

**Domestic Abuse Quick Guide for**

**Social Workers and Practitioners in Adult Social Care and Support**

**What is domestic abuse?**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as:

*‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.’*

Domestic abuse includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse, as well as so called ‘honour’-based violence and forced marriage.

* 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.

Having a long-term illness or disability, including mental health problems, increases a person’s risk of experiencing domestic violence or abuse. The law emphasis freedom from abuse as essential to a person’s wellbeing as highlighted in the Care Act 2014 and references the harm to children who experience domestic abuse in the Children’s Act 2004.

Domestic Abuse is a recognised type of abuse in the London Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure 2019, and this should be followed by Adult Social Workers and Practitioners in Adult Social Care and Support. It is available here on TRI.X: [Procedures by Team (proceduresonline.com)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/lbbd/adults/teams.html)**.**

Social Workers and other practitioners should regularly attend training on how to support adults experiencing domestic abuse to keep their knowledge current, especially as Barking and Dagenham has the highest prevalence of domestic abuse per capita in London (2022)**.**

Remember, believe the person who tells you they are a victim of domestic abuse, act on what they say and don't keep it to yourself. The victim and their family needs you to get them help. This may be the first and only chance to make them safe. This guidance note will help you to do just that.

**Supporting practitioners to tackle domestic abuse in Barking and Dagenham**

All information relating to domestic abuse and our services to tackle them are available here:

* <https://lbbd.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/SitePages/Domestic-Abuse.aspx>
* <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/adult-health-and-social-care/health-and-wellbeing/domestic-abuse>

At both of these web locations, professionals can also find an at a glance guide to domestic abuse, and a detailed toolkit that will provide you with all information, services and referral forms you might need to the local commissioned services offer.

The detailed guide can be found here: [PRACTITIONERS GUIDANCE - LONG (sharepoint.com)](https://lbbd.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/Shared%20Documents/Domestic%20Abuse/221202%20PRACTITIONERS%20GUIDANCE%20-%20LONG.pdf). Please always refer to this for residents living in Barking and Dagenham.

**Support available to adults experiencing domestic abuse**

* **Refuge** is the contracted **Independent** **Domestic Abuse Support Service** in Barking and Dagenham and they have specialist advocates, Independent Gender-based Violence Advocates (or IGVAs for short) who work with adults. Refuge provides support to those experiencing domestic abuse in order to make them safe. Refuge also has a specialist Vulnerable Adults IGVA, who may be the best option for some clients professionals are working with. You can find details on how to refer in the webpages and the toolkit referenced above.
* Adults experiencing domestic abuse can contact the **Police.** This is important, especially when someone is in immediate danger. The Police can support with a range of judicial outcomes, for example Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders. These may restrict perpetrators from entering or being in the adult’s home (even if it is the perpetrator’s home too) or stop the perpetrator from making the adult leave their home.
* There are other legal options to explore and usually these are usually applied for by the adult, who needs mental capacity to do so. If they lack mental capacity to do so, a referral should be made to an adult social worker within the local authority to support them with exploring an injuction on their behalf, or other avenues that the legal service may support to point out. If this is to happen the social worker or practitioner needs agreement from their Head of Service to support this level of intervention.
* **Cranstoun** are our provider of domestic abuse perpetrator behaviour change interventions. Adults perpetrating domestic abuse can be referred to Cranstoun where there is not an ongoing judicial disposal. You can find details on how to refer in the webpages and the toolkit referenced above.
* Where the adult has **Care and Support Needs** please refer them through as a **Safeguarding Adults Concern to Community Solutions**, **Adult Intake Team** [Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (lbbd.gov.uk)](https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults-at-risk-of-abuse-or-neglect). They can arrange the initial response to confirm the Care and Support Needs of the adult and if need be will then refer them to one of the three Adult Social Care Services: Integrated Care, Disability Services or Mental Health Social Care.
* If a **child is at risk** please notify Children and Young People Services in LBBD [What to do if you have concerns about a child’s welfare | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (lbbd.gov.uk)](https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/safeguarding-risk-children/what-do-if-you-have-concerns-about)

**Assessing and managing risk**

Complete a **DASH RIC Assessment** [Dash for IDVAs FINAL\_0.pdf (safelives.org.uk)](https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Dash%20for%20IDVAs%20FINAL_0.pdf) with the adult ideally, if not without them. The risk assessment tool and guidance for completing it are available in the toolkit referenced above.

On completing the risk assessment, depending on the outcome the following actions should be undertaken:

Immediate Risk

* Don’t delay calling **999** if the adult is at immediate or urgent risk of abuse that requires the Police to respond
* If the adult has Care and Support Needs, follow points a) to e) in the next section

High Risk

* Refer the client to the **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference** (MARAC) – the referral information can be found on the webpages referenced above (please note consent should be requested, but it is not required for a case to be referred). Professionals may wish to speak to the Adult Social Care MARAC SPOC if there are any questions on what is expected from a referee at the MARAC. You must fulfil any actions allocated to you at the MARAC.
* If the adult has Care and Support Needs, follow points a) to e) in the next section

Medium or Standard Risk

* Discuss the situation with the adult and why you are worried by highlighting the risks to them. Work with them to complete a basic safety plan and secure consent for a referral to Refuge. Information on how to have the conversation, how to complete a safety plan and how to make referrals are available in the toolkit referenced above.
* If the adult has Care and Support Needs, follow points a) to e) in the next section

**Adults with care and support needs**

1. Where the adult is at risk of domestic abuse, is 18 years and has a care and support need the three-stage test is met for Safeguarding Adults, then ensure the Adult is supported by means of the Care Act 2014, Section 42. The adult should be supported to ideally have their wellbeing improved by reducing or stopping the risks of abuse. Always follow the Principles of Safeguarding Adults in the Care Act 2014, for best practice and the London Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures.
2. If the adult has mental capacity get their views on the risk and let them decide how they may wish to safeguard themselves. You can work on a safety plan together.
3. If they don’t have mental capacity complete or arrange someone who is concerned with their welfare to carry out a mental capacity assessment and consult with them, their friends and family regarding the risks.
4. As the allocated social worker, practitioner or Enquiry Officer, discuss the matters with the Safeguarding Adults Manager for their input to support the risk assessment through a process of Safeguarding the Adult, through Section 42 of the Care Act 2014.
5. Do carry out home visits where it is safe to do so, or if not possible try to see the adult in an environment that is convenient for them. Only meet online if this is safe for the adult and in keeping with the appropriate management of risk in heir circumstances. Use your professional curiosity and professional judgement.
6. If it is not possible to meet the person at home, because it will increase the risks to them, offer the person an opportunity of a safe visit e.g. in a GP Surgery or health centre. Don’t forget about our community and family hubs – which are a great location.
7. Engage Refuge, our local domestic abuse services, and gain specialist advice and support for the adult. Remember you can call them as a professional for advice and guidance, which may be helpful when your client does not consent to a referral to Refuge or any other commissioned support service. If you are working with a perpetrator, remember you can make a referral to Cranstoun.
8. Ensure you discuss domestic abuse cases very regularly in professional supervision to provide the necessary management oversight and support risks appropriately.

**Don’t forget!**

* Talk to the adult – complete a risk assessment with them and discuss the risks identified with them – there are top tips on having the conversation in the guidance referred to above.
* Try to secure consent for a referral to Refuge or for you to share information with other partners who could help (e.g. the police) – there are top tips on having the conversation in the guidance referred to above. Where you don’t get consent, be sure to provide contact information to them – again, there is information on the safe way to do this in the guidance referred to above.
* Remember, you do not need consent to refer to the MARAC or where you are worried there is immediate risk.
* If the adult lacks mental capacity to understand the risks, you may need to make a best interest decision - follow the Mental Capacity Act 2005 if you consider this.
* If it is not possible to discuss the situation with the adult safely, try to arrange a time and place to do this such as offer them a safe visit at a GP surgery or using one of our Community or Family Hubs. Professionals should make the relevant arrangements e.g. work with their doctor to write to them and invite them in for an appointment, when you can meet with them to offer them support (remember to speak to an IGVA about how they can support the visit – if you have consent from the adult, an IGVA could attend with you).
* Identify what protective factors there are for the adult (it could be that they spend time away from the perpetrator of abuse or have friends, neighbours or family who check on their regularly or visit which could reduce the behaviours of abuse by the perpetrator). There are top tips on having the conversation in the guidance referred to above.
* Using this information, work with the adult to create a safety plan or refer them to someone who could respond timely and support them with this. There is guidance and a template safety plan in the guidance referred to above.
* If you provide contact details for services such as Refuge, make sure you provide these in a safe way

**Strategic oversight**

The **Safeguarding Adults Board (BDSAB)** reports on domestic abuse where it relates to Adults with Care and Support needs through the Safeguarding Adults Performance Board, a Committee of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB). We get data from statutory partners of the SAB such as NELFT and the Police.

The **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group**, a sub group of the **Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership**, is responsible for the delivery of the **Domestic Abuse Improvement Programme** (DAIP). The DAIP has it’s roots in the **Barking and Dagenham Independent Domestic Abuse Commission**’s final report - more details can be viewed here: [DA Commission - App 1.pdf (lbbd.gov.uk)](https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/internet/documents/s143521/DA%20Commission%20-%20App%201.pdf)

**Further reading**

*BASW (2021): Domestic Abuse Guidance for Social Workers* BASW England releases new Domestic Abuse Guidance for social workers | www.basw.co.uk

*Research in Practice (2021)* [The survivor voice in tackling domestic abuse | Research in Practice](https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/news-views/2021/march/the-importance-of-the-survivor-voice-in-tackling-domestic-abuse-in-barking-and-dagenham/)

*SCIE and NICE (2020)***:** [Recognising and responding to domestic violence and abuse | SCIE](https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/preventing-abuse-neglect/recognising-domestic-violence?gad=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIxOX4w-O6_gIVBoBQBh1K3Q8vEAAYAiAAEgK7YPD_BwE)

Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse (2015): [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/adult-safeguarding-and-do-cfe.pd﻿f](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/adult-safeguarding-and-do-cfe.pd%EF%BB%BFf)

*Author: Adults Principal Social Worker*

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