

Derbyshire Domestic Abuse County Forum
Domestic Abuse Protocol

Introduction

This protocol has been adopted by all the agencies represented on the Derbyshire County Forum and members of the constituent local forums:

- **It aims to ensure that a helpful and consistent response to domestic abuse is provided across Derbyshire by all staff and volunteers working for these agencies**
- It should be used in conjunction with each agency's policy and procedures regarding domestic abuse. It fits with the remit and responsibility of the County Forum and its strategy.
- This protocol will be operative from 1/4/04 and becomes out of date on 31/4/05 and should be replaced with the new edition from www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk
- **Each member of staff or volunteer has a responsibility to respond if they become concerned that domestic abuse is an issue for someone they come into contact with as part of their work.**
- Each member of staff or volunteer should be provided with the appropriate level of briefing and/or training to ensure that they can successfully and safely act.
- Each member of staff or volunteer should be able to name the manager or colleague who they should refer to in operating this protocol and their own agencies policy and procedures.
- Further information on help available for all experiencing, surviving and perpetrating abuse is available at www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk. The named manager or colleague should be readily able to access information from this site which will include a information leaflet that can be downloaded

Definition

The County Forum defines abuse as: Emotional, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse by the partner, ex partner, family member or someone with whom there has been a relationship.

Domestic abuse includes any form of physical sexual or emotional abuse between people in a close relationship. It can take a number of forms such as physical assault, sexual abuse, rape, threats and intimidation. It may be accompanied by other kinds of intimidation such as degradation, mental and verbal abuse humiliation, deprivation, systematic criticism and belittling. In the overwhelming majority of instances the abuser is male and the victim is female although this is not always the case. The abuse is not always between partners or former partners but may occur across generations, e.g. son to mother. It also occurs in same sex relationships.

Values and Principles adopted by Derbyshire County Forum

The following principles should be understood and inform your operation of this protocol (although these values and principles refer to the domestic abuse of women, the principles equally apply if the word "men" is substituted).

- (1) Domestic violence is a crime and should be viewed as seriously as similar crimes in other settings.
- (2) Domestic abuse is totally unacceptable in our society and by informing and changing public opinion we may positively influence the behaviour and attitudes of individuals.
- (3) Women who disclose domestic abuse should be listened to, taken seriously and given an appropriate response.
- (4) Women should be offered confidentiality within clearly defined limits.
- (5) Women who disclose abuse should have equal access to support and services regardless of age, nationality, race, sexuality, disability, religion and the legal status of their relationship.
- (6) Women who decide to stay in an abusive relationship should be offered as much help and support as they need.
- (7) The abused woman's viewpoint is central in the provision of services and support.
- (8) Women should be assisted to regain control of their own lives.
- (9) The rights of children affected by domestic abuse should be recognised and addressed.
- (10) In working with perpetrators or with the abused person, the primary concern must be the safety of survivors.

- (11) Assistance should be available to perpetrators to change harmful behaviours.

Responding to the Suspicion or Disclosure of Abuse

If you **suspect** abuse, but there is no disclosure, then decide if you are the appropriate person in your organisation to inquire further. If not then report your concern to the identified colleague or manager.

Where indicated, use the appropriate procedures for child protection, children in need or protection of vulnerable adults.

If you are the appropriate person to make an enquiry where abuse is suspected follow the detailed procedures for your own agency. In all cases:

- Offer a gender appropriate person and a safe and private place for further discussion. Do not ask about domestic violence in the presence of her partner or other family members. Provide a trained interpreter if necessary. Do not suggest using family or friends to interpret for you.

If abuse is **disclosed** to you, however partially, then:

- If you are not the appropriate person to assist further offer the assistance of the appropriate colleague or manager. If the adult or child asks that no further action is taken, you will need to explain your own need to discuss this matter with the identified colleague or manager.
- Where indicated use the appropriate procedures for child protection, children in need or protection of vulnerable adults.
- If you are the appropriate person to make an enquiry where abuse is suspected follow the detailed procedures for your own agency.

Where appropriate:

- Provide emergency assistance and/or contact emergency services to ensure the immediate health and safety of the person concerned, yourself and others.
- **Listen seriously to what the adult or child wants to happen as a result of talking to you. With permission and where appropriate to the disclosure, check out these immediate safety issues:**

Does the person at risk have a safe means of contacting emergency services?

Does the person at risk need to move to a place of safety?

If not does the person at risk need to make her house more secure?

Does the person at risk have emergency contact numbers?

Can the person at risk leave some emergency money, keys, and important documents with anyone safe in case she needs to leave in an emergency?

If the person at risk has children at school, does the school know of his/her circumstances?

Is there someone the person at risk can talk to and trust?

If the person at risk has pets, can they be left with someone?

- Explain that no information will be provided about what has been discussed to family, friends or alleged perpetrator.
- In every case either the Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Information Leaflet should be offered, which contains details of specialist support and housing services on offer, or the appropriate information from it.
- Be clear about what you will do and who, if any one, you will be contacting on behalf of the child or adult.
- Be clear what the contact arrangements will be if further contact with you is requested



- Home Office statistics show that domestic violence accounts for a quarter of all violent crime.
- Domestic violence claims 150 lives every year
- There are more repeat victims of domestic violence than any other crime
- Victims suffer, on average, 35 assaults before they call the police
- In South Derbyshire 240 incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police throughout 2003/04
- Yet British Crime Survey claims only 31% of incidents are reported
- 4 out of 5 victims are women

Derbyshire Domestic Abuse County Forum **Domestic Abuse Protocol**

Definition,

"emotional, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse by the partner, ex-partner, family member or someone with whom there has been a relationship."

Why have a county-wide protocol?

To ensure that a helpful and consistent response to domestic abuse is provided across Derbyshire by all staff and volunteers working for agencies.

What can we do?

If someone discloses you can make the call for them or give them the right telephone numbers to get help.

If you suspect that someone is a victim of domestic abuse you can report your concerns to the Community Safety Officer.

Why us?

Many people disclose violence to a professional that they feel they can trust. This is very often not a professional who is employed to deal with domestic violence.

If we only ever help one person we will have prevented further acts of violence and possibly helped save that person's life.



Reducing Crime in our Community

South Derbyshire Crime and Disorder Partnership

Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 17

Each department of the local authority must consider the impact of its day to day functions on crime and disorder.

Within our everyday duties we must do all that we reasonably can to make South Derbyshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

REPORTING NUMBERS

In the event of an emergency always call 999

Police	0845 123 3333
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Social Services	238000
Housing Department	595778
Environmental Health	221000

ADVICE LINES

Dom. Abuse Nat. Help Line	0800 2000 247
Local – Next Step	229854

Drugs issues – Talk to Frank	0800 776600
Local – Addaction	551489
Alcoholics Anonymous	0115 941 7100

Citizens Advice Bureau	210107
CVS	550163
Homelessness Officer	595804

Call Derbyshire	08456 058058
Out of hours	01773 728555

Community Safety Officer	595858
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