

Domestic Abuse- a quick guide

February 2026



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Who is this guide for and why is it important?

Domestic Abuse is a complex subject that no agency should have to address alone. Any disclosure of Domestic Abuse should be Risk Assessed and action taken to support Victims and Survivors

Risk Assessment should be done by the person who receives disclosure/ suspects Domestic Abuse. This process is for all Professionals. You may hold the “missing piece of the jigsaw”. This does not replace Safeguarding procedures

All Victims of Crime are entitled to specialist support under Point 4 of The Victims Code 2021. Details of specialist support agencies in Cumbria are at slides 13 and 14

In an emergency, if someone is at risk or a crime is in progress, always dial 999



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What is a 'Domestic'?

It is rarely a one off incident; more usually it is a **PATTERN** of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks **POWER and CONTROL** over family members and partners



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Statutory Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse consists of the following between two people aged 16 or older who are 'personally connected'. 'Personally connected' includes those in an intimate personal relationship or those who are related.

Physical or sexual abuse

Controlling or coercive behaviour

Economic abuse

Psychological, emotional or other abuse

*** Remember- all violence is abuse, but not all abuse is violent**



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Children as Victims

Babies, Children and Young People are defined as victims in their own right if they see, hear or are otherwise affected by DA and are related to either the victim or perpetrator



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The revised Victims Code came into effect on 1 April 2021. These are MINIMUM standards for all Victims of Crime. All Crime Victims MUST be offered support under the Code

Victims of ANY crime have the right:

- 1.To be able to understand and to be understood
- 2.To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
- 3.To be provided with information when reporting the crime
- 4.To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs
- 5.To be provided with information about compensation
- 6.To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution
- 7.To make a victim personal statement
- 8.To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness
- 9.To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals
- 10.To be paid expenses and have property returned
- 11.To be given information about the offender following a conviction
- 12.To make a complaint about your rights not being met



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Risk assessment



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Risk Assessment Process

In Cumbria, we have adopted the following Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment- DASH- risk assessments. They are merged with the Homicide and Suicide Timelines tm developed by Professor Jane Monckton-Smith to give an actuarial assessment of risk of death as a result of Domestic Abuse.

- **Assessment 1:** Children and Young People DASH- for those aged 13-16 9 (no merged Timeline)
- **Assessment 2:** Combined DASH risk of Homicide for those aged 16-59
- **Assessment 3:** Combined DASH risk of Homicide for those aged 59 plus
- **Assessment 4:** Combined DASH risk of suicide all age

If a DASH is High Risk (14 yes answers or more OR based on Professional Judgement, the case needs to be referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference- MARAC, sending the DASH and MARAC Referral Form.

A MARAC update form should be completed in all MARAC cases by the allocated officer and submitted to the Children's Services Representative.

A record of the MARAC discussion and actions should be recorded on the relevant Case Management System.

A DASH should be refreshed with any escalation or de-escalation of Risk or every 3 months as good practice.



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Assessment Process- all agency

- Practice Active listening
- Don't prompt or coach
- Note body language, appearance
- Explain that you can try to help but don't make promises
- Explain that in order to support you need to take some details. Consent needed for Referral to Victim Support if low or standard risk. No consent needed for high risk
- High risk cases MUST be referred to MARAC using this referral form <https://safelives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Marac-referral-form-England-Wales.doc> and send to Marac@cumbria.pnn.police.cjsm.net or Marac@cumbria.police.uk
- You can only effectively comment on risk if you complete the assessment
- Seek support from a Specialist Agency
- Log with 101, 999 if it is an emergency. Victim wishes MUST be passed on
- Record safe contact method



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Further learning opportunities

- Responding Well to Domestic Abuse is the adopted baseline standard DA Training in Cumbria. External places can be booked here <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/responding-well-domestic-abuse-training-2275729?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=creatorshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=odclsxcollection&utm-source=cp&aff=escb>
- 90 Minute Briefing can be arranged for 'light touch organisations by contacting Mary-Claire.Telford@cumberland.gov.uk



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For any questions or queries, please contact:

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