

Domestic Abuse One System Approach

Agreed Principles of Practice

Each organisation pledges to:

- Treat domestic abuse seriously by prioritising the safety of victims and their children in every aspect of decision making and intervention and acting immediately on disclosure of risk or harm.
- Understand that without effective prevention and early intervention domestic violence and abuse often escalate in severity and make every effort to identify and support adult and child victims earlier.
- Record all incidents of domestic abuse and provide statistical information at a senior management level. Informed consent from victims should be gained where there is an intention to share information.
- Develop working relations with specialist agencies and make appropriate representation and contribution to discussions at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and local domestic abuse forums.
- Use the Families First Access Point (FFAP) for non-safeguarding advice and support prior to referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), using Single Assessment process.
- Work cooperatively to provide a supportive and enabling environment which encourages people to report domestic abuse to the police, and recognise the importance of specialist independent domestic abuse services which strengthen victim safety strategies.
- Respect confidentiality and privacy wherever possible and understand the risks associated with information sharing in the context of domestic abuse.
- Take a multi-agency approach in holding perpetrators accountable for their actions and ensure that the full range of civil and criminal remedies are pursued but consider the needs of the perpetrator as this can increase the safety of the victim.
- Treat victims with respect and dignity by listening to them and believing their experiences and assuring them that they are never to blame.
- Maximise choices for domestic abuse victims and empower them to make informed decisions about their lives wherever possible. Consider the rights of the family to remain a family through restorative work.
- Be sensitive to the diverse needs of victims and children considering their age, disability, gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender whilst recognising that differences are not an excuse for accepting violence, abuse or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.
- Recognise socio economic factors which may impact on those experiencing domestic abuse, such as low income, low literacy or numeracy skills, rural isolation or caring status.
- Recognise additional barriers to those experiencing domestic abuse who are frightened that reporting will bring unwanted attention to their personal circumstances.
- Understand that victims and their children are most at risk when they end a violent relationship or seek help and work to protect them when they do.