

## 1. What is Domestic Abuse (DA)

The behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:

(a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, **and**

(b) the behaviour is abusive.

The behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

(a) physical or sexual abuse;

(b) violent or threatening behaviour;

(c) controlling or coercive behaviour;

(d) economic abuse;

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;

**and** it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. (DA Act 2021)

## 7. Useful local contacts

**Calderdale:** Domestic Abuse Health Service (business hours)  
**01422 337257**

[Staying Safe website](#) 01422 323339

[Directory of support services](#)

**Kirklees:** [Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership website](#) 01484 308300

[Directory of support services](#)

## 6. New DA Act 2021 aims to

♦ Improve the national response to DA e.g. court, police powers

♦ introduce a statutory disclosure scheme and protection order procedure to keep perpetrators away and victims safe

♦ extend definition of coercion and control crimes to include post-separation abuse and tighter laws around revenge porn and non-fatal strangulation

See factsheet [Domestic Abuse Act](#)

## Safeguarding: 7 Minute Briefing

### Domestic Abuse

July 2021



## 5. Risk Assessment

Automatic high risk indicators:

- Strangulation/suffocation
- Assault in pregnancy
- Sexual assault
- Assault with weapon
- Assault resulting in a fracture

If time permits complete a DASH [Risk assessment](#) **OR** liaise with local support agencies to arrange for contact to be made if consent is sought. (consent can be overruled in high risk cases—please seek further advice).

**ALWAYS DOCUMENT**, if relevant, quote the patient and provide as much detail as possible in the electronic record. [Guidance on recording domestic abuse in the electronic medical record](#) (RCGP)

## 2. Prevalence

Domestic abuse occurs irrespective of gender social class, racial, ethnic, cultural, religious or sexual relationships or identity. It affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men. In 2020 an estimated 2.3 million people experienced domestic abuse. The estimated cost to public services is £3.1 billion a year.

In West Yorkshire 2020/21, 57.5% of domestic incidents were recorded as a violent crime and repeat rates were 46%. Children are present at 29% of domestic incidents reported by police.

## 3. Possible indicators of abuse in primary care (NICE)

- ♦ low mood, PTSD, anxiety
- ♦ alcohol or substance misuse
- ♦ unexplained chronic pain
- ♦ gastrointestinal symptoms
- ♦ adverse reproductive and/or genitourinary concerns
- ♦ injury with implausible explanations
- ♦ headaches, cognitive problems
- ♦ repeated health consultations with no clear diagnosis
- ♦ intrusive 'other person' in consultations See [NICE](#) for info

## 4. Asking the question:

Before asking about DA offer confidentiality and ensure it is safe e.g. if a virtual consultation, ascertain who is present. Adapt an open and non-judgmental approach.

Some possible questions:

'Do you feel safe at home?'

'Do you feel at risk from someone at home/related to?'

**Or** you could ask a more direct question relating to the clinical presentation.

[A Guide for health professionals: Responding to domestic abuse](#)

If you feel the patient is at immediate risk please call **999**.