

Domestic Violence and Abuse



Background

The Definition of “domestic abuse” in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) is:
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.
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.

Further Information

- [WM Child Protection Procedures – 2.24 Domestic violence and abuse](#)
- [Talk 2 someone Warwickshire](#)

Why is it important?

Every year, over two million people in the UK experience DVA. Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone and 62% of children in households where DVA is happening are also directly harmed. All agencies must ensure their staff, carers and volunteers are fully aware of the impact DVA can have on victims and their children and how to safeguard them.

What can I do?

- Seek advice, make a referral or signpost to the [Refuge Warwickshire DVA Service](#) for support.
- Complete a DASH risk assessment and if appropriate, make a referral to [MARAC](#)
- If a child is living within the property and is at risk of significant harm, contact [Warwickshire’s Children & Families Integrated Front Door](#)..If anyone is in immediate danger call Warwickshire Police 999

What are the indicators an adult is experiencing DVA*?

- frequent or reoccurring injuries with unlikely explanations
- appearing frightened, ashamed and evasive
- stress or anxiety disorders; isolation from friends, family or colleagues; depression, panic attacks or other symptoms; alcohol and/or drug abuse; suicide attempts

What else should I consider?

Parents experiencing DVA may also be experiencing other issues such as mental health problems and substance misuse. The ‘multiplicative’ impact of combinations of factors have been found to increase the risk of harm to children. Professionals need to be mindful of how these issues interlink and assess the impact of the issues both together and separately to ensure the interventions put in place are as effective as possible in promoting the safety and wellbeing of all members of a household.

What are the indicators that a child is living in a home where DVA is happening*?

- frequent or reoccurring injuries with unlikely or no explanations
- low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm
- behavioural issues, antisocial or criminal behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, absenteeism, or a reluctance to go home

* This is not an exhaustive list. For more indicators and information, please visit [2.24 Domestic violence and abuse of the WM Child Protection Procedures in box 7](#)