



DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY – CHAS
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Statutory Definition of Domestic Abuse (Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality).

The abuse can involve, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional
- violent
- threatening

- controlling

'Personal connection' means the individuals concerned:

- are due to be, are currently, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- are, or have been, parents (or had a parental relationship) to the same child
- are relatives (the Act gives further definitions of 'relatives')

Reference: [Sections 1 and 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse between two personally connected individuals who are aged 16 or over.

However, abusive behaviour directed at a person under the age of 16 is child abuse rather than domestic abuse.

Reference: [Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

For more information, please read the statutory guidance. This provides more details on how statutory services should respond to domestic abuse.

Reference: [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#)

RECOGNISE INDICATORS of domestic and sexual violence and abuse:

FOR VICTIMS:

Behaviour: Frequent appointments with vague symptoms; injuries inconsistent with explanations; partner/carer consistently speaks on behalf the service user; reluctant to speak; appears anxious/fearful/confused, inconsistent information disclosed, dramatic changes in personality, forgetful, frighten, disclosure of unexpected marriage plans, isolation from established support networks and money going missing or money being given away (i.e. financial abuse)

Injuries and damage following assault: Bruises, burns, fractures, facial injuries, scars, bite and pinch marks, tooth and hair loss, scratches, damage to aids i.e. wheelchair, hearing aids or specialist equipment needed by service users, damage to property and personal belongings

Illnesses/conditions living with and after abuse: Headaches, chronic pain, gastrointestinal disorders, unexplained weight gain or loss, erratic use of prescribed medication for mental health and/or physical conditions, variations dispensing of medication i.e. too frequent or infrequent

Rape & Sexual Violence: Miscarriage, STIs, vaginal & anal bleeding and infection, painful intercourse, pelvic pain, recurrent UTIs., frequent abortions, sexual exploitation i

Psychological or psychosocial problems: Depression, anxiety, insomnia, somatic symptoms, PTSD symptoms, self-harm, suicidal ideation, increased substance use, mood swings

FOR PERPETRATORS: Most common presenting issues are depression and concerns about anger management

If you have concerns, **ASK THE QUESTION** about experiences of domestic and sexual violence or abuse:

Ensure you speak to the service user alone and cannot be overheard

Use a standard question *FOR VICTIMS:* Are you ever afraid at home? Has your partner/carer ever frightened or scared you? Has your partner/carer ever physically hurt you? Have you ever been forced to do something sexually that you did not want to?

FOR PERPETRATORS: Use RESPECT screening toolkit

Service user discloses abuse

No disclosure	<u>PROVIDE A KEY MESSAGE:</u> “I believe you. I am glad you told me”, “You are not alone/around 1 in 3 women will experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime”, “I am concerned about your health and safety”, “This is not your fault”, “You are the expert on what you need”, “Domestic and sexual violence can affect the way you think or feel, is this true for you?” Obtain consent. Offer following appointment so service users has an excuse to come back			
PROVIDE INFORMATION verbally and written, signpost to websites	<u>COMPLETE INITIAL RISK ASSESSEMENT</u> , by asking <i>VICTIM:</i>			
RECORD any concerns or indicators of abuse	Is the abuse current/recent or historic? Is it safe for the service user to go home right now? Are there children or other vulnerable adults in the family? What threats has the perpetrator made? What does the victim fear might happen? Has the abuse escalated in severity or frequency recently?			
REFER to MARAC if serious concerns.	If there are children or vulnerable adults involved, <u>ENSURE</u> relevant safeguarding policies and guidance are followed		If you have concerns for immediate safety, discuss <u>CALLING POLICE</u> with patient	
	If you have further concerns about current abuse or recent separation, or the patient asks for support, <u>REFER ON</u>			

USEFUL CONTACTS

VICTIMS of Domestic Violence to:

Freephone National 24hr helpline (0808 2000 247) for female victims in need of confidential emotional support, practical advice, safety planning and referrals to refuge and emergency accommodation

Men's Advice Line (0808 801 0327) for male victims

GALOP Helpline (0800 999 5428) support for LGBTQ+ community

Hounslow Domestic Violence Outreach Service (07810 031 780) – crisis intervention offering advice to anyone experience domestic violence

Victim Support (0808 168 9291 or 0845 450 3936) – support for low to medium risk victims of domestic violence. Floating support offered in Hounslow.

Women and Girls Network Advice Service (Freephone 0808 801 0660)
offering specialist advice, information and support on domestic and sexual violence

Hounslow One Stop Shop – (07810 031 780) Drop-in support for all victims of domestic abuse in Hounslow. Every Wednesday 10-12pm. Call for further details.

Eastern European IDVA Service – (0772 5245777) Support for women from Eastern Europe experiencing domestic abuse
Southall Black Sisters (0208571 9595) – Free Service for women who have experienced gender-based violence.

Dial 999 in an emergency

PERPETRATORS to **Respect Phonenumber (0808 802 4040)**

Mothers and Children affected by DV to:

Freedom Programme in Hounslow (0208 583 6163) – a 12 week programme for mothers and single women in the borough of Hounslow.

Let's Talk Programme (0208 583 4156) – free 12 week structured therapeutic group programme for children between 5 and 13 years of age affected by domestic violence, with a parallel programme for mothers.

Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Support for children in schools who have experienced domestic abuse – domesticabusesupport@hounslow.gov.uk

VICTIMS of Sexual Violence to:

The Haven (020 3299 6900 or 0203 299 1599) for crisis intervention, forensics or criminal justice support for women and men (for incidents within last 12 months)

Survivors UK (0203 598 3898) for male survivors overcoming sexual violence.

London Survivors Gateway (0808 801 0660) – specialist over the phone emotional support for women and girls who have experienced sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Prevention Worker. (contact 07810 031 780 or domesticabusesupport@hounslow.gov.uk) Support for sexual violence survivors in Hounslow.

VICTIMS of Forced Marriage to:

Forced Marriage Unit (0207 008 0151 or 0207 008 1500) – advice & support for victims of forced marriage in the UK or abroad

RECORD any details of domestic and sexual violence provided by service user and any action taken

CONTINUE TO OFFER SUPPORT utilising best practice and advice from voluntary sector and other partners