

Domestic Violence (DV)



What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence comprises a broad range of behaviours, which can often overlap. The current Government definition of DV is:

"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."

This is not a legal definition but is used to identify DV cases. This definition is currently the **subject of a government consultation seeking views on whether it should be expanded to include the concept of 'coercive control' as well as to include perpetrators and victims under 18 years old.** We have had cases where young people have experienced DV in their relationships.

Domestic violence is an act that takes place between adults and whilst it does not encompass child abuse within its definition, children caught up in it or witnessing it are likely to be at risk of suffering harm.

Approximately 200,000 children (1.8%) in England live in households where there is a known risk of DV or violence. Children are at risk of the consequences of DV occurring in their home.



How is DV a child protection issue?

DV is a factor in 60% of serious case reviews. Children who live in households where DV occurs can suffer physical, psychological and emotional harm through directly or indirectly witnessing and experiencing DV.

The definition of “harm” used in care proceedings includes impairment caused by seeing or hearing the abuse of another person. Therefore merely witnessing an act is likely to be harmful to the child. Children may also be directly affected if caught up in DV if they are physically or verbally assaulted.

Potential effects of children witnessing DV:

- Anxiety or depression
- Difficulty sleeping and nightmares or flashbacks
- Physical symptoms, such as tummy aches
- Wetting the bed
- Temper tantrums
- Acting younger than their age
- Problems at school, including truanting
- Aggression
- Internalising distress and becoming withdrawn
- Lowered sense of self worth
- Older children may start to use alcohol or drugs.
- Self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves.
- Developing an eating disorder
- Coercion

We have cases where young people experience DV in their households and own relationships.

All concerns need to be raised as a “child concern” with Richard Reeve, Tash Good or Imran Iqbal.

For further information please see Richard Reeve

