

WORKING WITH MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT

Best Practice Guidelines

Endorsed by

***Staffordshire Domestic
Abuse Steering Group***

***Stoke-on-Trent Domestic
Abuse Partnership***

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1. Introduction

Welcome to Staffordshire's Best Practice Guidelines for Working with Male Victims of Domestic Abuse.

Who are these Guidelines aimed at?

These Guidelines are primarily aimed at those practitioners who do not have a role which specialises in responding to people affected by domestic abuse, but who may, from time to time, work with service users or clients who are experiencing it.

Purpose of the Guidelines

These Guidelines have been developed to:

- Raise practitioners' awareness of male victims of domestic abuse and violence;
- Raise awareness of the services that are available in every district of Staffordshire to support male victims of domestic abuse;
- Provide practitioners with the information they need to respond safely and appropriately to male service users following a disclosure of domestic abuse; and
- Highlight sources of support and guidance (for both the service user and the practitioner).

Although the information in these Guidelines is focussed on responding to male victims, the majority of the information is also applicable to responding to female victims of domestic abuse and violence.

What is domestic abuse and violence?

These Guidelines use the Home Office 2012 definition of domestic abuse and violence:

“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. This encompasses but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological / emotional; physical; sexual; and financial”.

As the definition shows, the term domestic abuse or violence can encompass a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are inherently “violent”. Within these Guidelines the terms “domestic abuse” and “domestic violence” are used interchangeably.

Who is affected by domestic abuse and violence?

Research has shown that those who experience violence and abuse (as well as those who are violent and abusive) come from all backgrounds and social classes; they have differing levels of education, different occupations, income, sexuality, gender, age, ethnicity or race, physical and mental ability. However, some victims of domestic abuse experience additional barriers in accessing services due to, for example, cultural and social perceptions regarding gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

Situations involving domestic abuse are often complex. We know that some people (both male and female) who present to services as victims of domestic abuse may actually be the perpetrator of abuse, or indeed they may be in an unhappy relationship, but one which is not abusive. This is why it is vital that service users who disclose domestic abuse are referred to a specialist agency as soon as possible, where trained staff can robustly assess their needs and ensure that they receive a safe and appropriate response.

How should practitioners respond to those affected by domestic abuse and violence?

Practitioners are not expected to become 'experts' on domestic abuse and violence nor are they expected to provide a counselling service when someone discloses information about their situation to them. However, all practitioners have a duty to acknowledge and respond appropriately to service users who are affected by domestic abuse and to keep an accurate record of any actions they have taken.

In addition, all practitioners have responsibilities with regard to protecting children and vulnerable adults and should be mindful of the wider impact of abuse on others who live within the household. These Guidelines are intended to compliment existing safeguarding and child protection processes and policies.

Remember help and support is available:

- for practitioners who need advice and guidance on how to respond appropriately to male victims of domestic abuse in Staffordshire, and
- for service users themselves who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Do not be afraid to contact any [specialist domestic abuse agency](#) for guidance!

There are a number of features throughout this document which you may find useful:

Best Practice Box

Best practice boxes highlight key points for you to consider.

There is also a [Glossary](#) at the end of the document which details many of the terms used within the Guidelines.

If you would like further information regarding these guidelines or have any feedback please contact the Domestic & Sexual Violence Development Project at charlotte.almond@staffordshirewomensaid.org

2. Identifying Male Victims of Domestic Abuse and Violence

The following information has been adapted from the Respect 'Toolkit for Work with Male Victims of Domestic Violence' (2nd edition, 2013).

2.1 Who is Doing What to Whom - The Need to Explore the Situation

Exploring and assessing the experiences, needs and risks of men presenting as victims of domestic abuse provides trained domestic abuse practitioners with an understanding of who is a genuine victim, who is a perpetrator and who is a client in an unhappy, but not abusive, relationship. This improves the effectiveness and safety of interventions provided by enabling practitioners to:

- avoid the unintended consequences of mistakenly identifying someone as a perpetrator or victim;
- make informed decisions about the suitability of specific responses and services, such as advocacy for victims, referral/signposting onto specialist services.

2.2 The Dangers of Incorrectly Identifying Someone

If male victims are incorrectly identified as the perpetrator or as part of a mutually violent couple, there are consequences which will put them and others at increased risk. Similarly, if men are incorrectly identified as the victim when they are in fact the perpetrator, this will mean that their partner/ex is identified incorrectly as the perpetrator or as part of a 'mutually violent couple'.

In either case, incorrect identification is likely to have the following possible consequences:

Consequences for a victim incorrectly identified as a perpetrator

- Not taken seriously as the victim
- Losing care of children
- Becoming even more isolated
- Feeling there is no alternative but to use violence and/or weapons to protect self and/or children, increasing risk to everyone
- Increased use of alcohol, prescription drugs and other substances used as a coping strategy, which presents additional risks to self and to children, and also makes it harder for agencies to respond appropriately
- Psychological impact of not being believed – which may mean shutting down emotionally, minimising to self and others the nature and effects of the violence and thereby making it harder for agencies to respond
- Being referred to a perpetrator programme, which would be inappropriate or unsafe and may increase depression or anger in the victim and increase control by the real perpetrator
- Increased risk of suicide, of abuse from perpetrator and of harm to children, as a result of the above

Consequences for a perpetrator incorrectly identified as a victim

- The perpetrator may be referred to victims' services, which would be inappropriate and unsafe
- The perpetrator/abuser may feel that they can do what they like to the victim without a fear of consequences and this in turn may result in an increase in severity and frequency of physical or other attacks
- The perpetrator will not have access to services which can help them change

Consequences for the children

- Child contact or residence decisions may be unsafe or inappropriate for meeting children's needs and welfare
- Children may be confused about what is happening and why
- Children may mistrust authorities if they see the decisions as wrong or unsafe
- Children may be put in situations of risk and danger

2.3 Men who Approach Services as Victims

There are many male victims of domestic violence and they deserve, and have a right, to our help and protection. **It is vital, in the interests of these men, that we ensure that we are prioritising our time to helping them.**

There are no definitive categories into which everyone can fit – there will always be some exceptions. The experience of Respect, guided by relevant research on the prevalence and frequency of domestic violence, indicates that the following examples of clients are the most common:

- **Victim/survivor of domestic abuse**
- **Perpetrator of domestic abuse**
- **Victim who has used violent resistance against the perpetrator**
- **Perpetrator whose victim has used violent resistance**
- **Mutual violence**
- **Unhappy relationship with no abuse or violence**
- **Victim of abuse perpetrated by someone other than a partner, ex-partner or family member**

Best Practice Box

Remember, you are not expected to identify who is a 'genuine' victim. However, everybody has a duty to acknowledge and respond appropriately to service users who are affected by domestic abuse, including making a referral to a specialist agency (see [flowchart](#) on pg. 10).

2.4 Examples of Service Users as they May Present to a Service

In this section there are descriptions of some categories together with an example of a relationship which is likely to be in that category, described as they are likely to present or be referred to a service for male victims.

Victim/Survivor

Someone who is or has recently been experiencing violence, abuse, fear, force, threats and/or coercive control from an intimate partner or ex-partner. They may need legal or practical protection, emotional help and support, advocacy and other forms of help.

Example: Daf and Megan

Daf is 73 years old and has been married to his wife Megan (aged 60) for 27 years. Last night she attacked him with a glass and he ended up in hospital. He says Megan has always had a fierce temper and that this has been getting worse for the past few years. Until recently the abuse was mostly verbal but there have been several incidents recently where he has been punched and kicked. Now he is worried that this will be the start of an increase in violence. He doesn't want the police involved as he doesn't want to get her in trouble or to end the relationship. He wants some advice.

Perpetrator

By definition this is someone who is or has recently been using violence, abuse, fear, force, threats and coercive control to an intimate partner or ex-partner. They are likely to have committed criminal acts and may need criminal or civil legal sanctions to enforce changes in behaviour. They may be suitable for domestic violence intervention programmes for perpetrators. However, when presenting to a service for male victims, they are likely to use some language of victimisation, rather than being explicit about being a perpetrator wanting help to change. The example below is a common one.

Example: Terry

Terry describes himself as 'unfairly arrested' by the police when he pushed his girlfriend away from him during an argument. He says that she is verbally abusive to him and that she is always winding him up to see how far she can push him. He says that he has only pushed her away 'once or twice' and that he doesn't understand why the police have arrested him. He wants to know how he can get legal help as he feels he is the victim in the situation.

Mutual Violence

Relationships which appear to be mutually violent, with control either exercised in both directions at different times or violent abusive behaviour without any apparent control of one or other party.

Example: Dave and Julie

Dave and Julie have been together for 5 years, married for 3 and they have a four year old daughter. Dave tells us that Julie has an alcohol problem which is also present in many of her family of origin. He says that she has hit him and bit him, including in front of other people. However, he also tells you that he has hit her, causing bruises. He says he has been arrested several times and had to spend a night in the police cells on one occasion when he assaulted her in the street. He was cautioned but not charged. He resents the fact he has been in trouble with the police and blames her. He says that Julie is not a fit mother and wants to separate from her and have custody of their daughter as he thinks she will not be safe living with Julie, plus his extended family have always been very involved in her care. He says they both want to separate but they are still living in the same house as they can't sell it. There is violence from each of them regularly. He doesn't say if this has happened in front of their daughter.

Unhappy relationship but not abusive

Men who are in relationships which are unhappy, experiencing and/or using unkind behaviour which, whilst unpleasant, is not causing fear or control.

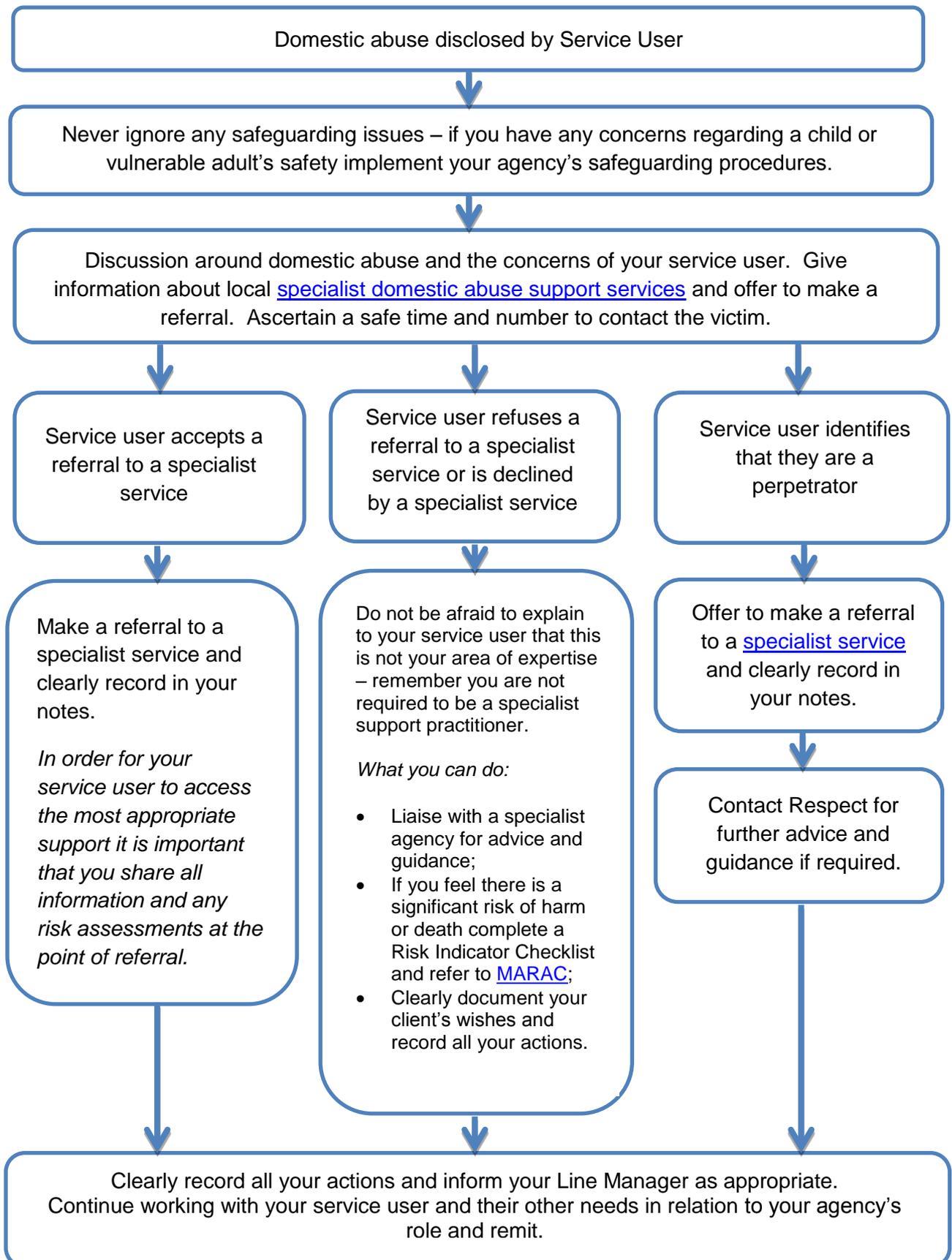
This often happens at the time of relationship breakdown – however, abuse and violence can also occur or increase at relationship breakdown, so it is important to assess whether or not this is really an abusive relationship. Sometimes men present to male victims services when there is no abuse – sometimes because they aren't sure who to turn to for help, sometimes because they aren't sure if they are living with domestic abuse or not and sometimes just because they want someone to listen to them.

Example: Aaron and Jamila

Aaron has a list of complaints about his partner, Jamila. He is not fearful of her, doesn't think she is fearful of him and says neither have used violence. They do regularly call each other names. He describes her not wanting to be in the same room as him. They are both critical of each other and unhappy.

3. Responding Appropriately to Male Victims of Domestic Abuse

3.1 What to do if a client discloses domestic abuse?



3.2 Practice Issues

Best Practice Box

- ❖ Let your service user know that you believe them.
- ❖ Let your service user know that you have taken their disclosure seriously – isolation is a key feature of domestic abuse.
- ❖ Ensure that your service user feels safe and comfortable and that you adopt a non-judgemental attitude.
- ❖ Ensure that you provide your service user with information on local domestic abuse services.
- ❖ Never ignore any safeguarding issues – if you have any concerns regarding a child or vulnerable adult's safety implement your agency's safeguarding procedures.
- ❖ Never use a family member as an interpreter.
- ❖ Remember that you are not required to be a counsellor. Support should be provided by a trained domestic abuse practitioner.
- ❖ If you are in any doubt whatsoever, or feel unsure about how best to respond, contact a specialist domestic abuse service for further advice and guidance.
- ❖ Ensure that you clearly record **all** your actions and inform your line manager as appropriate.

3.3 Specialist Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services

Specialist domestic and sexual violence services are provided across the UK, predominantly by the women's voluntary sector. They provide a variety of services for victims of abuse, including:

- Safe Refuge/Emergency Accommodation
- Community Based One to One Support and Advocacy
- Resettlement Services
- Telephone Helplines
- Counselling Services
- Children and Young People's Services

Specialist services provide support to men, women and children who are living with, escaping or recovering from domestic and sexual violence. Their focus is exclusively to support people in overcoming the impact of the violence they have experienced. Specialist services are independent of the statutory sector, user led and operate on the basis of choice and empowerment. This is important as only a minority of victims will ever report domestic or sexual violence, so alternative routes of support, particularly to the criminal justice system, are essential.

3.4 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference – MARAC

MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between local representatives from Adult Social Care Services (formerly Social Services), Children’s Services (formerly Social Services), Fire & Rescue, Health, Housing, Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs), Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), Mental Health Services, Midwifery, Police, Probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The victim does not attend the meeting but is represented by an IDVA who speaks on their behalf.

In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent MARAC meetings are held on a fortnightly basis and are administered and chaired by Staffordshire Police. For further information, including a Risk Indicator Checklist and MARAC referral form, email:

marac@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

3.5 Sexual Assault Referral Centre - SARC

Grange Park is Staffordshire’s, including Stoke-on-Trent, Sexual Assault Referral Centre. Grange Park’s primary aim is to provide access to a comprehensive forensic medical examination for men, women and children who have been sexually assaulted within the last seven days. The service is available whether or not the client chooses to report the assault to the Police. Where indicated, clients are also offered emergency contraception, immunisation against Hepatitis B, and HIV Post Exposure-Pharyngitis.

After the examination, clients can choose to be referred for follow-on care within their own locality, which may include counselling, and support throughout any criminal justice proceedings.

Men, women and children can be referred to Grange Park 24 hours a day, although self-referrals can only be accepted between the hours of 9.00am – 5.00pm. For further information contact the SARC on **0300 7900 166**

Best Practice Box

When making a referral to a specialist service:

- ❖ Ensure that your service user wants, and has given permission, for you to make a referral
- ❖ Ensure that you provide a safe time and number to contact the victim
- ❖ Include all known information, risks and needs of your service user

3.6 Specialist Services for Male Victims of Domestic Abuse in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Please note that there is no refuge provision in Staffordshire for male victims of domestic abuse, if you are working with a man who requires emergency accommodation please contact your [Local Authority Homelessness Department](#).

Area / Agency	Contact Details	Description of Service
Cannock		
Staffordshire Women's Aid	0870 2700 123 (24 hrs) Enquiries@staffordshirewomensaid.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 16 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals • Website: http://www.staffordshirewomensaid.org
East Staffordshire		
Stonham Domestic Abuse Services	0845 155 2318 Staffordshirereferrals@homegroup.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men and women in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 12 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals • Website: www.homegroup.org.uk
SARAC	01283 517185	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic and sexual abuse outreach support for men, women and children age 13 and over in the community • Website: www.sarac.org.uk
Lichfield		
Pathway	01543 676800 (24 hrs) talktoeve.pathway@virgin.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 15 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals • Website: http://www.pathway-project.co.uk
Newcastle		
Arch (North Staffs)	01782 222421 dv.services@archnorthstaffs.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 15 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals • Website: http://www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk

Area / Agency	Contact Details	Description of Service
South Staffordshire		
Staffordshire Women's Aid	0870 2700 123 (24 hrs) Enquiries@staffordshirewomensaid.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 16 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals Website: http://www.staffordshirewomensaid.org
Stafford		
Staffordshire Women's Aid	0870 2700 123 (24 hrs) Enquiries@staffordshirewomensaid.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 16 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals Website: http://www.staffordshirewomensaid.org
Staffordshire Moorlands		
Arch (North Staffs)	01782 222421 dv.services@archnorthstaffs.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 12 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals Website: http://www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk
Tamworth		
Pathway	01543 676 800 (24hrs) talktoeve.pathway@virgin.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 15 • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals Website: http://www.pathway-project.co.uk
Stoke-on-Trent		
Arch (North Staffs)	01782 222421 dv.services@archnorthstaffs.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men, women and children in the community • Refuge accommodation for women and children • Boys accommodated in refuge up to age 12 • Accepts agency and self-referrals Website: http://www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk/domestic-violence-services

Area / Agency	Contact Details	Description of Service
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Central Locality SoT 07900 135734 South Locality SoT 07824 496275 North Locality SoT 07584 174463 domestic.violence@stoke.gcsx.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court based Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals
Staffordshire-wide		
Arch Domestic Violence Services for Male Victims	01782 222421 dv.services@archnorthstaffs.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse outreach support for men • Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals. • Website: http://www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk
Savana	01782 221000 (24 hr message line – staff will return call within 2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist sexual abuse counselling for men, women and children • Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) • Accepts agency and self-referrals • Website: http://www.savana.org.uk
Victim Support	0300 303 1977 Mon-Fri 8.00am-8.00pm	Trained volunteers offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • someone to talk to in confidence • information on police and court procedures • information about compensation and insurance • Website: http://www.victimsupport.org

3.7 Services for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Area / Agency	Contact Details	Description of Service
Staffordshire-wide		
Arch Male Perpetrator Programme	01782 222421 dvpp@archnorthstaffs.org.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male Perpetrator Programme • Website: http://www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk/domestic-violence-services
National Helplines		
Respect Phoneline	0808 8024040 Mon – Fri 10.00am – 1.00pm 2.00pm – 5.00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential helpline for people who are abusive and/or violent towards their partners • Practitioners can access advice and guidance • Website: http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk/phoneline.php

3.8 Further Information

National Helplines		
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247 (24hr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freephone 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline • Translation facilities for callers whose first language is not English, and a service for callers who are deaf or hard of hearing are available • Website: http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
Broken Rainbow	0300 999 5428	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic violence • Website: http://www.brokenrainbow.org.uk/
Forced Marriage Unit	0207 008 0151 (24hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit is dedicated both to preventing British nationals being forced into marriage overseas and to assisting anyone in the UK faced with the prospect of being forced into a marriage • Website: http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/information-for-victims
Forward	0208 960 4000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An African Diaspora led UK-registered campaign and support charity dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the health and rights of African girls and women, in particular female genital mutilation and forced and child marriage • Website: http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/
Karma Nirvana	0800 5999 247	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting all victims of honour based abuse and forced marriage • Website: http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/
Respect Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and support for men in abusive relationships • Website: http://www.mensadvice.org.uk
National Stalking Helpline		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides guidance and information to anybody who is currently, or has previously been, affected by harassment or stalking • Website: http://www.stalkinghelpline.org

3.9 Local Authority Homelessness Departments

As there is no refuge provision in Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent for male victims of domestic abuse, if you are working with a man who requires emergency accommodation please contact your [Local Authority Homelessness Department](#). A victim of domestic abuse can approach any local authority for assistance, not just the one in which they normally reside.

Local Authority Homelessness Departments	
Cannock Chase Council	Tel: 01543 462621
East Staffordshire Borough Council	Tel: 01283 508000
Lichfield District Council	Tel: 01543 308000
Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council	Tel: 01782 717717
South Staffordshire District Council	Tel: 01902 696000
Stafford Borough Council	Tel: 01785 619000
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Tel: 0345 605 3012
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Tel: 01782 234234
Tamworth Borough Council	Tel: 01827 709709

3.10 Useful Links

Respect Toolkit for Working with Male Victims of Domestic Violence
<http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/toolkit-for-work-with-male-victims-of-domestic-violence.html>

Staffordshire County Council – Contact details for local and national domestic abuse services
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/community/communitysafety/domestic/further/FurtherAdvice.aspx>

Stoke-on-Trent City Council – Contact details for local and national domestic abuse services
<http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/community/community/domestic-abuse.en/>

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board <http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/Home.aspx>

Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board
<http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk>

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/health/care/reportingabuse/safeguarding/StaffordshireandStokeonTrent.aspx>

4. Glossary

CAADA

Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Further information can be found on their website at: <http://www.caada.org.uk>

CAADA DASH Risk Indicator Checklist

The purpose of the CAADA DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour Based Violence) Risk Indicator Checklist is to give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a MARAC meeting in order to manage their risk.

Child Protection

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Domestic Abuse and Violence – Definition and Description of Types of Abuse

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. This encompasses but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological / emotional; physical; sexual; and financial. (Home Office, 2013)

- **Physical Abuse**

Physical assault is the most obvious form of domestic violence, the most visible, and also the most lethal. Assaults can often start small, maybe a small shove during an argument or forcefully grabbing your wrist. Over time, physical abuse usually becomes more severe, and more frequent, and can result in the death of the victim.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse can be defined as any sexual encounter without consent and includes any unwanted touching, forced sexual activity, be it oral, anal or vaginal, forcing the victim to perform sexual acts, painful or degrading acts during intercourse (e.g. urinating on victim), and exploitation through photography or prostitution.

Coercion or manipulation in the form of threats or emotional/psychological abuse may also be used, leaving the victim to submit to unwanted sexual acts out of fear or guilt. The abuser may, for instance, imply that should the victim not submit, they will physically assault them, leave them and find 'another man / woman', withdraw sex and affectionate behaviour, or punish them in some other way. Or the abuser may insist on sex following a physical attack so the victim can 'prove' they have forgiven them. Whatever form of coercion is used, be it physical, financial or emotional, any sexual act which is not based on mutual consent constitutes sexual abuse.

- **Emotional / Psychological Abuse**

Emotional and psychological abuse is subtle. Quite often such abuse goes unseen, as even the victim does not always recognise that they are being abused. Although emotional abuse does not leave black eyes or visible injuries, it is often more seriously damaging to self-esteem. Physical abuse or sexual abuse is always accompanied, and often follows, emotional abuse, often over a long period of time. This undermines a victim's self-concept so that they are willing to accept responsibility for their abuser's actions and behaviour towards them.

Abusers will use verbal tactics to hurt and humiliate. Abusers will also isolate the victim, dictating where they go, who they see etc. Many abusers justify their control over their victim by stating that it is proof of their love or that they worry about their safety when out etc. In reality, the abuser needs to isolate the victim to feel secure themselves, they feel that any relationship, be it family, friend or colleague, will undermine their authority and take their partner away from them i.e. poses a threat. The effect of this isolation is that the victim feels very alone in their struggle and is ultimately more dependent on the abuser for all of their social needs.

- **Stalking**

It is hard to give an exact definition of stalking because stalkers will often use multiple and differing methods to harass their victims. Stalking can consist of any type of behaviour such as regularly sending flowers or gifts, making unwanted or malicious communication, damaging property and physical or sexual assault. If the behaviour is persistent and clearly unwanted causing fear, harassment or anxiety then it is stalking.

- **Financial Abuse**

Financial abuse can take many forms, from denying you access to all funds, to making their victim solely responsible for all finances while handling money irresponsibly. Money becomes a tool by which the abuser can further control the victim, ensuring either their financial dependence on them, or shifting the responsibility of keeping a roof over the family's head onto the victim, while simultaneously denying their ability to do so or obstructing them.

Domestic Abuse Support Practitioner

A practitioner who is specially trained to work with those affected by domestic violence. They may be based in statutory or voluntary sector organisations and will have different functions or roles.

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR)

Domestic Homicide Reviews are part of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and became law from 13th April 2011. In the event of a domestic homicide, the Act requires the local area to carry out a review, intended to ensure that public bodies like social services, councils, police and other community based organisations understand what happened that led to the death and identify where responses to the situation could be improved. From this, public bodies hope to learn all the right lessons including those which impact how they work together. Further information about DHR's can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/domestic-homicide-review>

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA)

The main purpose of independent domestic violence advisors (IDVA) is to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans.

Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA)

This independent person is a practical and emotional supporter for those who have experienced or who are affected by sexual violence (including within domestic violence). They can offer a range of support that:

- Assesses risk to help clients keep safe
- Help clients understand their rights
- Help clients access health and other services they require
- Monitor clients progress
- Provide support through the criminal justice system and keep clients informed about their case if they have or choose to report their experience

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

[See pg. 12](#)

Outreach Support

Specialist community based support and advocacy for victims of domestic abuse.

Perpetrator Programme

Domestic violence perpetrator programmes are behaviour-change programmes aiming to help perpetrators stop being violent and abusive.

Refuge Accommodation

Temporary, emergency accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence. There is no refuge provision in Staffordshire for male victims of domestic violence. If you are working with a man who requires emergency accommodation please contact your [Local Authority Homelessness Department](#).

Respect

Respect is an organisation which develops, delivers and supports effective services for male and female perpetrators of domestic violence; young people who use violence and abuse at home and in relationships; and men who are victims of domestic violence. More information can be found on their website at: <http://www.respect.uk.net>

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting vulnerable adults and children from abuse and neglect and putting in place systems and processes to prevent abuse and neglect from happening in future.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

[See pg. 12](#)

Specialist Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services

[See pg. 11](#)

Vulnerable Adult

A person aged 18 years or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.