

## Domestic Abuse Guidance



# DOMESTIC ABUSE GUIDANCE

### What can you do to support people with care and support needs who are victims of domestic abuse?

As in all safeguarding work, it is important to give the person time to discuss their concerns. But in domestic abuse this is even more essential. In the field of Domestic abuse, professional talk about the principle of **safe enquiry** which is core to all work with victims of domestic violence. Research shows that female victims of domestic violence will not usually voluntarily disclose domestic violence to a professional unless they are directly asked.

Therefore you need to:

- follow the principles of safe enquiry and take protective measures to ensure that any discussions with potential victims of abuse are conducted in a safe environment
- understand that victims of abuse may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, but that the conversation may be helping them to understand their situation better and build up trust
- ask direct questions, in a safe environment
- keep good records of any discussions and interventions.
- follow local policies, protocols and procedures at all times.

### Agencies that can help in Buckinghamshire include:

Police – in an emergency 999, for less urgent issues call 101

Adult Safeguarding Team (MASH) 0800 137 915

Women's Aid Aylesbury - 01296 436827

Women's Aid High Wycombe 01494 461367



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This leaflet has been produced by Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Adults Board to provide advice and guidance to those working with adults with care and support needs. Further details on how to support people who are being abused can be found on the BSAB website: <http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.co.uk/safeguarding-adults-board/>

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### Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding

A large proportion of safeguarding adults work relates to the abuse or neglect of people with care and support needs who are living in their own homes. Domestic abuse is perhaps most commonly thought of as violence between intimate partners, but it can take many other forms and be perpetrated by a range of people. Much safeguarding of adults is therefore also domestic abuse

### What is Domestic Abuse?

The Home Office (March 2013) defines domestic abuse as:

*'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 can encompass 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.

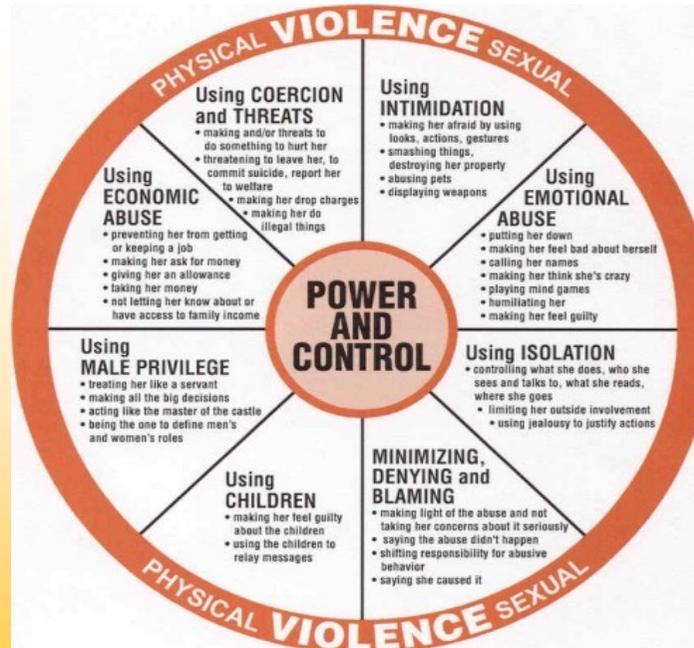
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'Coercive behaviour' is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

### Power and Control

Domestic abuse is about power and control and the wheel below can be used to help people understand how domestic abuse is affecting their lives

It enables both the worker and the victim to understand how the domestic abuse is being perpetrated and how then to work with the victim to help them to regain control of their lives.



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### What impact does domestic abuse have on people with care and support needs?

- Increased physical/mental disability.
- Reluctance to use essential routine medical services or to attend services outside the home where personal care is provided.
- Increased powerlessness, dependency and isolation.
- Feeling that their impairments are to blame.
- Increased shame about their impairments (for example in relation to needs for personal care.)
- Sexual abuse appears to be proportionately more common for disabled than for non-disabled women, perhaps reflecting particular vulnerabilities.
- The impact of domestic abuse is often especially acute where the abusive partner is also the carer, the carer has considerable power and control and the victim relies on them.

Research has mainly been carried out with women, and this has shown that:

- being disabled strongly affects the nature, extent and impact of abuse. Many abusers deliberately emphasise and reinforce dependency as a way of asserting and maintaining control
- perpetrators often use forms of abuse that exploit, or contribute to, the abused person's impairment.