

Every Child Matters And Domestic Abuse

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THAMES VALLEY
PARTNERSHIP 
Working for safer communities

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1. Introduction

The publication of Every Child Matters prompted the Thames Valley Partnership to review research that is available in relation to domestic abuse and the effects on children within the context of this framework. The following charts illustrate that domestic abuse is a central theme that cuts across all sectors of the framework and the implications for Children's Trusts, partner agencies and the education sector are clear. Most of the research relates to domestic violence, but it can equally well be applied to child sexual abuse which can be an integral part of domestic abuse and should not be considered as a separate dynamic where the safety of children is concerned.

It should be remembered that the impacts of domestic abuse on children will be dependant on age, culture, economic status, gender, disability, child's own resilience, type of abuse, extent and frequency of abuse and prevailing protective factors. Professionals often minimise the impact of domestic abuse on children

Statistics show that at any one time as many as one in 10 women may be experiencing domestic violence. The recent Police domestic violence risk assessment pilot demonstrated that in nearly 80% of cases, children were living in the household and other research estimates that if there is inter-parental violence there is at least a one in two chance that the children are being directly abused as well.

Many children despite exposure to domestic abuse will go on to have very successful lives with reduced impacts of previous violence often due to the interplay of protective factors. Any education policy with regard to domestic abuse should seek to support, strengthen or provide some of these factors. They include: -

- Intervention and prevention of further abuse
- Support within the family – non-abusive parent, sibling
- Support outside the family – peers, relatives, teachers etc
- Individual child's disposition and coping strategies
- Opportunity to discuss experiences in a safe environment

This document is not intended to be exhaustive but to provide examples within the categories of Every Child Matters of the wide ranging effects on children of domestic abuse and the implications for agencies. Details have also been provided of some of the initiatives and approaches that could be undertaken to address these issues more effectively with young people.

‘Be Healthy’

Physically Healthy	Mentally & Emotionally Healthy	Sexually Healthy	Healthy Lifestyle	Choose Not To Take Illegal Drugs
Actual injury (direct abuse, intervening in an incident or excessive physical punishment) Fearfulness Physical symptoms of anxiety Eating difficulties & disorders Self-harm Weight loss Higher risk of suicide Abnormal neurological development Disability due to abuse of the mother in pregnancy General poorer health Impact on healthy growth Psychosomatic illnesses	Psychological problems Emotional problems Disrupted development Anxiety Low self-esteem Isolation / Loneliness Denial own needs and feelings Uncertainty Faulty attachments Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Aggression & anger Behavioural problems Poor parenting – affects protective factors Stress Depression Guilt & Shame Irritability Feelings powerlessness	Teenage pregnancy Coping with puberty without support Boys – increased risk of sexually abusing Direct sexual abuse Poor sexual image Sexual acting out Increased risk of prostitution	Lack of sleep Chaotic routine Sleep disturbance / nightmares Flashbacks & intrusive thoughts Disruption of general home life Poor social skills	Higher risk of parents abusing drugs & alcohol More likely to spend time on the streets More likely to abuse drugs/alcohol More likely to truant More likely to run away

What Children’s Trusts, Partners & Schools Can Do

School medical or regular dental & medical checks Engagement of school nurses Sex education – broader scope Sexual abuse awareness raising Drug & alcohol awareness with an additional perspective Schools to explore links between mental health issues and domestic violence Proactive child protection procedures within schools Whole school approach to emotional well-being and social competence Parenting classes – as part of extended community agenda
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‘Stay Safe’

Safe From Maltreatment, Neglect, Violence & Sexual Exploitation	Safe From Accidental Injury & Death	Safe From Bullying & Discrimination	Safe From Crime & Anti-social Behaviour In & Out of School	Have Security, Stability and Are Cared For
Risk physical abuse Risk of sexual abuse	Risk of familial homicide Risk of child homicide Risk of parental neglect Risk of lack of parental supervision	Increased risk of bullying Risk of reinforcing racial ‘isolation’	Spend more time on the streets Runaways – increased risk of being victim of crime Behavioural problems	Insecure family environment Fear of break-up of family Fearfulness and uncertainty Increased risk of neglect

What Children’s Trusts, Partners & Schools Can Do

<p>Promote sibling support</p> <p>Promote social networks outside the family</p> <p>Peer support groups</p> <p>Friendship/buddying schemes</p> <p>Adult champions of the children</p> <p>Advocacy services</p> <p>Teach coping strategies / safety planning</p> <p>Address issues of citizenship and personal safety within the curriculum</p> <p>Explore role of arts, media in awareness raising</p> <p>Address issues of abuse within dating relationships – dating violence prevention courses</p> <p>Education about the role of internet, mobile phones etc in abuse</p> <p>Relevant contact information for help lines and support services available</p> <p>Information provided on internet sites that can provide good information</p> <p>Primary prevention programmes to be introduced in both primary and secondary schools with messages incorporated across the curriculum, not just in PHSE to increase the impact and re-enforce the message</p> <p>Specialist PHSE teachers</p> <p>Effective anti-bullying policy / whole school anti-bullying campaign</p> <p>Whole-school non violence policy and prevention programme</p> <p>Staff training in responding to disclosure, contact with parents, confidentiality</p> <p>Active links between the school and child protection/welfare agencies</p> <p>Exploration of the overlaps between attitudes towards personal violence and sexual practice</p> <p>Schools to appreciate the range of benefits of tackling domestic abuse will have in other areas</p>
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‘Enjoy & Achieve’

Ready For School	Attend & Enjoy School	Achieve Educational Standards at Primary School	Achieve Personal & Social Development & Enjoy Recreation	Achieve Educational Standards at Secondary School
<p>May excuse themselves from school for fear of harm to a parent or being abandoned Pupil mobility and problems of being on the roll only short term Needed at home to provide practical or emotional support Attendance from refuges Disruption in the routine of attending school</p>	<p>Absent from school looking after parent or sibling Increased truancy Increased risk of running away from home Higher risk of exclusion Separation anxiety</p>	<p>Difficult to concentrate Memory impaired Risk of academic performance below ability</p>	<p>Feelings of helplessness and lack of control hinder development Isolation Prevention of participation in out-of-school activities Interference in development of relationship with friends, teachers etc Reduction in understanding of social situations</p>	<p>Difficult to concentrate Memory impaired Risk of academic performance below ability</p>

What Children’s Trusts, Partners & Schools Can Do

<p>Well monitored school attendance Improved tracking of children within Education sector Vigilant & sympathetic teachers Available mentor or trusted adult Counselling – from specialists in domestic violence Referral or attendance at specialist child support groups Child development workers – especially in temporary accommodation Peer support groups for new children Peer education programmes Opportunity to discuss their experiences with others and peers Effective domestic violence awareness training for all school staff including risk factors, recognising abuse and the effects of abuse More focused strategy on teaching about domestic violence as part of the curriculum School providing an important supportive environment for children living with violence and can contribute to protective factors. Organised out of school activities</p>
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‘Make a Positive Contribution’

Engage In Decision Making & Support Community & Environment	Engage In Law Abiding & Positive Behaviour In & Out of School	Develop Positive Relationships & Choose Not To Bully or Discriminate	Develop Self Confidence & Successfully Deal With Life Changes & Challenges	Develop Enterprising Behaviour
Cautious of exposing family life to outside society Lack of belief in a benevolent world	Increased risk of conduct disorders Increased risk of criminal activity Affects development of morality Increased anti-social behaviour Exacerbates risk taking	Increased risk of bullying Higher risk of being bullied Adjustment issues Protective of abused parent Introverted or withdrawn Poor social skills Friendships restricted Lack of ability to maintain relationships Inability to trust Learn violence as a means of conflict resolution Learned victimisation May become adult abusers Early marriage	Risk of being too advanced in maturity and sense of responsibility Lack of parental appreciation of effects of distress Poor parenting Lack of support in puberty Lack of support in transition	Developmental delays Risk of poor achievement at school inhibits contributions elsewhere

What Children’s Trusts, Partners & Schools Can Do

PHSE – curriculum to include work on mutual respect, peer based conflict resolution skills, healthy relationships, gender discrimination, supportive anti-violence work, parenting skills etc

Comprehensive focus on bullying could also include wider anti-violence concepts and anti-racism

Holistic school approach to prevention to include – parents, local media, community groups, arts, governors etc

YOT teams to more fully engage with the domestic violence agenda

‘Achieve Economic Well-Being’

Engage In Further Education, Employment or Training After School	Ready For Employment	Live In Decent Homes & Sustainable Communities	Access To Transport & Material Goods	Live In Households Free From Low Income
Threats of abduction or forced marriage Lack of belief in surviving to adulthood Lower academic achievement reducing later education options or employment opportunities	Low self-esteem Low belief in abilities	Fear family will be broken up Ethnic considerations – racist/hostile community	Potential economic hardship Potential financial abuse	Financial hardship due to financial abuse, single-parenting, separation etc

What Children’s Trusts, Partners & Schools Can Do

Early intervention and protection

3. Statistics & Relevant Information

2001/2 - 25,000 children stayed in refuges and 120,000 were supported by domestic violence services – only those identified

Annual cost of domestic violence to social services is estimated at £0.25 billion – overwhelmingly for services to children

The majority of children who have an abused parent are aware of the abuse. Research shows that up to 66% of these children will be directly abused themselves. However the separation in policy and practice of adult abuse and the overlap with child abuse, consistently provides under-estimates of the effects on children. 59% of mothers with children on the child protection register were subjected to domestic violence.

Studies of child death enquiries found a strong association between domestic violence and fatal child abuse. In serious case reviews of child deaths, one of the commonly recurring features was domestic violence.

25% of children in refuges have been shown to have clinical problems for behaviour and social competence.

A study of children living in violent families in USA showed below average school performance, doubled rate of absence from school, behavioural problems in class and some 38% (twice that expected) were receiving special educational service, when compared with a control group of children not living with violence.

Currently very few services are provided for child experiencing domestic violence usually confined to Women's Aid and children's charities.

Young people's survey (Lifetime Television) 57% men (aged 19-21) say they know a woman who has been sexually assaulted.

Teenage girls are more likely to see teachers and counsellors as allies and recommend to a friend to seek help. Teenage girls are more likely to access the Internet for information. There is a need to educate boys to better understand that victims need support and help.

UK – Boswell found that 72% of young offenders incarcerated for grave crimes reported some form of abuse as children.

'Too few schools saw achievements in PSHE as related to their pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. PSHE programmes did not give pupils the opportunity to explore issues effectively'. Ofsted 2005

4. Context

Every Child Matters – Prevention of abuse fits within all the targets

Children' s Act 1989 & 2004 – safeguard and promote child welfare, requires LEAs to assist, child protection. Key themes Partnership, Accountability, Safeguarding, Prevention & Early Intervention – more proactive responsibilities.

Sexual Offences Act 2003 – under 13 sexual activity always unacceptable, 13-15 tighter restraints on consent, grooming, abuse of position of trust,

Education Act 2002 – Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children – responsible governing bodies, child protection

Healthy Schools – reduce health inequalities, address social exclusion, raise achievement – 'making the whole person a whole school issue'

Implementing The New Domestic Violence Best Value Performance Indicator – Local Government Association BVPI 225 Action Against Domestic Violence 10 – Has the local authority funded and developed a domestic violence education pack in consultation with the wider domestic violence forum?

Local Safeguarding Children Committees – preventative responsibilities

Home Office Evaluation - Tackling Domestic Violence Effective Interventions & Approaches – Role of Education

Local Children's Services Plans and Community Safety Plans - required to set out how they address domestic violence as an issue as well as its impact on children.

Home Office Guidance - Partnerships In Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Forums and ACPCs - should have cross membership and aim to map the number of children involved in domestic violence, assess their needs, assess adequacy of services to meet those needs, consider the implications for local services especially education

Surveys of Young People - Worrying attitudes to violence in relationships among young people

5. General Research References

Children & Domestic Violence – Research In Practice Paper Humphreys & Mullender

Domestic Violence Source Book – Berry 2000

Every Child Matters: Change For Children In Schools – Department of Education & Skills 2004

Healthy Minds – Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being In Schools – Ofsted 2005

It Hurts – Survey of The Findings On The Effects of Violence on Children – Thames Valley Partnership 2001

Lifetime Anti-violence Youth & Young Adult Survey – Michael Cohen Group

Reducing Domestic Violence – What Works? Meeting The Needs of Children – Audrey Mullender – Home Office Briefing Paper

Personal, Social & Health Education in Secondary Schools – Ofsted 2005

Problems at Home, Problems at School – NSPCC

Safe – Domestic Abuse Quarterly – Impact of Domestic Violence on a Child's Education – Autumn 2003

Tackling Domestic Violence: Effective Interventions & Approaches – Home Office Research Study 290

Tackling Domestic Violence: Providing Support For Children Who Have Witnessed Domestic Violence – Home Office Development & Practice Report 33

The Cost of Domestic Violence – Woman & Equality Unit 2004 – Sylvia Walby

Young People's Attitudes Towards Violence, Sex & Relationships – Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust



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