

# SAFEGUARDING BRIEFING

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## Safeguarding Children and Young People – Domestic Abuse

Every child has the right to a safe and secure home. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to be safe from violence (Article 19) and yet thousands of children across the UK sadly live in households where there have been or continue to be incidents of domestic abuse. The term domestic abuse is more encompassing of the psychological harm or coercive behaviours that can be just as harmful as physical acts of violence. Living within households of domestic abuse will also adversely affect children and young people's perception of what a healthy relationship is. It changes the way they view the world and assaults all of their senses.

Women's Aid highlight that one in seven children and young people under the age of 18 will have lived with domestic abuse at some point in their childhood. Action for Children highlight that according to the Department for Education, domestic abuse is the most common factor identified at the end of social care assessments for children in need.

The hidden nature of domestic abuse has been compounded by the amount of time people have spent within their own homes during the pandemic. This is why it is as important as it ever has been to recognise the risk to children and the impact on children of continuing to live in households in which there is domestic abuse. Children may experience trauma, direct abuse and/or neglect.

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse.

Women's Aid state that children can witness domestic abuse in a variety of ways:

- they may be in the same room and may get caught in the middle of an incident, perhaps in an effort to make the violence stop;
- they may be in another room but be able to hear the abuse or see their parent/sibling's physical injuries following an incident of violence; or
- they may be forced to take part in verbally abusing the victim.
- Children are completely dependent on the adults around them, and if they do not feel safe in their own homes, this can have many negative physical, emotional and chemical effects.
- All children witnessing domestic violence are being emotionally abused and traumatised, and this is now recognised as 'significant harm' in recent legislation.

It's important to remember that domestic abuse:

- can happen inside and outside the home
- can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites
- can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended
- both men and women can be abused or be the person abusing
- Living in a home where domestic abuse happens can have a serious impact on a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their behaviour. This can last into adulthood.
- It is important to make sure the abuse stops and that children have a safe and stable environment to grow up in. (NSPCC)



# Where to access help

Produced by the SCP VCS  
Reference Group

## LWA (Leicester City) Offer:

- One to one support
- Children & Young People group programme – Space4Me
- Parenting support group sessions – You and Me, Mum
- Support for young people who are using violence
- An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) for young people at high risk from domestic abuse
- A Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (CHISVA) for young people who have been sexually assaulted
- Therapeutic intervention
- Healthy Relationships sessions in schools and youth services
- Assemblies in primary & secondary schools
- Child-care for parents attending groups and appointments
- Counselling support for children and young people
- Drawing and talking therapy
- Young people group & one to one sessions – Time4Me

## Finding Help

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999 or 112. If the child is not in immediate danger but you are still concerned that they might be in danger, or at risk of being in danger, you can report your concerns via the website: <https://lrsb.org.uk/childreport>

## Make a Referral

Make a referral for primary victims aged 13+ here:  
<https://www.uava.org.uk/make-a-referral/>

## For domestic abuse support in Leicestershire and Rutland:

For domestic abuse support in Leicestershire and Rutland, please follow the below links:

Leicestershire: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families/children-and-family-wellbeing-service>

Rutland: <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-community/community-safety/domestic-abuse/>

## References:

- <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/campaign-with-us/domestic-abuse/>
- <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/children-and-domestic-abuse/>
- <https://www.unicef.org/media/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>
- <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

For further advice and guidance related to domestic abuse:

- **Gov.uk**  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help#coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse>
- **LRSB**  
<https://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/domestic-abuse-resources-booklet.pdf>
- **Coventry Panahghar Project**  
<https://www.safehouse.org.uk/>
- **Home-start Horizons**  
<https://homestarthorizons.org.uk/>
- **Sharma**  
<https://shamawomenscentre.co.uk/>
- **Zinthyia Trust**  
<https://www.zinthyiastrust.org/>
- **Safe Lives – My Story Matters** is project co-created with young people sharing their relationship stories and how to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships  
<https://safelives.org.uk/MyStoryMatters/event>

