

Domestic Abuse

**Central
Bedfordshire**

VINTAGE CLOTHING LOVER?

DOTING GRANDMOTHER?

VICTIM OF 20 YEARS ABUSE?

LIFE AND SOUL OF THE PARTY?

HAPPY GO LUCKY?

STALKED BY EX-BOYFRIEND?

PROGRAMME MANAGER

VINTAGE CAR ENTHUSIAST?

VICTIM OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

Key Points

- What is Domestic Abuse; coercive control
- Key pieces of work
 - Building Resilience in Families
 - Needs Assessment
 - Impact and Evidence
 - Domestic Abuse; Staff and Managers Guidance
 - Communication Strategy
 - Criminal Justice 'From call to Court'
- Challenges
- Partnership working
- Members information

What is Domestic Abuse?

- Domestic Abuse affects all genders
- Domestic Abuse is not age related
- Domestic Abuse is about power, control and fear
- Domestic Abuse is not one single incident or crime, it is a series or pattern of abuse over a prolonged period of time



In Central Bedfordshire

DA Crimes reported to the Police	Female Reporting	Male Reporting	Offenders of DA	Female Offender	Male Offender
April 2016 – March 2017	2458	684	April 2016 – March 2017	2440	2440
April 2017 – March 2018	2678	826	April 2017 – March 2018	632	2750

Victims supported through the MARAC	Total individuals supported	Female's supported	Male's supported
April 2016 – March 2017	321	313	8
April 2017 – March 2018	293	284	9
April 2018 – August 2018	114	109	5

Victims approaching Housing for support	Total number of clients seeking support due to DA	Number of those clients who were male	Total number placed in accommodation	Number of those placed who were male
April 2016 - March 2017	34	1	27	0
April 2017 - March 2018	47	3	35	3
New legislation	60	9	23	4
3 rd April 2018 – August 2018				

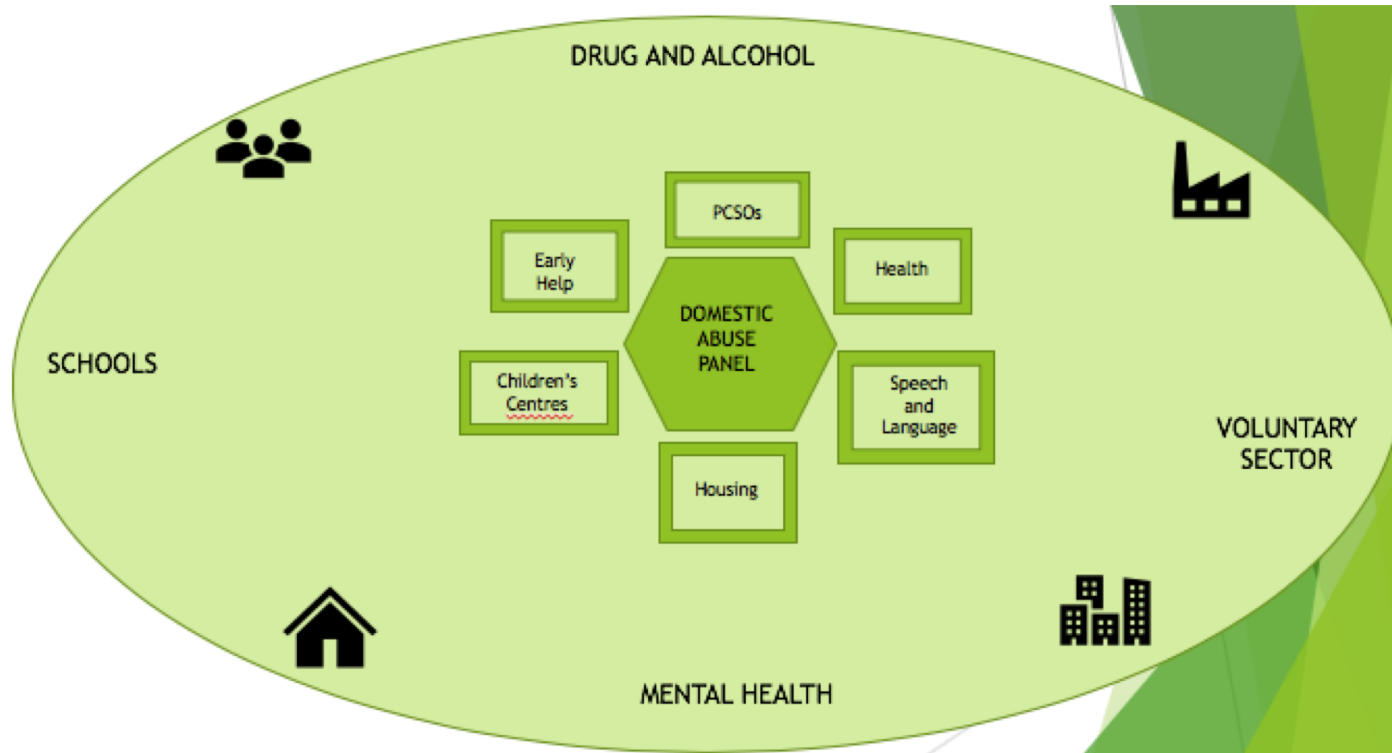
Coercive Control

- Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim
- Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour
- This year, two brothers spoke out about the coercive control their father used against his family. Sadly, their mother and sister were shot dead by their father, who then committed suicide, as the last part of his control over them. In this video they clearly articulate what coercive control is, how it looks to the family and others, and their story.

<https://youtu.be/qreA6ue0hk8>

Building Resilience in Families

October 2017 saw our new approach to multi-agency working with families affected by domestic abuse at early intervention and prevention stage.



Core partners meet bi-weekly to case manage and support a family who are affected by DA. A network of other partners are utilised according to the needs of the family

Building Resilience in Families

- Panel focusses on improvement around multi-agency working and partner relationships. There is a shared understanding about the strengths of community resilience and resources to prevent escalation
- The key success of this panel is that it has facilitated a space to consider how to build a more robust and holistic way of working around a family who are experiencing / at risk of DA
- Discussions are held around strategies to address linked issues such as increased prevalence of family breakdown and exploration of child to parent violence
- All partners involved in the panel share a vision of a one family one plan approach
- Early identification of families experiencing DA enables us to provide effective early intervention
- Partner agencies develop and evolve and through regular communication we can all benefit from the expertise and resources that each partner holds. Partners are shaping the way we work in the community

Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

- The assessment will map population and service-level data, the service delivery market, and include first-hand feedback (obtained where possible from previous victims of DA or through existing mechanisms) to give a more holistic picture of the scale and nature of this issue within Central Bedfordshire, other issues which impact on residents' experiences (e.g. mental health and substance misuse).
- The outcome of this work will be a greater understanding for the local authority and its partners of trends, needs and service gaps, and identification of appropriate prevention and intervention methods to meet these needs.

Impact and Evidence

- Registrar in Public Health supporting a research piece into impact and evidence of what works in domestic abuse intervention, support, awareness and services.

Evidence for effectiveness	Intervention
Strong	School based programmes to achieve positive changes in knowledge and attitude towards domestic abuse (but not behaviour change).
Moderate/ emerging	<p><u>Primary Prevention:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions to reduce child maltreatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> health sector programmes e.g. GPs Home visiting and parenting programmes e.g. Health Visiting School based training to help children recognise and avoid potentially sexually abusive situations. Empowerment and participatory programmes addressing gender inequality Programmes aimed at addressing social and cultural norms e.g. media campaigns, targeted work with men and boys. <p><u>Secondary Prevention:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare professional training to improve identification and appropriate response and referral Women-centred health-sector interventions (psychosocial support, advocacy, counselling, home visits)

Staff and Managers Guidance

- In the past 12 months we have had a number of officers utilising the Domestic Abuse Service, our Employee Assistance Programme and support services who are victims of abuse
- We have had perpetrators of that abuse stalking and harassing victims around our Council premises
- Those who are being abused need to feel safe and protected at work and as an organisation we need to ensure we do what we can to support them, and hold perpetrators to account
- We ran a recent DA Staff Survey and received 90 replies from officers who have been affected by DA. The results of the survey are currently being analysed and will help shape the Guidance.

Voice of the Survivor

Communication Strategy

- Working with key partners; Health, Police, Luton Borough Council and Bedford Borough Council
- Key messages, common language, key themes, calendar of events



Criminal Justice, 'from call to Court'

- Supporting a victim at point of disclosure, investigation, charge and Court
- Working with Crown Prosecution Service, Police, Court Service, Probation organisations and Victim Services to ensure the victim is at the heart of what we do
- Our local Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) is Luton Magistrates every Wednesday
- Crown Prosecution Service carried out a national SDVC Deep Dive in 2018 which resulted in a series of strategic recommendations and action plan. Working with partners we are supporting the Bedfordshire Implementation Working Group with what needs to improve for the best outcomes of the victim.

Challenges

- Short term funding for services
- Demand v Resources
- Continued awareness raising
- Stereotype, mis-understanding and stigma

Partnership Working

- No one partner organisation can deal with or change domestic abuse on their own
- Co-ordinated approach
- Support of Voluntary sector
- Consistency of message, support, intervention
- Challenge and learning

Members Information

- A simple briefing sheet has been created with more information on :
 - ❖ What abuse is
 - ❖ Types of abuse
 - ❖ Support Services Available
- In May, a further presentation about abuse will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny on some of the learning from the Needs Assessment and the Staff Survey.

Domestic Abuse – Members Briefing Note

Who is affected by domestic abuse?

Domestic Abuse affects all people regardless of gender, race, culture, age, sexuality. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse; no one is excluded.

15% of men and 26% of women aged 16-59 had experienced some form of DA since the age of 16. This is equivalent to an estimated 2.4 million male victims and 4.3 million females nationally. For Central Bedfordshire, this is equivalent to an estimated 11,100 male victims and 19,300 female victims.

Domestic Abuse is not just committed by a partner; perpetrators can be family members, parents, siblings, children or other people living in the household.

Two women per week are killed by a current or former partner in the UK.

Some victims do not realise that their relationships are abusive; as they have been manipulated by the abusive partner and believe that they are to blame when things are not right.

There are points where abuse will escalate such as when a woman becomes pregnant, when an individual decides to leave the relationship and straight after an individual has left a relationship.

A child who is in a house where they hear abuse is affected by the trauma even if they have not physically witnessed it.

ONS, BCS Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences 2016/17 in ManKind Initiative, Male victims of domestic and partner abuse: 35 key facts, March 2018.

Using the 2011 Census population by age from the Office for National Statistics.

What is domestic abuse?

The current Government definition of domestic abuse is:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can include, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse.

Psychological

Physical

Sexual

Financial

Emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour”.

The definition also includes Honour Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

Types of abuse:

Psychological or emotional abuse – includes, being mocked, name calling, shouting, threatening the victim verbally; sulking, lying, threatening to refer the victim to social services or the mental health team saying that they are an unfit parent etc. Saying and giving the victim no choice in any decision making. Threatening to harm the victim or ones they love (including children and pets) or threatening to commit suicide.

Physical abuse – includes, slapping, punching, strangling, pushing, shoving, kicking, pulling hair, biting, burning, restraining. Forcing the victim to take drugs or alcohol against their will. Preventing the victim from getting medical support; withholding or controlling medication or forcing the victim to take medication.

Some of the physical injuries are short term and heal but some victims of domestic abuse experience other long-term ill health this can include asthma, bladder and kidney infections, cardiovascular disease, fibromyalgia, chronic pain syndromes, central nervous system disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, migraines/headaches. Some victims have to take absence time from work because of their injuries.

Sexual abuse – includes, forcing the victim to have sex against their will, threatening the victim to have sex even if they have said no, forcing the victim to look at pornography against their will, or forcing the victim to have sex with other people against their will.

There can be health consequences for women who have experienced sexual violence; gynaecological disorders, sexually transmitted infections, pre-term and pregnancy difficulties and miscarriage.

Financial abuse – includes, withholding money from the victim, controlling the victim's salary or benefits, stealing money from the victim, making the victim have to account for every penny spent, refusing to pay bills or offering financial support. Taking control of the household budget and not buying enough food for the family. Running up debts in the victim's name and then leaving them to pay that debt.

Controlling behaviour – includes, making the victim feel inferior and dependent upon the abuser. It can include isolation from family and friends; stopping the victim from leaving the house or going to work; preventing the victim attending medical appointments or always attending with the victim. Depriving the victim of their independence. Further isolating the victim by making visitors to the home feel uncomfortable by sitting in the same room. Telling the victim that their friends or family are flirting with the abuser.

Coercive behaviour – is a way of being controlled by the abuser who uses threats, assaults, humiliation and intimidation to punish the victim and to make the victim feel as though they are “walking on egg shells”. In public, the abuser behaves as though they are a perfect, caring partner and no one would believe that they could be a perpetrator of domestic abuse. This makes disclosure more difficult as victims feel that no one would believe them.

So called 'Honour' based abuse or violence – this type of abuse often has more than one perpetrator as other family members can be involved, punishing the victim for bringing so called 'shame' to the family. This might be because the young person is having a relationship outside the community that they live in. Sadly, family members can collude with each other to cover up the abuse. Young people have died at the hands of family members because of honour based violence. Victims can be subjected to physical abuse, threats of violence, emotional abuse; they may be taken somewhere against their will.

Forced marriage – where a person is coerced into marrying someone against their will. It is not an arranged marriage; sometimes a young person is taken abroad without prior knowledge that the marriage has been planned. Forced marriage affects a wide range of communities, including Irish Traveller, Turkish, Roma, Afghan, South Asian, Kurdish, Iranian, Arab and African communities. There are no religions which support or advocate the practice of forced marriage. Forced marriage can happen to anyone from any background, regardless of social class, financial status and sexuality; which include people who identify as lesbian, bi-sexual, gay and transgender, or are perceived as such.

Female genital mutilation – forced removal of external female genitalia; there are four types of FGM. FGM is illegal in the UK.

Stalking and Harassment – includes following the victim, turning up where the victim is, or insisting in going everywhere that the victim goes, checking the victim's phone or other devices, placing trackers on phones or devices. Sending unwanted texts, emails, What's App, Instagram or using other social media platforms to contact the victim when the contact is unwanted. Using other people's numbers to contact the victim or using withheld numbers. Contacting the victim via a third party or via children.

Stalking and harassment should not be dismissed and are real risks to a victim.

Religious / Spiritual – Faith based approaches to justice are very different than the criminal justice system. In the UK it is understood that a considerable amount of DA cases are mediated through Sharia Councils (30 in the UK) for Muslims, Beth Din's for Jews and Catholic Churches for Roman Catholics. The source of justice for the faith-based approaches is taken from the scriptures of the religion which are interpreted by those who run and mediate at faith-based organisations.

Victims who utilise faith-based justice have articulated they seek to be accepted by their community and in the eye of God and look to be believed.

Breaking down stereotypes

Domestic abuse is not just committed by a partner; perpetrators can be family members, parents, siblings or children living in the household.

Some victims do not realise that their relationships are abusive; as they have been manipulated by the abusive partner and believe that they are to blame when things are not right. A victim should never be blamed for any abuse.

A frequently asked question is "why doesn't she leave?" What we should be asking is "**why doesn't he stop**". Over a period of time the abuser will take away a victim's confidence, freedom, identity, money, and isolate them from friends and family. A victim can be constantly threatened that their abuser will kill them, kill the children, kill their pets or commit suicide if they left

Domestic Abuse is not one single incident or crime, it is a series or pattern of abuse over a prolonged period of time. Domestic abuse is about power, control and fear by one person over another.

DA Service in Central Bedfordshire Council

There is a dedicated team of four officers who support strategy, policy, action plans, commissioning of services, training, awareness raising, communication, engagement and who run the monthly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference for high risk victims across Central Bedfordshire.

The team are available to professionals to advise them in their case work and help to provide details of possible referral routes or support services that could help the individual or family they are working with.

The team assist officers who are victims of abuse themselves, or Managers who require some advice for a team member and are able to provide confidential support pathways and assist in personal safety planning.

The team can be contacted via bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse

The DA Service have developed a referral document which provides details of where victims, perpetrators and children can be referred for assistance and support: [Referral Document](#)

Need more information? You can go to our Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP) website where there is a Support Services Directory; <https://bedsdv.org.uk/service-directory/>

For members of the public who ask for a contact number there are two which we would provide:

National 24-hour DA Helpline: 0808 200 0247

Bedfordshire Signpost Hub 0800 028 2887

Contact us for more information...

You can follow the DA Service on Twitter and Facebook

Website: www.bedsdv.co.uk

Email: bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Twitter: @bedsdv

Facebook: @bedsdv