



Medway Domestic Abuse Assessment Reflection Aid for Children and Families

Domestic abuse is any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other as a result of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse.

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; or psychological, emotional or other abuse. This includes incidences where the abusive party directs their behaviour at another person (e.g. a child). Economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on someone's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

This aid has been developed for professionals working in Medway, hyperlinks throughout the document will take you to localised guidance/information and toolkits.

The aim of this assessment reflection aid is to support professionals in their approach and assessments where domestic abuse has been identified, to promote professionals' curiosity and it is also a helpful aid for reflective practice to support supervision practices. The aid identifies potential protective factors that may have been identified in homes where there is or has been domestic abuse. It also identifies risk factors, considerations and professionals prompts to be reflected on for children, victims/parents and perpetrators where identified protective factors are being relied on. The aid will support thinking about risks and needs of victims (including children) and perpetrators as individuals, intervention and prevention strategies and other influences on risk.

These risk factors and considerations/prompts should be reflected on in assessments, as part of [safety planning](#), to support professional curiosity and help identify the need for any further referrals or further information. Where there are [counter allegations](#) of abuse consider "who is doing what to whom and with what effect?". Mutual violence in relationships is rare and there is usually a primary aggressor and primary victim.

This aid is not a risk assessment of domestic abuse and does not replace the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Abuse) Risk Identification Checklist which should be completed after each incident of domestic abuse. [DASH resources](#). It is **not** a tool to be used with children/victims/perpetrators and professionals are encouraged to reflect on the document when needed and not remember the full contents.

Where there are limited protective factors, violence and psychological abuse of victims, emotional abuse of children and domestic abuse risk facts as identified by the DASH and the [Medway Threshold Guidance for children in need](#) are present appropriate referrals must be made to [MARAC](#) (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and [children's and/or adult's social care](#).

Further information about Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse services across Kent and Medway can be found [here](#). The Medway Domestic Abuse Service is provided by [Oasis](#) and supports high and medium risk victims. Oasis may be able to offer additional support for families once a victim/survivor is open to them. Standard risk victims are supported by [Victim Support](#). Medway's Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop for victims of Domestic Abuse takes place every Tuesday morning at the Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road. Male victims can also access the [Male Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service](#) from Look Ahead.

Working with perpetrators of Domestic Abuse guidance can be found [here](#).

National resources include: [Women's Aid](#), [Man Kind](#), [Galop \(LGBT+\)](#)

Protective factor: Victim has left the relationship and the perpetrator/victim has left the home.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ongoing child contact with perpetrator and impact this has on the victim and child. Is this court ordered? Has this been reviewed? Are the children new to the area? Medway Children and family hubs or download the Medway Family Hub App 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk to victim and child increases at point of relationship breakdown. Is the victim suffering from stalking and harassment? Has the victim left or attempted to leave the relationship before? What were the barriers to leaving previously or the reason for returning? If the victim has to leave their home what is their housing plan? Are they at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse, hate crimes or harassment? Are there concerns about financial support and access to benefits? Does the victim need a place in a refuge? Is the victim being abused via social media or technology? Are they safe online? Does the victim need support with obtaining occupation orders and non-molestation orders and has no access to legal aid? Does the victim and perpetrator share any assets, business or pets that would continue contact? Have pets been abused or used as a tool for control? What is the victim's immigration status? Do they have insecure immigration status? The right to remain toolkit. Does the victim have no recourse to public funds? Is the victim new to the area? Consider introduction to local services. Is there a domestic abuse safety plan in place? Consider appropriate apps for support. E.g. Hollie Guard or Bright Sky Is the victim elderly and being abused by their partner or family? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we know what understanding and beliefs the perpetrators has that are associated with abusive behaviours, vulnerability, social isolation and discrimination? Is there only one perpetrator or multi? Are family members involved in the abuse? Is there any risk of Honour Based Abuse? Have you consulted the HBA Identification tool? Has ending the relationship ended the abuse? Has the perpetrator been imprisoned for violent and sexual offences? Are they under MAPPA and have a Risk management plan? Have you identified the primary aggressor appropriately? Is there evidence of counter allegations and resistant violence?

Protective factor: Child/parent relationship is nurturing, protective and stable.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who witness domestic abuse are victims too. They are at risk of short and long term physical and mental health problems. Consider whether the child 'normalises' the abuse. Have the child's own vulnerabilities been acknowledged? Who is part of the family? Where does the child fit in? What behaviours do the children exhibit towards both the abusive and non-abusive parent? Would the family benefit from the NSPCC program, Domestic Abuse, Recovering Together (DART) Currently delivered through Medway Council Early Help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the victim be expected to manage contact arrangements? Consider other influencing factors e.g., financial, substance misuse, housing and relocation/isolation issues. Consider other influencing vulnerabilities of the victim including neurodiversity, learning disabilities or difficulties, physical disabilities, substance misuse or mental health. Consider the impact of parents' own childhood experiences or domestic abuse and abuse and neglect. Does the victim need support through the family court and has no access to legal aid? Could family with children under five use some additional support in the community? Home-start Medway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and child/ren. Consider the motivation of the perpetrator. Are they child/ren focused or victims focused?

Protective factor: Presence of children was a restraint for the abuser.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider impact of children's routine changing e.g., being out of the home at early years settings, school/college or with other relatives/friends. Consider what has happened during incidences of abuse, did the child have a role? E.g., surveillance of victim for perpetrator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider times when the victim is "child free" i.e., social situations, or at work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic abuse escalates as it is repeated so this may change, use of alcohol or substances or change in mental health may also impact this.

Protective factor: Abuser accepts responsibility for abuse and violence.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the impact of experiences of previous abuse and violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they recognise coercive and controlling behaviour? Does the victim recognise the abuse and accept there are associated risks? Consider how the victim may be accepting blame and responsibility for abuser's actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the perpetrator's history associated with domestic abuse? Did they experience it in their childhood or in previous relationships? Abuse and violence may still continue despite abuser accepting responsibility.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the victim completed any domestic abuse educational programmes? Consider Phoenix provided through Oasis and Medway Early Help Services for cases open to Medway children's services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perpetrator has no regard to the impact on the child/ren. Do they recognise coercive and controlling behaviour? Consider other external risk factors or influencing factors for the abuser that are present that may continue the abuse including financial, substance misuse, mental health, housing issues and other historical issues. Consider any impact of learning difficulties. Has the perpetrator previous adhered to any order, injunctions or bail conditions? What has been the result of past police investigations?
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Protective factor: Abuser indicates genuine remorse and is willing to seek support, or engage with services, to address their abusive behaviour.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider what the voice of the child and their lived experience is. Consider the risks/signs of the child continuing to witness domestic abuse where reports are that the abuse has ceased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and review safety planning is in place for the victim and children in case of future abuse/violence. Consider what continued support the victim may need and ensure that their voice continues to be heard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge/recognise trends and patterns of previous behaviour of abuser and levels of engagement with support/programmes or domestic abuse work. Are services/programmes available? CDAP or Intervention Alliance. If not, what support is needed/available? Does the language the perpetrator uses support their remorse? Do they demonstrate empathy for the victim and children? Does the perpetrator express male dominant and patriarchal views? Do they see women as their equals? Does the perpetrator demonstrate intolerance of certain groups? Consider risk of extremism and radicalisation. Is there evidence of victim blaming? Or counter allegations and perpetrator presenting as a victim? Respect toolkit Is there evidence of sustained progress? Are the identified next steps to support abusers' rehabilitation and continued progress realistic and achievable? Consider if the perpetrator is working/volunteering with children and/or adults. Is a LADO referral required? Is there a concern that the perpetrator is in

a position of trust? [Children's LADO](#) or for [Adult's Managing concerns around people in positions of trust](#)

Protective factor: Victim has positive support from family/friends and community.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider impact of a move on children including education, social and emotional impact, and historical issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Victim could still have a number of external vulnerabilities and not share these with support networks, meaning they and their children are still at risk.What other support measures can be put in place either in partnership with family/friends and community, or provided by other multi- agencies?Family and friends may not be protective factors due to their own vulnerabilities or there may be a history of poor relationships.Has there been appropriate consideration of cultural influences to the support available?Consider whether abuser knows whereabouts of victims' family and friends and how close to the victim/abuser current address these networks are.Consider their understanding of domestic abuse given their own histories.Are there any disability issues that may contribute to isolation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider possibility of coercion of these family/friends by perpetrator into the abuse or using them to keep track of the victim. This is particularly true of identified Honour based abuse.Consider if there is a family/friends/communities held belief (influence by perceived culture or otherwise) that agrees with male dominance.Be alert to domestic abuse having occurred or occurring in extended families.

Protective factor: Victim will seek positive support from new partner; they also offer child a positive and nurturing relationships.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider impact of separations from significant others.Is the new relationship positive and nurturing for all children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There could be a risk of repeat victimisation. Explore the history of the significant other/new partner. Consider the Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme "Clare's Law" for new, current or ex partners.Does the new partner have their own vulnerabilities including learning disabilities or difficulties, physical disabilities, substance misuse or mental health?Consider potential for stalking and harassment by perpetrator and possibly new partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider possibility/risk of a new relationship being a trigger for stalking and harassment of victim and new partner by perpetrator.

Protective factor: Victim appears emotionally strong (not worn-down by the abuse).

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the mental health of the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ongoing impact of trauma. Does the victim self-blame? Where does the self-blame come from? New/current partner has history of domestic abuse and/or being abusive. History of being in different abusive relationships. Victims can build emotional resilience to abuse and learn to minimise or deny abuse, appearing 'unfazed' by abuse. Consider future safety planning and other future risk factors that might de-stabilise the victims' emotional state. Is there any evidence of self-neglect? Consider any potential impact of mental health issues when they are not being managed. Are there any signs of self-harm or suicide attempts or ideation? Suicide prevention Consider victim's coping strategies; does it include drugs/alcohol? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider escalation and change in abuse to counter victim's appearance of being emotionally strong.

Protective factor: Victim will seek or has sought appropriate support and/or is willing to accept help from other agencies. This includes taking advice on safety issues.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are children focused agencies appropriately involved? Are children appropriately involved in safety plans? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider sustainability of engagement with supportive services and victim's capacity to make informed decisions during times of high-risk abuse. How well were previous services/support engaged in? Did completing programmes make a difference, can the victim demonstrate learning? Do victims need support to engage with other multi-agency support? Consider what other multi-agency partners should be involved; are there any gaps? Are any agencies working in isolation? Consider any levels of control interfering with their level of commitment to engage. Consider risk to victim when attempting to communicate with them and the potential for 'rapid' escalation of violence at point of implementing safety planning and possible exit from the relationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider previous trends of behaviour of the abuser in terms of control and tactics to resume the relationship.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the victim does act on the safety advice given, consider that the level of risk could increase for them and their children. • Acknowledge that the victim is still vulnerable if other risk factors are not considered; including whereabouts of abuser and the abuser's current situation. • Does the victim want to make an non-emergency report to the police? 	
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Protective factor: Despite abuse, victim was not prevented from meeting the needs of their children.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we know about their age, development, health, and emotional needs? • Are there factors that make the child more vulnerable? • Consider impact of abuse on the children and how they have been affected; has the victim actually been able to meet all needs? Including emotional? • Does changing routines impact this i.e., when children are more likely to be in the home during school holidays? • Is there evidence of neglect? Consider the Graded Care Profile to support working with the family or support referral to children's services. • Is there pressure to conform to stereotypical gender roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how the victim will process the abuse experienced and acknowledge the impact the abuse on their parenting. • Consider if this could be a normalised behaviour that the victim will take into future relationships or accept in their children's behaviours. • Consider holistic package of support provided to the victim and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what caring responsibilities are held by the perpetrator and the impact on these on child contact or effect of the loss of this support.

Protective factor: Older children use coping/protective strategies.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the children been overlooked? Older children will still need professional multi-agency support and future referrals to relevant agencies. • Consider vulnerability levels of older children and potential to become an abuser/victim themselves. • Are they experience healthy relationships with their peers? • Consider role the child may have had to assume in the home. Are they young carers? Do they have to look after their siblings? • Consider emotional trauma that the older child has experienced and opportunities to provide relevant individual support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the victim able to implement and maintain appropriate boundaries and discipline? • Does the victim/parent understand their role in supporting coping/protective strategies for their children? • Does the victim seek support for themselves from their children? • Consider signs of Adolescent to parent abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What interaction is there with the perpetrator? What access does the perpetrator have to the older children to challenge these coping/protective strategies?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider children’s behaviours and signs of behaviours associated with response to trauma. Have the children been “adultified” and seen as culpable of dealing with their experiences? <p>Also see next protective factor.</p>		
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Protective factor: Victim attempted to use protective strategies, or safety plans, for themselves and with the children.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the emotional wellbeing of the children. Do the children exhibit any behaviours suggesting emerging concerns e.g., self-harming, harmful sexual behaviour or risk-taking behaviour, drug or alcohol use. Are the children at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the victim trying to use protective strategies, but the abuser’s violence and control is intense? Consider safety planning if abuser finds out that the victim is implementing protective strategies. Consider professional multi-agency support with victim and with older children, including future referrals to relevant agencies and family group work. Are the protective strategies put in place by the victim sustainable? Consider what the impact of escalation of abuse/violence would be on these strategies. Consider multi-agency services to help support the victim and make the home safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the victim’s implementation of protective strategies lead to a change in the perpetrator’s behaviour?

Protective factor: Victim has insight into the risks to their children posed by the abuse.

Child focused considerations / prompts	Victim/parent focused considerations / prompts	Perpetrator / abuser considerations / prompts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are agencies allowed access to complete direct work with the children? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the victim able to implement safety planning to prevent the risk to their children posed by the abuse? Does the victims support networks, including partner agencies, enable them to extend this insight into action? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the perpetrator demonstrate insight or take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour on the children?

Find Domestic Abuse related multi agency training information [here](#) and free learning webinars [here](#)

To suggest any amendments or additions to the above document please email mscp@medway.gov.uk