of suicide/homicide/familicide
- preventing the victim from taking medication or accessing care (especially relevant for victims with disabilities)
- using children to control their partner, e.g. threats to take the children away
- extreme dominance; a sense of 'entitlement' to partner or the partner's services, obedience etc - no matter what
- extreme jealousy ("If I can't have you, no one can"), giving the victim cause to believe they will act on this
- threats to damage the property and cause injury to pets
- threats to expose sensitive information (e.g. sexual activity) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet

- involvement of wider family members or the community; crimes in the name of 'honour'
- manipulation of information given to professionals

Young people at risk: online intimate abuse and coercive control

Examples of online abuse include:

- being encouraged to send compromising and/or illegal explicit sexual images of themselves, or to 'talk' in an explicit sexual manner, often with threats or blackmail that this will be sent to others
- multiple mobile phone calls, emails and/or text messages from their partner
- being asked to take photos showing who they are with/where they are.
- being forced to give their partner passwords for social media, email accounts etc
- contact from adults pretending to be younger, which can lead to grooming

Why is online abuse more prevalent among young people?

- widespread use of smart phones means young people are continually accessible
- abusive online communication is often hidden from a caring parent, adult or peer, who is then unable to take protective action
- young people are less inhibited online, including the nature of the images they may send to one another. They may take spontaneous actions which could be used against them as a threat or blackmail

Young people may be reluctant to disclose abuse as it's likely they have built emotional dependency on their partner. They may be feeling embarrassed and ashamed about the highly sexualised nature of their language when communicating online. They might also fear they will be judged as being an active partner in the abusive scenario and therefore partly responsible for what happened to them. Fear of peer group and family responses to what young people have done is another reason why they might be reluctant to talk about what happened.

Enabling disclosure and making safe enquiries

It is important to understand that victims of abuse may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them but having a conversation can help them to

understand their situation better and build up trust. Domestic abuse victims are likely to feel constantly anxious and afraid and that fear will include talking to others about what is happening.

There are many reasons why victims will not, or feel they cannot, make a disclosure (e.g. fear, retaliation, denial, minimisation, embarrassment, being judged). Where there are inequalities (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, sexuality etc.) it can make it harder. It is very important to build up trust to enable a possible future disclosure.

- always be alert to the possibility that an individual is experiencing domestic abuse and be prepared to offer support or signposting e.g. keep the local helpline number in your phone: 0800 197 4787 for The Blue Door
- be aware of the signs that could indicate abuse is taking place. There may not always be physical injury. Look out for other signs such as controlling behaviour (e.g. partner always present during appointments; will not allow the person to talk for themselves; person has limited access to money; person seems isolated from sources of support such as family and friends; person is tense and 'clock-watching' etc.). There may also be environmental factors (e.g. broken furniture, holes in doors/walls, tense atmosphere in the home)
- understand how coercive and controlling behaviours may inhibit people disclosing or revealing the extent of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse causes fear and fear reinforces the victim to act, but often in a way that placate the perpetrator and so the victim may appear uncooperative
- ensure that any discussions with potential victims of abuse are conducted in a safe and confidential environment without disruptions
- ask DIRECT questions about the abuse but only ask when the victim is ON THEIR OWN and in a PRIVATE place. Do not assume someone else will ask at another time as it may be the victim's only opportunity to tell someone about what is happening to them
- if interpreters are needed, ensure professional interpreters are used – NEVER use family members, children or friends where abuse is known or suspected
- keep good records of any discussions and record what is said in the victim's own words
- record any interventions and advice offered
- follow the relevant North Lincolnshire [Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding \(MARS\) Board](#) and [Local Safeguarding Adults Board](#) policies and procedures
- be clear with the victim about confidentiality

Never assume that someone else will act on 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 victims' first and only contact and only chance of them disclosing. Remember that victims can deny abuse is happening and minimise the risk and/or harm for many reasons, but this is often because of the level of coercion and control being placed on them by their abusive partner. Assess their immediate safety by risk assessing and then act accordingly. Discuss the issues with your supervisor or manager if you are unsure about what to do.

Domestic abuse commonly escalates and increases in severity over time. Separation does not ensure safety; it often increases the risk. Also, Department of Health guidance states that in 30% of domestic abuse cases, the abuse either starts or significantly escalates during pregnancy.

If the victim is at the stage of wishing to separate from their abuser, ALWAYS consult with domestic abuse specialist agencies for safety planning advice and support, such as The Blue Door on 0800 197 4787.

Safety and confidentiality

Making safe enquiries is an important domestic abuse intervention even where it does not result in disclosure, and advice, information and support can still be provided.

- always ensure you are alone with the person before enquiring into possible abuse - never ask in front of a partner, friend or child
- make sure you cannot be interrupted and that you – and the person – have sufficient time
- only use professional interpreters
- do not enquire if the person lacks the capacity to consent to the interview
- document the person's response

Asking the question

Although it may be difficult to ask someone if they are suffering domestic abuse it is important to remember that most victims of domestic abuse will not usually disclose it unless they are directly asked. Whilst victims can be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, they are often hoping that someone will ask them the question!

There is no definitive list but having some key questions to help start the conversation when concerns are triggered is helpful. These conversations need to have time and they need to be carried out in privacy and with an official interpreter if the individual does not speak English.

- has anyone ever hit, slapped, restrained or hurt you physically? Or emotionally?
- at times, are you afraid of your partner? Previous partner? (it could be any other significant person in their life, i.e., children, parents or other family members?)
- have you ever felt unsafe in your home situation?
- does your partner* like to boss you around?
- if he/she does not get their own way, how do they act?
- have you been forced to have sex or do sexual things you are uncomfortable doing?
- when arguing with your partner, do they threaten to hurt you or the children, or someone else?
- has your partner ever stopped you from leaving home, visiting family or friends, or going to work or school?
- do you have a say in how to spend money?
- are any of these things going on now?
- how are you feeling?
- is everything alright at home?
- does anyone close to you, e.g. a partner, ex-partner or family member, make you feel frightened?
- does anyone close to you bully you, control you or force you into things?
- has anyone close to you ever hurt you physically for e.g. hit you, pushed you, slapped, choked you or threatened you in any way?
- I noticed some bruising/cuts/scratches/burn marks, how did they happen?
- does your partner ever treat you badly/call you names/push you round/threaten you?
- does your partner get jealous of you seeing friends or talking to other people? If so, what happens?
- you mentioned that your partner uses drugs/alcohol. How do they act when drinking or on drugs
- record and follow up information that has been discussed

Carrying out a Risk Assessment (the DASH) and information sharing

Always use the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment, Honour Based Abuse 'Risk Indicator Checklist' (called the DASH) when assessing a victim's level of risk.

Make sure you familiarise yourself with the questions in the DASH. The questions cover many areas including: the current incident and level of injury, victims level of fear, isolation, mental health, attempts to separate, conflict over child contact, victim's concerns over stalking and harassment, pregnancy/recent birth, escalation of abuse and a series of questions about the perpetrator including: jealous/controlling behaviour, use of weapons, threats to kill, attempts to strangle/choke, sexual abuse, threats from a third party, history of hurting others and mistreatment of animals, financial issues, perpetrator's use of drugs, alcohol, mental health, suicide threats, response to previous bail conditions, criminal record etc.

The purpose of the DASH is to give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims or 16-17 year olds of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meeting in order to manage their risk and develop a safety plan.

Before you begin to ask the questions in the DASH with a victim:

- establish how much time the victim has to talk to you: is it safe to talk now? What are their safe contact details?
- establish the whereabouts of the perpetrator and children
- explain why you are asking these questions and how it is related to the MARAC

While you are asking the questions in the DASH:

- identify early on who the victim is frightened of – ex-partner/partner/family member
- use gender neutral terms such as partner/ex-partner. By creating a safe, accessible environment any LGBTQ+ victims accessing your service will feel more able to disclose both domestic abuse and their sexual orientation or gender identity

Once you have completed the DASH, the number of 'yes' ticks or other criteria will determine whether or not the victim needs to be referred to MARAC.

If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, you should contact North Lincolnshire Children's Services Single Point of Contact.

The DASH can be accessed from the [Community Safety Partnership webpage](#) along with a 5-minute guide on how to complete it. The 5-minute guide is also available in [appendix 1](#) of this toolkit.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Consent

It is important to ensure that the individual who gives consent to the referral fully understands what they are consenting to and the implications of giving their consent. Being open and honest, including being clear about information sharing and respecting their wishes wherever possible will help to maintain trust and confidence. This conversation is an essential part of making sure that the practitioner fully understands the person's needs and agrees how best to meet those needs, including which other agencies may be able to support them.

Consent is **not** needed if the risk has been judged as **high** and/ or what has been disclosed is a safeguarding issue. Obtaining informed and explicit consent for information sharing is very important and ideally is obtained from the start.

Staff referring to MARAC without consent should ensure they discuss this with their manager or safeguarding lead and it is good practice to explain to a victim/survivor that you have made the referral and why you have made this without their consent.

To find out more information see the [Children's MARS Information Sharing Guidance](#), [Safeguarding Adults Board policies and procedures](#), [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(2018\) Department for Education](#)

What is MARAC?

A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a victim focused information sharing and risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where high risk cases are discussed. The role of the MARAC is to

facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. In a single meeting, MARAC combines up to date risk information with a timely assessment of a victim's needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in a domestic abuse case: victim, children and perpetrator.

What are the aims of a MARAC?

- to share information to increase the safety, health and well-being of victims – adults and their children
- to determine whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual or to the general community
- to identify outstanding aspects of risk assessment in regard to the victim, children or perpetrator that need referral or progress
- to pulled together a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm
- to reduce repeat victimisation
- to improve agency accountability and
- Improve support for staff involved in high risk domestic abuse cases

Case meets Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) criteria (people aged 16 or over)

- complete the DASH and if it comes out with 16 ticks or more, or 4 significant concerns (Q1-5) or if there are 3 or more police call outs in 12 months it meets the criteria for a referral to MARAC. Remember, if it does not meet the criteria above but you still think the victim is at serious risk of harm or death, you can still refer to MARAC on professional judgement
- be clear with the victim about confidentiality. You should always try and seek consent to make the referrals but for victims assessed as high-risk victims, you can still refer to MARAC without consent
- complete the MARAC referral form which is available on [The Safer Neighbourhoods website](#)
- forward the MARAC referral form and the completed DASH direct to the MARAC Coordinator at marac@northlincs.gov.uk and inform your line manager or MARAC representative that you have done this. The MARAC Coordinator will then be in contact with you regarding the agenda and your attendance at the MARAC
- within North Lincolnshire The Blue Door provide the high-risk service by employing IDVA's (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors). These workers provide the support and advice for the high-risk victims of

domestic abuse. Their referrals are taken directly from the MARAC referrals made and will then contact the victim after that referral is made within 48 hours. The IDVA will contact the victim

- you are also responsible for submitting a child's safeguarding referral if children are involved in the situation
- MARAC takes place every 3 weeks. They discuss the highest risk victims (those at serious risk of harm or death). Agencies share their information and the victim's views are presented by the IDVA
- a safety/action plan is developed and MARAC partners should tag/flag their own systems to identify the victim is high risk and has been considered at MARAC
- advice is also available from the MARAC Coordinator, Tel: 01724 244657 and the [North Lincolnshire Council website](#)

Case meets safeguarding adults' criteria

The Care Act 2014 cites domestic abuse as a category of abuse which is covered by North Lincolnshire's multi-agency safeguarding adults' policy and procedures.

The Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act (October 2014), states that adult safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding duties apply to adults who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

To make a safeguarding adults' referral or if you have any queries or want advice on whether safeguarding procedures need to be invoked then Tel: 01724 297000 or complete a Safeguarding Concern Form which can be accessed via the [Safeguarding Adults Board website](#).

Case does not meet MARAC or safeguarding adults' criteria

If the risk assessment places the victim at a standard or medium risk level of domestic abuse (less than 16 ticks) and they do not meet the safeguarding adults criteria (as above) then you/your agency still have a duty to take action

and support the victim and it is important that you do not assume someone else will do this.

Short term involvement:

- consider immediate risks and long-term risks
- assess the victims needs and strengths
- review any previous risks/decision making in relation to domestic abuse or safeguarding adults and do not assume it remains the same. Risk can fluctuate and so you must approach risk assessment as an ongoing review of static and dynamic risk factors
- identify the victim's protective factors and how these could be strengthened
- discuss basic safety planning with the alleged victim (see [appendix 2](#))
- ensure they know where to go for help if they need it and refer to specialist support services if needed
- share information with other relevant agencies with the victim's consent (e.g. you may be able to help them access housing options advice, training and employment options, legal advice etc.)
- consider whether the case needs allocating to a longer-term worker to keep them engaged
- ensure records are clear for future workers who may become involved.

Long term involvement:

- consider the immediate and long-term risks. Assess the victims needs and strengths
- victims who successfully make changes in their lives progress along a continuum of predictable stages of change so work with the victim to assess their readiness for change
- refer the victim to a specialist domestic abuse service e.g. The Blue Door 0800 197 4787 if needed
- share information with other relevant agencies with the victim's consent and follow up on any referrals
- risk can fluctuate so you must regularly revisit level of risk to determine whether thresholds are met for a MARAC referral and/or a referral to Children's Services due to concerns about the safety and welfare of a child.
- domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident and usually escalates in frequency and severity over time. Always assess the history and not just each incident in isolation
- continue to work with the victim to assess their needs and to strengthen their protective factors and resilience

Cases where children are involved (including unborn babies)

Children are impacted by domestic abuse through direct abuse, as well as from hearing, witnessing or intervening in incidents. Consideration should be given to the [Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire Document 2020/24](#) in relation to any child in connection with the household, including an unborn baby, who is living with domestic abuse. This provides clarity and guidance to support a consistent understanding and application of thresholds by professionals. The level of children's needs and risks will determine whether the Early Help Assessment framework is used or whether a referral is made to Children's Services due to risk of long-term impairment to children's health or development or where they are at risk of or have suffered significant harm.

It is also important to remember that children and young people who are subject to sexual exploitation or who go missing may do so as a consequence of domestic abuse. Reference should be made to the [Children's MARS policies and procedures for child sexual exploitation and the children who runaway or go missing from home or care protocol](#).

If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person affected by domestic abuse you should contact North Lincolnshire's Children's Services Single Point of Contact on:

- 01724 296500 (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm Friday)
- 08081 689667 (freephone)
- 01724 296555 (answerphone – out of office hours and at weekends)

For more information on making a referral to Children's Services see [Children's MARS multi-agency policy and procedures for assessing need and providing help](#) or speak to your agency's lead for children's safeguarding. If the child is aged 16 or 17 you can also use the Young Person's DASH if they are experiencing relationship abuse, including stalking and 'honour'-based violence. This document also explains the duty to consider safeguarding in relation to young people. If assessed as high risk on the DASH then a referral must be made to MARAC. You should still make a referral to Children's Services even if a referral is made to MARAC for a high risk 16-17 year old.

Guidance when working with perpetrators of domestic abuse

Remember that the majority of abusers will deny or minimise the abuse which they are perpetrating (e.g. by saying that they have only hit their partner once, that the violence was mutual, out of character or blamed on intoxication).

Any form of abuse is unacceptable and perpetrators often try and manipulate professionals as well as using children as a tool through which they can continue to abuse the victim. A perpetrator's need to exercise control over the victim will increase (not decrease) with professional intervention and in addition they may attempt to manipulate child protection proceedings and staff.

Some perpetrators may also try and present themselves as victims. Try and distinguish between self-defence and abuse. If you are unsure in any way, seek advice from a specialist domestic abuse service such as The Blue Door (0800 197 4787) or from the national [RESPECT website](#), as they have tools/advice to help you distinguish who is the perpetrator and who is the victim. There is a male victim screening tool by request from [The Blue Door website](#).

You may have contact with the perpetrator directly or within the context of a family. They may present with a problem such as substance misuse, stress, depression or aggressive or offending behaviour, but without reference to abusive behaviour in the household or relationship.

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 victim (such as ex-partners or extended family members).

Staff should also give consideration to their organisation's 'lone working policy' where a potential risk is identified for staff members, particularly when it is known that domestic abuse is a feature. Information sharing between agencies is especially important when referring to services who undertake home visits to allow for their agencies to risk assess and put steps in place in line with their lone working policy.

RESPECT take calls from men and women who are violent/abusive towards their partners in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. They also provide

advice to frontline staff working with perpetrators; as well as victims wanting to find out what help is available for their abusive partner.

Advice for frontline workers about working with a domestic abuse perpetrator can include:

- Which interventions are safe and most effective
- How domestic abuse perpetrators may manipulate frontline workers in order to exercise power and control over their partners
- Why anger management courses, mediation and couples counselling are not appropriate interventions for domestic abuse perpetrators

Good practice in dealing with perpetrators

- be aware of passing on information to the perpetrator that could have only come from the victim.
- see the victim separately from the perpetrator when discussing abuse
- ensure that separate workers are allocated to the perpetrator, victim and any children
- remember and make clear to the perpetrator, that domestic abuse is about a range of abusive behaviours, not just physical abuse
- address issues of substance misuse, mental ill health, childhood abuse or other stressors separately from the abuse they are perpetrating. These issues must not be used as an excuse
- always ask yourself if any action you take will escalate the risk to the victim
- responsibility for abuse must lie with the perpetrator
- be clear that abuse (in all its forms) is always unacceptable and is always a choice
- be clear about what they alone need to do differently. Help the perpetrator to understand the costs and consequences around not changing
- look for corroboration from other sources other than the victim and use these to challenge the perpetrator, rather than what the victim (or the children) have disclosed – do not challenge the perpetrator with information that could only have come from the victim
- be clear with the perpetrator about the risks that their behaviour poses to the child(ren)
- be clear about the limits to the perpetrator's confidentiality where children are at risk
- do not collude with the perpetrator by allowing them to shape your views of the victims/victim's behaviour

- do not be surprised if an apparently pleasant/compliant individual becomes aggressive when adequately challenged or if attempts to challenge becomes the focus of a complaint
- maintain your own empathy for the victim and their children and understand that the perpetrator needs to develop a greater empathy for them
- undertake risk assessments and put safety systems in place for staff working with perpetrators and ensure you have appropriate and effective supervision
- remember that change is possible, but will require persistence.

Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC)

The MATAC allows statutory and voluntary agencies to give a consistent and structured response to managing the risk posed by serial perpetrators of domestic abuse.

MATAC allows all relevant agencies to share information and decide upon the most appropriate way to reduce or manage the identified risks around domestic abuse. The MATAC model fits the ethos of multi-agency working. No single agency can solve all problems but by sharing information and working together through the MATAC process the outcomes for victims/survivors of domestic abuse incident can be improved.

What are the aims of MATAC?

The overall aim of MATAC is to ensure that agencies work in partnership to engage serial domestic abuse perpetrators in support, take enforcement action where required and to protect vulnerable and intimidated victims and their families through:

- agreement of the risk and response level, in each case and whether, and in what form action may be needed
- sharing of information to increase the safety, health and well-being of victims – adults and their children
- constructing jointly and implementing a risk management plan that provides professional support to those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm
- reducing repeat victimisation
- swiftly and robustly responding where MATAC nominal do not engage;
- frequently reviewing risk to the victim(s) and family
- reviewing the Risk, Frequency, Gravity and Victimisation (RFGV) score at completion of milestones or in the event of disengagement or non-engagement

To make a referral to MATAAC, a referral form can be requested from and returned by secure email to:

SPOCMATAACNLINCS@humberside.pnn.police.uk

Re:Form

Re:Form is a behaviour-change programmes for non-convicted perpetrators who use violence and abuse towards their (ex) partners. They are usually run in small groups; however, in recent years there has been development of intervention work with perpetrators in a 1-2-1 setting.

The primary aim of work with perpetrators is to increase the safety and wellbeing of survivors and their children.

Professionals can refer by completing the [referral form](#) and returning it to referrals@reformda.org. Receipt of the referral will be confirmed within three working days. The individual being referred will then be invited to the first of three assessment appointments whereby they will be assessed for suitability for the programme.

Non-Violent Resistance

The non-violent resistance parenting approach was developed to support adults caring for young people presenting with behaviours that concern such as violence, risk taking, aggression or self-destruction.

Legal Orders

Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN) and Protection Orders (DVPO)

The police and magistrates courts have a responsibility to protect people from Domestic Abuse and help them to stop violence being used against them. Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO) are a way to help stop domestic violence and gives everyone involved a “cooling off” period so that all those involved can seek help.

Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN)

A DVPN is a notice served by the police against an individual (an alleged perpetrator) where the police reasonably believe that the alleged perpetrator

has been violent or has threatened violence against their partner or associated person within their home. The law allows the police to serve a DVPN on this person even if their partner or associated person does not agree to it.

The DVPN lasts for up to 48 hours (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays) after it is served and within that time-period:

- may prohibit the alleged perpetrator from returning to, entering and being within a certain distance of the specified address, or face arrest
- may prohibit the alleged perpetrator from molesting (i.e. threatening or otherwise interfering with) the named individuals living at a specified address, or face arrest
- the DVPN also tells the alleged perpetrator that, within 48 hours of being served with the DVPN, he or she must attend a court hearing so that the court can decide whether to make a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) against him or her
- when the date and time of the court hearing becomes known within the 48-hour period, the police will serve a “Notice of Hearing” on the alleged perpetrator

What happens if the alleged perpetrator lives at the same address?

If the alleged perpetrator lives at the same address specified in the DVPN, then the DVPN requires him/her/them to leave this address with immediate effect.

What happens if the alleged perpetrator breaches the Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN)?

The alleged perpetrator may be arrested, kept in police custody and then brought before a magistrate’s court. Within 24 hours of the arrest, the Magistrates Court will hear an application for a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) and, if proceedings are adjourned, may remand the alleged perpetrator into custody.

Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO)

A Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) is an order applied for by the police and made by the Magistrates Court which imposes certain restrictions on the alleged perpetrator if the court is satisfied that:

- on the balance of probabilities, the alleged perpetrator has been violent or has threatened violence towards a person living at a specified address

- the court believes that the person at the specified address requires the protection of a DVPO. If the Magistrate decides to serve the alleged perpetrator with a DVPO, then the Order will last for between a minimum of 14 days and a maximum of 28 days.

The Order will:

- prohibit the alleged perpetrator from returning to, entering and being within a certain distance of the specified address
- impose any other restriction which the Magistrates feel are necessary to ensure that the alleged perpetrator does not molest individuals within the specified address. The law allows Magistrates to serve a DVPO against the alleged perpetrator even if the person living at the specified address does not consent to it. In addition, the Magistrates will take into account the welfare of any alleged perpetrator aged under 18 living at the specified address

What happens if the alleged perpetrator breaches a DVPO?

If the alleged perpetrator breaches a DVPO, he or she may be arrested, kept in custody and placed before a magistrates' court within 24 hours of arrest. The alleged perpetrator could be fined up to £5000 and/or sent to prison for up to 2 months. If the alleged perpetrator is in police custody for breach of a DVPN or DVPO then he or she will have access to free legal advice and assistance. If they are eligible, legal aid may also be available. If alleged perpetrator wants to be represented at their court hearing, then legal advice and assistance should be sought at the earliest opportunity

Civil Orders

Victims can only apply for these types of orders if they are '**associated**' to their abuser. They are associated to their abuser if they are or were married or in a civil partnership; are or were living together as a couple (including same-sex couples).

An Occupation Order

An order issued by the court which sets out who has the right to stay, return or be excluded from a family home. It is usually a short-term measure which can last for 6 or 12, depending on the circumstances. An order can only be made for a property where both the victim and perpetrator lives, lived, or intended to live in as the family home.

A Non-Molestation Order

Prevents someone from using or threatening violence and also forbids them from intimidating, harassing or pestering the victim or any children, in order to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the victim and their children. Under new legislation, a breach of a non-molestation order is now a criminal offence.

A Prohibited Steps Order

Forbids a parent/carer who has parental responsibility for their child from taking them away from the other parent/carer's care and control without permission. This order is particularly appropriate when the person threatening to take away the child(ren) is ordinarily allowed to have the care and control of them. This does not necessarily prevent all contact between the child(ren) and the respondent if appropriate in the circumstances. These are civil orders and as such will be assessed on the 'balance of probabilities' rather than the criminal legal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. As such, a sworn statement by the applicant is usually considered sufficient evidence.

Forced Married Protection Orders (FMPO)

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 enables the courts to make Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) to prevent or pre-empt forced marriages from occurring and to protect those who have already been forced into marriage. The order can include restrictions or requirements to protect a victim from a spouse, family member or anyone involved and the order can relate to conduct either within or outside of England and Wales.

Applications for a FMPO can be made direct to the court by the person seeking protection and since 2009; Local authorities do not need to seek the court's permission to make an application for an order. Other people can also make applications with the leave of the court. This means that they have the court's permission to make an application. A person or persons found guilty of forcing another in to a marriage can be convicted under the Forced Marriage act, as it is a criminal offence and carries a maximum of 7 years imprisonment

Female Genital Mutilation Prevention Orders (FGMPO)

A Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order (FGMPO) is a civil order used to protect those who are vulnerable to FGM, and prevent it from taking place. It gives the courts flexibility in stipulating conditions around safeguarding the welfare of the protected person. This means a court can put provisions in place to facilitate the safe return of girls who have been taken outside the UK

for the purpose of FGM. Breaching an FGMPO can carry a penalty of up to five years in prison.

Stalking Protection Orders

A Stalking Protection Order (SPO) is a civil order used to protect those who are at risk of and/or experiencing a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive. It can include harassment that amounts to stalking or stalking that causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress in the victim.

The order can be made for a fixed period of at least two years or until a further order is made. Each application is considered based on its own circumstances when deciding the most appropriate conditions to include on the order but can include conditions such as prohibiting access to certain locations, limiting access to digital devices and the internet and engaging in any form of surveillance of the victim. The perpetrator can also be ordered to attend appropriate treatment or intervention programmes or be requested to provide police with access to social media accounts, mobile phones and computer devices.

Help, advice, and support agencies for domestic and sexual abuse

Victims, friends and family

The Blue Door

The Blue Door is a specialist service who provide support to anyone that has experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence in North and North East Lincolnshire and those who have experienced rape and serious sexual offences in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire through a variety of advocacy, outreach workers, groups and programmes.

Office Telephone: 01724 841947

Helpline: 0800 197 47 87

Further information and referral forms are available from [The Blue Door's website](#)

Humberside Police

Humberside Police take domestic violence very seriously. In an emergency always call 999 for immediate help. At other times ring 101 and ask for the crime desk. The Neighbourhood Policing Teams are responsible for providing

support to medium risk victims who report to the police. A Protecting Vulnerable People's (PVP) Unit is staffed by police officers who are specially trained to support victims of domestic and sexual abuse and investigate domestic and sexual abuse offences. They can also give advice about legal options; can take action against an abuser; and give advice on home security and other matters.

Emergency: 999

Non-Emergency: 101

Further information and advice is available on [Humberside Police website](#)

Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme - Clare'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 who is in the relationship with the individual is at risk, the police will consider sharing this information with the person(s) best placed to protect the potential victim.

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.

Who can ask for a disclosure?

- Anyone can make an application about an individual who is in an intimate relationship with another person and where there is a concern that the individual may harm the other person
- Any concerned third party, such as a parent, neighbour or friend can make an application not just the potential victim; however,
- A third party making an application would not necessarily receive the information about the individual concerned. It may be more appropriate for someone else to receive the information such as the victim or another person who is best placed to protect the potential victim.

Visit the [Humberside Police website](#) for further information on Clare's Law.

The White Ribbon campaign

The White Ribbon Campaign aims to prevent Violence Against Women and promote respectful relationships. By wearing the White Ribbon it is taking a stand against Violence Against Women and Girls and be positive role models to other men in the community.

For more information visit the [White Ribbon website](#).

SafeLives

SafeLives, the UK-wide charity that provides research, training and support to frontline domestic abuse services and professionals

Information and guidance for a variety of professionals is available on the [SafeLives website](#).

Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent national charity for people affected by crime. They have staff and volunteers who are specially trained to give information, practical help and emotional support to people who have been threatened or abused. Their services are confidential, free and available to everyone. Victims are usually put in touch with them by the police; however people can also contact the organisation directly, whether or not they want to report the crime to the police and regardless of when it happened.

Free Support Line: 0808 16 89 111

Request support online via the [Victim Support website](#).

Respect UK

The Respect Phonenumber is a confidential helpline, email and webchat service for perpetrators of domestic violence looking for help to stop. Respect provide help to male and female perpetrators, in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Partners or ex-partners of perpetrators, as well as concerned friends and family and Frontline Workers are welcome to get in touch for information, advice and support.

Helpline: 0808 802 4040

Webchat also available via the [Respect website](#).

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline offers confidential, non-judgmental information and expert support. The Helpline can also help callers access refuge accommodation, or other specialist services.

The Helpline is free to call. It uses the services of Language Line to provide access to interpreters for non-English-speaking callers. The Helpline can also access the BT Type Talk Service for deaf or hard-of-hearing callers. The Helpline is open 24 hours a day and every day of the year.

Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Refuge: For Women and Children against Domestic Violence

The [Refuge website](#) offers a variety of resources and guidance for men, women and children in relation to Domestic Abuse.

There are also wide ranging mainstream services who support those affected by domestic abuse including children's services, adults social care, community safety, NHS primary and secondary care services such as GPs, midwives, A&E, community nurses etc., neighbourhood and 24/7 policing, relationship education in schools (at the school's own choice), homelessness services, probation services, treatment services, awareness raising campaigns etc.

Male victims

Respect: Men's Advice Helpline

The men's advice line advisors offer confidential emotional support, practical advice and information

0808 801 0327 (Monday – Friday 10am-5pm)

Webchat and email support is also available through their website

www.mensadvice.org.uk

Survivors UK

Provides information, support and counselling for men who have been raped or sexually abused.

0845 122 1201 (see website for opening hours as they may vary)

www.survivorsuk.org

info@survivorsuk.org

LGBT+

GALOP

Galop provides support to LGBT+ who have experienced sexual violence and/or domestic abuse.

0800 999 5428 The National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

www.galop.org.uk

help@galop.org.uk

Stalking

The National Stalking Helpline

The National Stalking Helpline provides practical guidance and information, support and advice on risk, safety planning and legislation to victims of stalking, their friends, family and professionals working with victims

0808 802 0300

www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service

Paladin provides a trauma-informed advocacy service to assist high risk victims of stalking. Their caseworkers ensure that high risk victims of stalking are supported and that a coordinated community response is developed locally to ensure victims and their children are kept safe

0203 866 4107

www.paladinservice.co.uk

Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse

Karma Nirvana

Karma Nirvana is a national charity supporting victims of honour based abuse and forced marriage. A national helpline is available which offers direct support to victims and professionals.

0800 599 9247

www.karmanirvana.org.uk

The Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage unit provides support to victims as well as expert training and guidance to professionals.

0207 008 0151

www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

The Halo Project

The Halo project is a national charity that supports victims of honour based abuse, forced marriages and female genital mutilation by providing appropriate advice and support to victims.

01642 683045

0808 178 8424 Freephone

www.haloproject.org.uk

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is abuse and it is mandatory to report it. For further advice and guidance on FGM contact Police on 101 or Children's Services on 01724 296500 (Out of hours 01724 296555)

Please also refer to [North Lincolnshire Children's MARS Procedure for Recognising and Responding to FGM](#)

Sexual assault and sexual abuse

Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis England & Wales is the umbrella body for a network of independent Rape Crisis Centres.

All member centres provide specialist support and services for victims and survivors of sexual violence.

A variety of self-help tools and resources are also available on their website.

National Telephone Helpline: 0808 802 9999

Live Chat Helpline available on the [Rape Crisis Website](#).

Housing

North Lincolnshire Women's Refuge

If a victim has to leave their home because of threats, abuse or intimidation you can help them to access safe accommodation such as North Lincolnshire Women's Refuge.

Please contact North Lincolnshire Women's Refuge on 01724 289299 where assessments for refuge accommodation will be completed. Once accepted, we will immediately refer the client to The Blue Door for their support.

Access into the refuge remains for professionals only and is to be arranged in advance with the client between the hours stated below. On occasions where this may not be possible, please contact the office to discuss. Office hours are 9.00am – 4.30pm Monday – Friday (excluding Bank Holidays).

North Lincolnshire Housing Advice Team

It may also be possible for the victim to stay in their own home if it is safe to do so, with additional home security. In terms of homelessness help from the council, if as a homeless person, they cannot stay in their home because of the situation, the council has to provide advice about finding somewhere to live and the victim may be entitled to emergency accommodation pending their enquiries.

They will be asked to provide details of their situation and may be asked for supporting evidence. This evidence could include details and dates of incidents and reports from the police. A victim can take a friend or an advisor with them for support.

The Housing Advice Team can be contacted on 01724 297777

Legal advice

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal service has a guide '[Domestic Violence: A guide to Civil Remedies and Criminal Sanctions 2007](#)' that sets out the civil remedies and criminal sanctions available through the courts to victims of domestic violence and abuse. It is intended for statutory and voluntary service providers who deal with the impact of domestic abuse.

There is a range of civil remedies available to victims of domestic abuse. Victims can choose to go down a family law route which remains private and confidential (especially if the victim does not want to report the abuse to the police).

Drug and alcohol services

We Are With You

Substance Misuse (alcohol and drugs) services are provided through an integrated service to all adults (18 and over) who live in North Lincolnshire. Individuals can refer themselves to the service, be referred by their GP or other professional, or be referred by a family member or carer.

We Are With You also provide free confidential support with alcohol, drugs both through online webchat

0808 143 0640

www.wearewithyou.org.uk

Drug Education Liaison and Treatment Agency (DELTA)

DELTA is North Lincolnshire's under 19s drug and alcohol service which offers free help and support to young people worried about their own or someone else's drug/alcohol use.

01724 298528 - phone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm and on Fridays from 9am to 4.30pm. There is an answerphone after these hours.

Mental health services

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

North Lincolnshire Improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) Adult Mental Health Service. IAPT is an open access self-referral service and therefore can be accessed by anyone affected by domestic abuse, however intervention would only be provided for those experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems. The IAPT service refers severe cases to secondary mental health care services.

For calls of an urgent nature contact North Lincolnshire Adult Mental Health Service – Access Team including the crisis resolution service on 01724 382015

The North Lincolnshire Talking Shop, 19 Market Hill, Scunthorpe is available for walk in referrals and brief consultation/advice.

For telephone referrals to The Talking Shop and IAPT services call 01724 867297

North Lincolnshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

The North Lincolnshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) service provides a range of comprehensive, multidisciplinary community mental health services for children and young people with mental health needs, and support for their parents and carers. This is delivered through integrated, targeted and specialist teams. These mental health needs include mild to moderate mental health problems as well as severe or complex mental health problems or disorders.

Referral to the North Lincolnshire CAMHS service can be made by a professional such as GP, teacher or social worker.

The CAMHS team can be contacted on 01724 408460 during office hours.

For mental health crisis access to support contact the North Lincolnshire Adult Mental Health Service – Access Team including the crisis resolution service on 01724 382015

Support for children and young people

North Lincolnshire Children's Services

If a child is at risk of significant harm, North Lincolnshire Children's Services should be contacted on the Single Point of Contact on 01724 296500 or out of office hours on 01724 296555.

The Haven

The Haven provides a range of therapeutic support and interventions to children who have experienced trauma as a result of all types of abuse and harm. One to one therapeutic interventions for children and young people and support sessions for parents are available. Professionals may contact the service through the [Barnardo's website](#).

Childline

The trained helpline counsellors at Childline are there to talk through any worries with children. They will not judge and are not easily shocked. Instead, they listen to children and help them talk through their options.

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Childline has been reviewed and recommended by North Lincolnshire Youth Council - 'The format is very simple and I love the way you can filter your results to find specific things. I think it's great that you can submit a problem anonymously and people can respond and help. They have lots of links within those replies to their pages with lots of useful information'

NSPCC

You can contact the NSPCC if you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child. Their trained helpline counsellors are ready to offer expert help, advice and support 24/7.

They can also take action on your behalf if you are concerned that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse.

It's free to contact them and you do not have to say who you are.

0808 800 5000 24 hours a day

Text: 88858

help@nspcc.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

The Hideout

The Hideout provides information to children and young people to understand domestic abuse and how to take positive action if it happening to them

www.thehideout.org.uk

The Hideout has been reviewed and recommended by North Lincolnshire Youth Council – ‘The web site is attractive, interactive and information is very easy to follow and well laid out. I also feel the hide this page link is a fantastic Idea’

What’s OK at Home?

Previously called ‘Bursting the Bubble’, this organisation creates websites, videos, apps, brochures, posters and other resources to help young people understand what family violence is, why it happens, how to recognise it and how to help others who are experiencing it.

www.woah.org.au

Bursting the Bubble has been reviewed and recommended by North Lincolnshire Youth Council- ‘The information is good based on real life scenarios helping the individual take some control, and connecting making them feel like they are not alone’

Hidden Hurt

Hidden Hurt aims to help children and young people understand the dynamics of an abusive relationship, the different types of abuse and the effect on both direct and indirect victims. A number of resources and personal stories are available to read on their website.

www.hiddenhurt.co.uk

Hidden Hurt has been reviewed and recommended by North Lincolnshire Youth Council – ‘The information is good in relation to knowing you’re not alone and the feelings and experiences help you to relate with what you could also be experiencing giving you the confidence to seek help and support’

Online policies, referral forms, procedures, training and guidance

Safeguarding

- [Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire Document 2020/24](#)
- [Children's MARS Policy and Procedures Assessing Need and Providing Help](#)
- [Children's MARS Policy Statement – Children living in households where there is Domestic Abuse](#)
- [Children's MARS guidance for identifying and responding to concerns about FGM](#)
- [Children's MARS Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage protocol](#)

DASH

- [DASH Risk Indicator Checklist](#)

MARAC

- [MARAC Referral form](#)
- [MARAC Information and procedures](#)

Safety Planning


- [Women's Aid: Making a safety plan](#)

Domestic Abuse Training, E-Learning and Other Useful Documents

- [The Blue Door Domestic Abuse Training Programme](#)
- [Disrespect Nobody website](#)
- [Disrespect Nobody teaching resources on preventing teenage relationship abuse](#)
- [Respect Phonenumber resource bank for frontline practitioners working with perpetrators of domestic abuse](#)
- [Kings College London framework for working safely and effectively with men who perpetrate intimate partner violence in substance use treatment settings](#)

Further reading

- [Domestic Abuse Bill \(2020\) Home Office](#)
- [Captive and Controlled: Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas \(2019\) National Rural Crime Network](#)
- ["Are they shouting because of me?" Voices of Children Living in Households with Domestic Abuse, Parental Substance Misuse and Mental Health Issues \(2018\) The Children's Commissioner](#)

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- [The Government Response to the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill: First Report of Session 2017-2019 \(2019\) Home Office](#)
 - [“There’s a reason we’re in trouble” Domestic Abuse as a driver to Women’s Offending \(2017\) The Prison Reform Trust](#)

Appendix 1: 5 Minute Guide to the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist



5 Minute Guide **DASH Risk Indicator Checklist**

*Domestic Abuse, Stalking,
Harassment and Honour Based
Violence*

Introduction

This 5 minute guide aims to provide a brief overview of the purpose of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Indicator Checklist and provides guidance on how to complete the assessment with a victim of domestic abuse.

What is the DASH for?

The purpose of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist is to give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners working with victims of domestic abuse, aged 16 and above, in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meeting in order to manage their risk. The MARAC is a meeting held every three weeks where professionals discuss the highest risk cases of domestic abuse to implement safeguarding action plans. The frequency of MARAC meetings may be subject to change.

You should always consider whether you need to make a referral or share information about a case where domestic abuse has been disclosed and there are children in the household. If you are concerned about risk to a child, or children, you should share information and/or make a referral to Children's Services Single Point of Contact (SPOC) on 01724 296500 and to the Young Person's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA).

Domestic abuse can take many forms. It is often perpetrated by men towards women in an intimate relationship such as boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife. The DASH Risk Indicator Checklist can also be used for female against male; lesbian, gay or bisexual relationships and for situations of 'honour'-based or family abuse. Domestic abuse can include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse, as well as stalking and harassment. It has been recognised that coercive control often lies at the core of domestic abuse and a new offence has been created in order to disrupt this behaviour. Individuals might be experiencing one or all types of abuse; each situation is unique. It is the combination of behaviours that can be so intimidating. It can occur both during a relationship or after it has ended.

Further information and guidance around domestic abuse and coercive control, the Domestic Abuse Toolkit for professionals is available on the [Children's MARS website](#).

Why use the DASH?

The model has been built on evidence based good practice, drawn from extensive research by leading academics in the field of domestic homicides, 'near misses' and lower level incidents. Using DASH will improve decisions

being made and increase the likelihood of the victim being responded to appropriately, and therefore, of correctly addressing the risks they face. The DASH Risk Indicator Checklist has also given practitioners common criteria and a common language for risk. If victims and/or perpetrators move, which they often do, they can be easily referred to another area which will subsequently have a similar understanding of risk. Throughout the checklist certain questions have been highlighted in red text and made bold, these questions hold significant weight when answered 'yes'. A positive answer to these questions gives a strong indication of high risk and should be considered when using professional judgement (described later in the guide).

How to use the DASH?

It is very important that all questions on the checklist have been asked and full answers recorded. You need to consider: who is at risk; the context of the behaviour; how the risk factors interact with each other; the victim's perception of risk. Before beginning the checklist, it would be useful to know how much time the victim has to talk to you and whether it is safe for them to do so; introduce the concept of risk to the victim and explain why you are asking these questions. It is important to note that during completion of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist that victims may not only be disclosing domestic abuse but other personal details such as their sexual orientation therefore creating a safe environment and using gender neutral terms is essential.

It is important to explain the outcome of the assessment once you have finished asking all questions, this may mean having to tell a victim you have assessed them as high risk, which can be frightening or overwhelming for them to hear. State your exact concerns by using the answers they gave you during the assessment and explain the ways in which you are able to help them to become safe. It would be useful to familiarise yourself with the checklist before use so that you are confident you understand the implication of each question, as well as knowing what is available for victims of domestic abuse locally and what actions you can take to protect them.

When do I make a referral to MARAC?

Referrals to MARAC are based on three criteria:

Professional judgement: completing the checklist will inform your professional judgement. There may be some things that are going on that are not visible in the checklist as the checklist cannot cover every single behaviour. There may also be situations where a victim either refuses to answer questions or answers only a few but the professional may still conclude that they are at high risk of harm.

Visible high risk: there will be instances where a victim is prepared to answer the full range of questions and a threshold of 16 ticks or above is the agreed criteria in North Lincolnshire for referring a case to a MARAC. Inevitably, there will be cases that fall below the actuarial threshold but you may have genuine concerns about a victim. In these cases, you have full discretion to use your professional judgement to refer them into the meeting. The actuarial threshold should be used more as a safety net than anything else.

Number of incidents: there may be instances of escalation of abuse/violence where there are numerous 'smaller' incidents occurring more frequently, such as an increase from once a month to weekly or even daily. Escalation may also mean an increase in the severity of abuse taking place, such as a move from verbal abuse to physical violence. Both of these situations can be a catalyst to taking a case to MARAC, sharing information and getting a better picture of the true situation.

In practice, the more experienced domestic abuse practitioners will tend to rely on professional judgement, whilst less experienced practitioners will use the actuarial threshold as a safety net. Ideally, we want to get to a position where professionals are familiar with the model and therefore are more reliant on their professional judgement. Training is crucial to build the knowledge to understand what the risk factors are and how they co-relate. The context and detail of the behaviour is crucial as well as what the answers to the questions mean. In North Lincolnshire, training on completing a DASH Risk Indicator Checklist will be incorporated into MARAC Awareness training and all levels of Domestic Abuse training. For professionals who prefer to gain a deeper understanding of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist, training sessions will continue to be available through The Blue Door.


Further information

Domestic Abuse Guidance

- [Domestic Abuse toolkit for professionals](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Bill Statutory Guidance \(2020\) Home Office](#)

Local Policies and Procedures

- [Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire Document 2020/24](#)
- [Children's MARS Policy and Procedures Assessing Need and Providing Help](#)
- [Children's MARS Policy Statement – Children living in households where there is Domestic Abuse](#)

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- [Children's MARS guidance for identifying and responding to concerns about FGM](#)
 - [Children's MARS Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage protocol](#)

DASH Risk Indicator Checklist

- [DASH Risk Indicator Checklist](#)

MARAC

- [MARAC Referral form](#)
- [MARAC Information and procedures](#)

Appendix 2: Staying safe – basic safety planning advice

A safety plan is about allowing the victim to identify the options available to them within the context of their current circumstances not about you telling them what to do.

Some questions you can ask victims when helping them draw up a safety plan:

- who can you tell about the domestic abuse who will not tell your partner/ex-partner?
- what do you currently do to keep you and your children safe? What works best?
- do you have important phone numbers available e.g. family, friends, refuges, police?
- when you suspect they are going to be violent or abusive and can leave, where could you go?
- can you keep a bag of spare clothes and things for the children (e.g. favourite toy, medicines, small treasured items, jewellery, spare keys, photo of the abuser etc.) at a friend's or family member's house?
- are you able to keep copies of important papers with anyone else? E.g. passport, birth certificates (yours and children's), marriage certificate, benefits book, tenancy agreement, bank details, any proof of abuse, address book)
- what part of the house do you feel safest in?
- is there somewhere for your children to go when your partner is being violent and abusive?
- can you work out a signal to alert others you need help (e.g. send a blank text, have a code word?)
- can you try and keep in contact with friends or family? Are you able to carry on working or studying?


Suggestions for increasing safety whilst in the relationship - for the victim's safety plan

- I will have important numbers available
- I will make sure my children (if old enough) know how to contact emergency services or family/friends for help
- I can tell _____ and _____ about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from the home.
- If I leave my home, I can go to (list three places):

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- I can try and save some money and have a safe hiding place for it if I need to get away
 - I will keep a list of important phone numbers in the hiding place with my money
 - I can leave extra money, phone numbers, spare car keys, clothes and copies of documents with _____
 - When I leave I will bring _____
 - To ensure my safety and independence, I can: keep change for phone calls with me at all times; open my own savings account; rehearse my escape route with a support person; and review safety plan on _____ (date).
 - When the violence or abuse begins I know which areas are the safest in the house? These are _____
 - If I need medical treatment I can tell my GP or hospital how my injuries were caused, and ask to have them noted in writing and photographed if possible so I have evidence if I need it in the future.

Suggestions for increasing safety for the survivor – when the relationship is over

- I can: change the locks; install an security system, alarm, smoke detectors, door/window locks and outside lightening (help may be available via the police)
- I will inform _____ and _____ that my partner no longer lives with me and ask them to call the police if s/he is observed near my home or my children
- I will tell people who take care of my children the names of those who have permission to pick them up. The people who have permission are: _____, _____ and _____
- I will put important phone numbers in my phone (e.g. The Blue Door 0800 197 4787)
- When I make phone calls I can use 141 so my number cannot be easily traced
- I will get an answer machine and screen calls. I will keep any abusive messages (e.g. on my phone/social media) to show my solicitor/police
- I can tell _____ at work about my situation and ask _____ to screen my calls
- I can avoid certain shops, banks and _____ that I used when living with my abusive partner.

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- I will take to The Blue Door Tel: 0800 197 4787 as I know I can talk to them in confidence as they can provide a listening ear, advice, a safe place to stay, help me attend a support group
 - I can get a non-molestation or a restraining order
 - At any stage I can call _____ for support. I can also call:

Police _____

Friends _____

Emergency accommodation _____

The Blue Door 0800 197 4787

Children's Services 01724 296500

Adult Services 01724 297000