

Bristol Healthy Schools



School's Pack

What is domestic and sexual abuse, how to identify it, and how to respond to disclosures.

If you have concerns about a child/young person, contact First Response (0117 903 6444), and/or the Police (101/999)



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Introduction

This guidance has been developed in order to support staff in all education settings in Bristol to respond effectively to disclosures of domestic and sexual abuse and to work successfully to prevent all forms of gendered violence.

Domestic and sexual abuse is a broad umbrella term covering a variety of different issues including:

- Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) including peer to peer abuse between teenagers
- Sexual violence and rape
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Human trafficking/ sexual exploitation
- Sexual harassment/ sexual bullying

Definitions

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

Bristol defines domestic violence and abuse as follows:

- The misuse of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and/or financial control by one person over another who is or has been in a relationship. This includes family members.
- Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) covers a wide range of behaviours and may be actual or threatened.
- DVA includes forced marriage, so-called “honour”-based violence, and female genital mutilation.
- DVA also includes the use of children to control an adult victim. Because of this, child abuse and domestic abuse can overlap.
- DVA is usually perpetrated by men against women, but not exclusively.

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- DVA is a continuing pattern of events, behaviour and coercive control.
- DVA occurs in all groups and sections of society and may be experienced differently, due to, and compounded by race, sexuality, disability, age, religion, culture, class or mental health.

The Government’s definition, amended in April 2013 to include 16 and 17 year olds, and coercive control is:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional. Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

Teen Abuse

It is important to remember that children and young people are not only affected by domestic and sexual abuse against a parent, but as they develop their own intimate relationships, they may perpetrate or become victims of abuse and violence themselves. This applies to all young people, not only to those who have previously experienced domestic violence and abuse at home.

A piece of NSPCC research in schools found that of 1,361 young people, aged 13-17:

- **25% of girls and 18% of boys** reported physical violence – 75% of girls and 14% of boys stated a negative impact
- **35% of girls and 16% of boys** reported sexual violence – 70% of girls and 13% of boys stated a negative impact
- **75% of girls and 50% of boys** reported emotional violence - 31% of girls and 6% of boys reported a negative impact

Young people’s relationships are often experienced as intensely as adult relationships; however lack of experience and an acceptance of peer group norms can make it difficult for young people to recognise abuse within a relationship.

“I felt confused, I knew what was happening was wrong but I also didn’t know what was right. I had never been told what was normal in a relationship and I didn’t realise that it’s ok to say no and that he should have respected that”

Amy’s Story, The Hideout, Women’s Aid

It is vital that education settings can be both a safe place for young people to disclose concerns about their relationships, and a source of targeted prevention programmes which demonstrate to young people what healthy relationships look like.

Sexual Violence:

Sexual violence and abuse is any unwanted sexual act or sexual activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including, but not restricted to; rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force on the 1st May 2004. The Act extends the definition of rape to include the penetration by a penis of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person. The 2003 Act also updates the law about consent and belief in consent.

The word 'consent' in the context of the offence of rape is now defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. A person consents if she or he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual assault is an act of physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, which is inflicted on someone without consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts.

Forced Marriage:

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress (emotional pressure in addition to physical abuse) is a factor. It is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage, and the two should not be confused.

In an arranged or assisted marriage, the families take a role in choosing and introducing the marriage partners but the marriage is entered into freely by both people, without duress being a factor. In a forced marriage, this consent does not exist.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

In 2004 the Government's definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called 'honour crimes', which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence. Many of these acts are committed against children.

Forced Marriage Unit:
Telephone: 020 7008 0151
Email: fmufco.gov.uk

If there are concerns that a child (male or female) is in danger of a forced marriage, local agencies and

professionals should contact the **Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)** – where experienced caseworkers are able to offer support and guidance – or visit the FMU page of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website. Police and children's social care should also be contacted.

All those involved should bear in mind that mediation as a response to forced marriage can be extremely dangerous. Refusal to go through with a forced marriage has, in the past, been linked to so-called 'honour crimes'.¹

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

FGM is an illegal practice and is a form of child abuse. Female Genital Mutilation is any procedure which involves the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Types of FGM

FGM Type 1

Is the partial or total removal of the clitoris

FGM Type 2

Excision - removal of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora

FGM Type 3

Infibulation - removal of the clitoris and labia minora with narrowing by stitching of the vaginal opening

FGM Type 4

All other types of harmful traditional practices that mutilate the female genitalia, including pricking, cutting, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterisation

Health Implications

Short term: Severe pain and shock; broken limbs from being held down; infection; increased risk of HIV; urine retention; injury to adjacent tissues and immediate fatal haemorrhaging.

As a professional you should:

- Familiarise yourself with the warning signs of FGM and know how to make a child protection referral
- Get further training around FGM and Safeguarding children.
<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/children-home/training/#TrainProgramme>
- Ask for help from other organisations and the Bristol FGM Delivery and Safeguarding Partnership
- Support the city's FGM summer campaign in school settings, see www.bava.org.uk for more details.

How and where may it happen?

School holidays are seen as a key time when daughters may be taken abroad with the intention of subjecting them to FGM. Or an elder could be flown into the UK to perform FGM on many girls together.

FGM is considered by some to be a rite of passage for girls from being a child to a woman. It is generally performed on girls aged 8-14, but can be done at any age.

A woman may ask to be closed/ resutured following the birth of her child.

These are all illegal under UK law.

What can you do?

Professionals and volunteers from all agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM.

Human Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation:

Human trafficking includes the threat or use of force, coercion, deception and abuse of power to control another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Exploitation can include:

- sexual exploitation, for example, forcing someone to have sex for money
- forced labour for example, forcing someone to work long hours, in hard conditions and to hand over most if not all of their wages
- domestic servitude, for example, forcing someone to perform household tasks such as child care and house-keeping over long hours and for little if any pay
- trafficking people in order to use their internal organs for transplant without their permission

Both adults and children can be trafficked, and they can come to the UK from other countries or they can be moved within a country, for example from Manchester to Bristol.

“The women in my family have been cut in the past. I am very worried this will happen to me. I spoke to my teacher about my concerns and she explained that there are people who can help and protect me. A social worker came and spoke to me and then to my family. By talking about this, my parents are educated about the law and they can understand my fears and protect me.”

10 year old girl

Children are trafficked for many reasons, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud and involvement in criminal activity such as pick-pocketing, theft and working in cannabis farms.

Whilst the majority of child trafficking cases known about involve cross border movement, it is also known that child trafficking occurs within the UK. A number of serious cases involving organised child sexual exploitation and trafficking have raised this issue and schools should be aware of the risks in relation to this type of trafficking.

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse, in which a young person is manipulated or forced into taking part in a sexual act. This could be as part of a seemingly consensual relationship, or in return for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol or somewhere to stay.

The young person may think that their abuser is their friend, or even their boyfriend or girlfriend. But they will put them into dangerous situations, forcing the young person to do things they don't want to do. The abuser may physically or verbally threaten the young person, or be violent towards them. They will control and manipulate them, and try to isolate them from friends and family.

Sexual harassment/ sexual bullying:

Sexual harassment in education is any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that can interfere with a student's ability to learn, study, work or participate in school activities. Sexual harassment involves a range of behaviours including, but not limited to sexist language or bullying, using the word 'gay' to describe something bad, teasing someone about their sexuality or sex life, and groping a student in the corridor. Sexual harassment can range from mild annoyances to sexual assault and rape and can be physical, verbal or emotional.

The NSPCC defined sexual bullying as *"any bullying behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, that is based on a person's sexuality or gender. It is when sexuality or gender is used as a weapon by boys or girls towards other boys or girls - although it is more commonly directed at girls. It can be carried out to a person's face, behind their back or through the use of technology."*ⁱⁱⁱ

I'm concerned, what should I do?

If you are concerned that a child or young person is experiencing any of the above, discuss with your school's child protection lead and

Contact First Response (0117 903 6444), and/or the Police (101/999)

What Next?

It is highly likely that there are individuals in every education setting in Bristol who are affected by domestic and sexual abuse of some kind. This guidance aims to support those who come into contact with these children and young people to respond effectively.

It is important to understand that schools are not expected to address domestic and sexual abuse in isolation. Violence and abuse work is most effective when undertaken within a multi-agency context. This allows each agency to focus on its primary role yet have the support of other service providers if a need arises that falls outside its remit.

And what about staff?

It is important to recognise that in many schools there will also be staff experiencing DVA. Living with DVA can impact on every part of an individual's life, including work. For many victims, work can be a haven away from life at home. It is therefore important that education settings also acknowledge their responsibilities towards their staff in relation to DVA. A comprehensive list of support services is available on the BAVA website www.bava.org.uk. The Bristol Ideal pack ('toolkit') contains a template DVA workplace policy; consider amending this policy to suit your own setting and making all staff aware of its existence.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse and its impact on children

Children can be directly, or indirectly involved in domestic and sexual abuse. The effects of domestic and sexual abuse may be on their physical safety, but are also on the feelings they experience, the behaviour they display, and the conditions of their lives.

They are likely to be affected by the fear, disruption and distress in their lives. They show distress in their own individual ways, depending on their age and developmental stage. They may have physical, emotional, learning, behavioural or developmental problems. These may be assessed as signs of illness, permanent learning difficulties, or simple naughtiness. It is important to consider the various reasons for this kind of behaviour, including domestic and sexual abuse.

Children who live in homes where domestic and sexual abuse occurs, or who are still in contact with an abuser, may themselves be suffering from direct abuse. As the Munro Review highlights, “The association between child abuse and neglect and parental problems, such as poor mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse, is well established”ⁱⁱⁱ.

Whether it is the case that the child or young person is experiencing direct abuse, or are witnessing abuse towards their parents/carer, they are always vulnerable, and will always be affected by the abuse. Until children can feel safe, they continue to suffer.

There is a considerable body of literature which makes the link between experiences of abuse as a child, and detrimental physical and mental health implications. These can include severe emotional and behavioural consequences, as well as consequences for long term developmental and intellectual progression.

Key findings from research are summarised below^{iv}:

- Experience of abuse during childhood can increase the likelihood of mental disorders, health problems, education failure and unemployment, substance addiction, crime and delinquency, homelessness and an intergenerational cycle of abuse and neglect.
- The health effects of child abuse include physical injuries such as shaken baby syndrome, non-organic failure to thrive, broken bones, spinal injuries, stomach aches, migraines, and gut problems. Health problems later in life can include heart disease, obesity, liver disease, cancer and chronic lung disease.
- Depression, severe anxiety, panic attacks and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are the most common mental health consequences of abuse.
- Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child’s mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging during the critical period of infancy, and affect children especially during their school years.
- Sexual abuse is linked to disturbed mental health resulting in self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, sadness, depression and loss of self-esteem. These adverse effects may endure into adulthood.

It is important to recognise that it is very likely that the various consequences of abuse will have a negative impact on a child’s attendance and attainment at school.

It is important to remember that any behaviour that concerns you may signify domestic and sexual abuse.

Remember, children may not disclose:

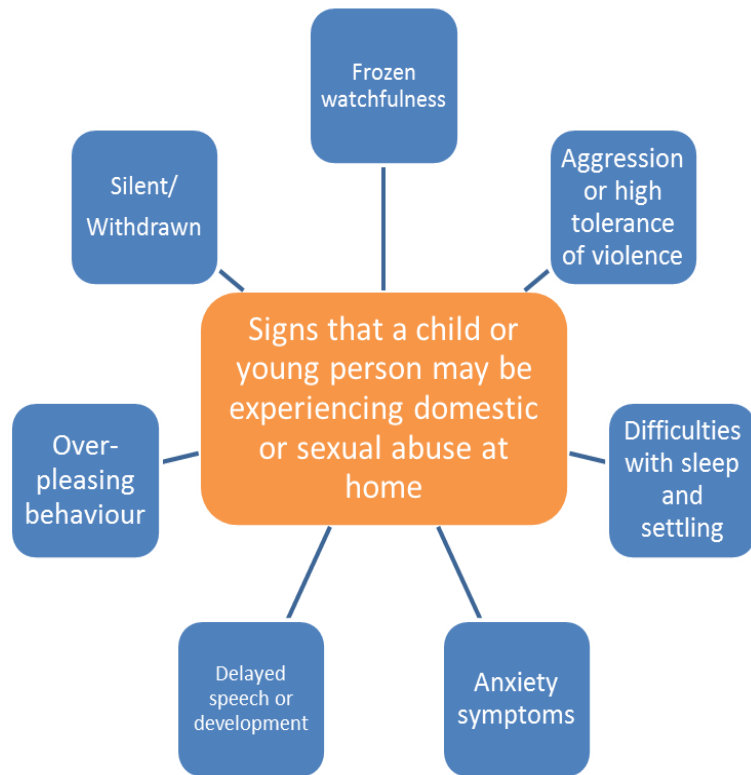
“Listen to their behaviour”

Identifying Domestic and Sexual Abuse

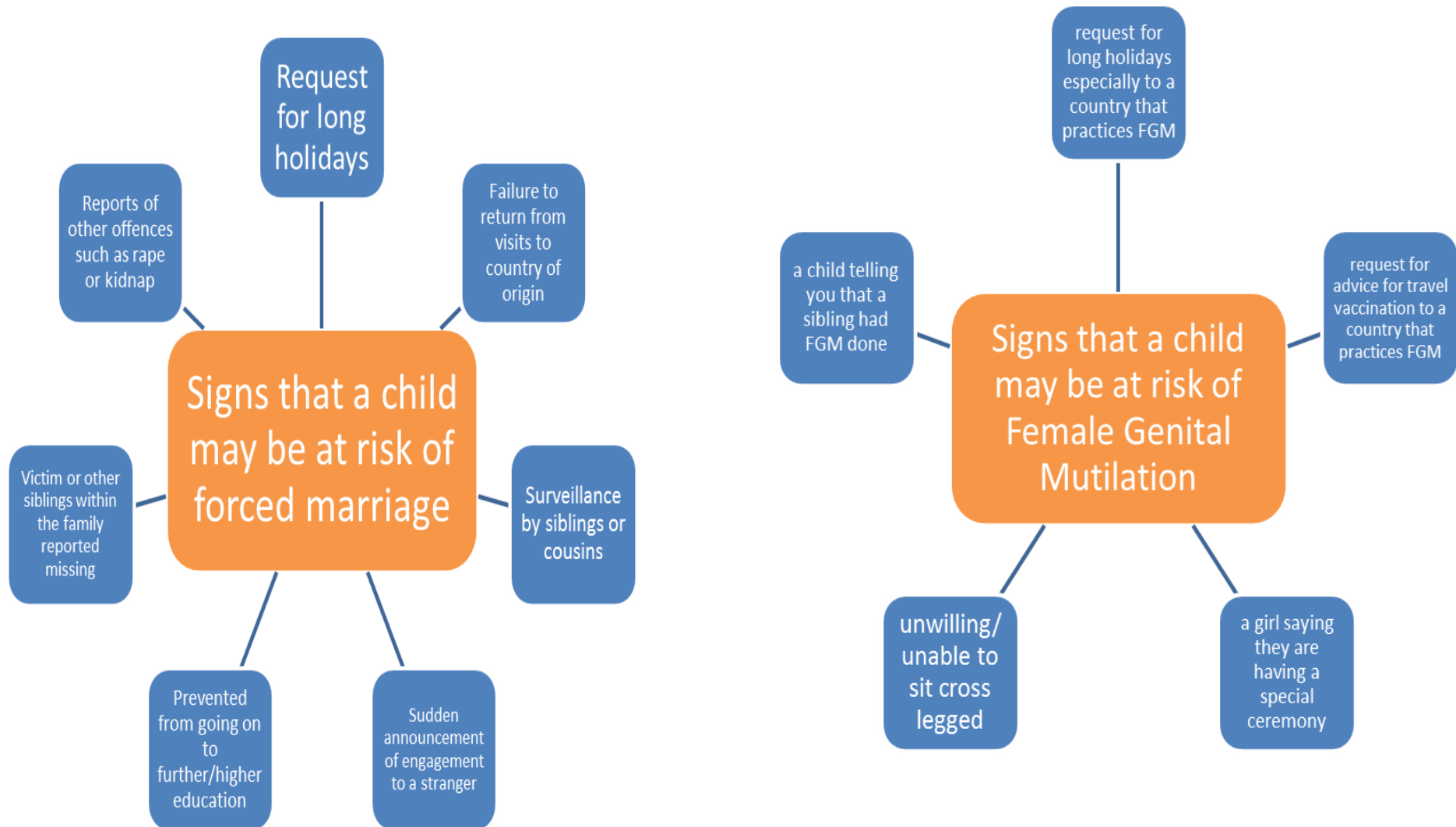
It is important to always consider domestic and sexual abuse as a possible explanation for any unusual behaviour.

The following signs and symptoms can be warning signs that a child or young person is experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.

- Persistent absence from school
- Decline in behaviour, performance and engagement
- Self-harm
- Attempted suicide
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Isolation
- Substance misuse
- Early/unwanted pregnancy
- Evidence of control over movement
- Evidence of being monitored by family or other adults
- Anxiety
- Evidence that certain situation trigger memories of traumatic experiences



Other more specific indicators for different kinds of abuse can be found below (note that these are not exhaustive or definitive lists):



If you have concerns about a child/young person, contact First Response (0117 903 6444), and/or the Police (101/999)



Dos and Don'ts

Working with children, young people and their families around domestic and sexual abuse can pose significant risks. However, adhering to these simple guidelines should minimise any risk and ensure that you are working in a safe way:

DO
Create a school environment where children and young people feel comfortable to disclose abuse
Make a public statement that your school does not tolerate abuse of any kind
Know how to ask the right questions to let a child/young person know that they can talk to you about DVA
Listen positively and reassure the child/young person. Ensure that they know: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You believe them• It's not their fault• There is support available
Pass on information to relevant agencies; this should be alongside the child/young person whenever possible
Keep detailed, accurate records about a child/young person's experiences
Explain the limits of confidentiality and safeguarding duties
If appropriate, and you have a relationship with the non-abusing parent, offer support to them and recommend a specialist domestic and sexual abuse support agency to help them look at their choices
Make domestic and sexual abuse resources available to staff and pupils

If you have concerns about a child/young person, contact First Response (0117 903 6444), and/or the Police (101/999)

DON'T
Pressurise a child/young person or the non-abusing parent into a specific course of action
Discuss concerns about FGM, 'honour' based violence, or forced marriage with a child's parents
Promise confidentiality
Attempt to discuss the issue with the perpetrator
Send anything home informing parents of a disclosure of DVA
Attempt to provide mediation between partners
Recommend couple counselling, mediation or anger management as suitable solutions
Be judgmental of the child/young person or non-abusing parent's choices and actions
Stop supporting the child/young person once you have referred to children's social care or another agency

Understanding barriers to disclosure

In order to fully support non-abusive parents and children to disclose domestic and sexual abuse it is important for a school to understand the barriers to disclosure. There are many reasons why a non-abusing parent will be unwilling or unable to disclose that she/he is experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. Usually it is because she/he fears that the disclosure (and accepting help) will be worse than the current situation and could be fatal, these are realistic fears. When considering ending an abusive relationship a victim's risk of serious assault or murder is increased. Children affected by domestic and sexual abuse often find disclosure equally difficult or go to great lengths to hide it.

Barriers to disclosure for non abusive parents & children

<i>A non abusive parent may:</i>	<i>A child/ young person may:</i>
Minimise their experiences and/or not define them as domestic and sexual abuse (this view could be culturally based)	Be extremely fearful of the consequence of sharing family 'secrets' with anyone. This may include fears that it will cause further violence to their non-abusing parent and/or themselves
Be unable to express their concerns clearly (language can be a significant barrier to disclosure for many women)	Be protective of their non-abusing parent
Fear the abusive partner will find out through lack of confidentiality	Be protective of their abusing parent
Fear that their child/ren will be taken into care	Be fearful of being taken into care
Fear death	Feel threatened by the abusing parent
Fear deportation	Fear deportation
Be scared of the future (where they will go, what they will do for money, whether they will have to hide forever and what will happen to the children)	Fear losing their friends and school
Be isolated from friends and family or be prevented from leaving the home or reaching out for help	Fear exposing the family to dishonour, shame or embarrassment
Have had previous poor experience when they have disclosed in the past	Fear that they won't be believed
Fear that they are to blame for the abuse	Fear that they are to blame for the abuse

Asking about domestic and sexual abuse

Questions for a non-abusing parent or a young person in an intimate relationship:

**Questions for a non-abusing parent or a young person in an intimate relationship:
For victims of high level abuse, often the only safe place they are allowed to go is school.**

- Is everything ok, I just want to have a quick chat.
- I am worried about how you are, would you like to come and have a chat?
- How are things at home?
- How are things with your partner?
- Does your partner treat you well?
- Does your partner ever stop you from doing things?
- Are you ever afraid at home?
- Is someone hurting you?
- Have you ever been forced to do anything you don't want to?
- I see you have a bruise on your face, what happened/ tell me about that?

It is important to remember that school is often a safe and happy place for children living with a difficult home life. Support offered by schools may be invaluable to children and young people living with domestic and sexual abuse and those who have recently left an abusive home.

Various types of support can be offered to children and young people, much of it is very straightforward and simple to put in place. Remember that you are not expected to deal with these issues alone, liaise with your child protection lead and if there is one in your setting, your domestic and sexual abuse champion. Where necessary, work with other agencies to offer the best support possible. Visit the Bristol Ideal website for up to date services lists.

Documenting Domestic and Sexual Abuse

This offers general guidance to recording a disclosure of domestic violence and abuse. Your agency may also have a policy on this, or on recording generally, and so this guidance should be read in conjunction with that:

- You must record all disclosures of abuse, for your own safety and the victim's, and should tell the victim that you will do this, including explaining who will have access to the records. You do not need the victim's consent.
- Record the date, time and setting in which the abuse happened.
- Record non-judgementally, using the words that the victim used (e.g. "John hit me with a hammer" not "client has experienced physical violence.") Use words like "stated" and "said," not "alleged" or "claimed."
- Record your observations: how the victim appears, physical, emotional and behavioural signs that they are experiencing DVA.
- Make it clear if you are recording interpretation or conclusions that you have drawn, which are not what the victim has stated (e.g. "In my professional opinion, I think that Jane is being denied access to food because she has lost a lot of weight recently and cannot give a reason for it").
- If the victim minimises or tries to excuse the abuse, make it clear in any record that this is minimising or excusing, and that this is not a reason for abuse to happen.
- Always keep notes confidential and under no circumstances allow abusers to see these. This may include having a separate file for the victim e.g. if they live together and have a shared housing record.
- Never write anything about disclosure on something that the victim will take home. If you work to rules that give clients rights to copies of their own records, make sure disclosure notes are in the "exempt" part of the notes, which will not be copied.
- If there are previous notes for the victim, review these to see if there have been previous disclosures or evidence of abuse, and if so, what happened as a result.
- Discuss all disclosures with supervising manager e.g. line manager or child protection supervisor, according to local protocols for information sharing.
- Sign and date any record. Record also who you shared the information with.

Providing Practical support

All members of staff play a key role in offering informal support to individuals experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. Teachers and support staff are in a position to be a safe adult that a child/young person can talk to. All members of staff would therefore benefit from domestic and sexual abuse training (visit Healthy Schools or BSCB website for dates). There is free training available in Bristol on all forms of domestic and sexual violence.

Always follow these guidelines when supporting a child/young person:

Listen positively and reassure the child/ young person. Explain the limits of confidentiality and safeguarding children duties.

Ensure that they are clear that:

- **You believe them**
- **It is not their fault**
- **There are agencies that can help**

If you have serious concerns about a child, discuss them with your organisation's Child Protection lead and contact the relevant services:

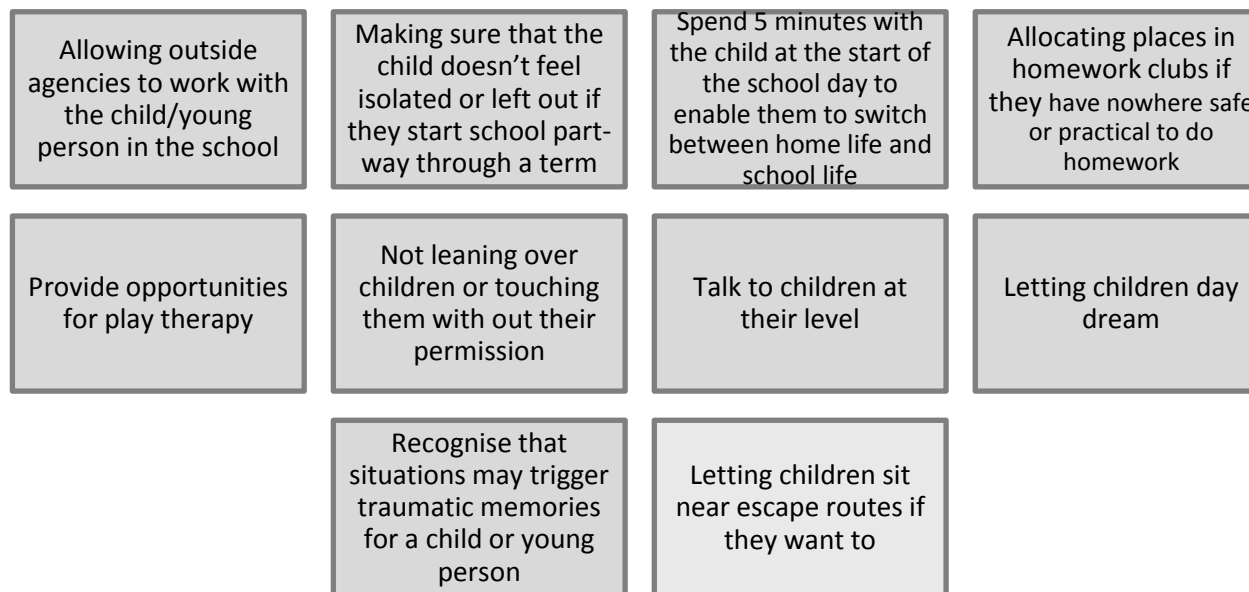
If the child is at immediate risk call the Police on 999.

First response: 0117 903 6444 for the right help, in the right place, at the right time

Your phone call may result in:

- Information, advice and guidance being given about services to help families.
- A referral to the Early Help team who can provide support to children, young people and families.
- A safeguarding referral to a social work team.

Other ideas for providing practical support are:



Facilitate peer support:

Children and young people frequently say that they want to talk to their friends when they have problems. Children and young people can and do help each other, and can be helped to do this in a safe way. Training for children and young people (or selected groups of children and young people) on peer support skills, including safety planning and when to tell an adult what is happening, can equip them to do this effectively. Some schools have a quiet space at play times where there are two peer support counsellors to talk to if needed, with books and games as well.

Contacting other agencies:

Forced Marriage

If you are concerned that a child /young person may be forced to marry, you should talk to your child protection lead. It is also advisable to contact the Forced Marriage Unit (**020 7008 0151**) who will be able to advise.

If English is not the child or families first language always use an interpreter and not a member of the family. Make sure you know the views and opinions of the interpreter on the subject of forced marriage before you use them.

Do not contact the family or friends to verify concerns. This could lead to an escalation in risk. If English is not the child or family's first language always use an interpreter who is not a member of the family. Make sure you know the views and opinions of the interpreter on the subject of forced marriage before you use them.

If you have serious concerns about a child, discuss them with your organisation's Child Protection lead and contact the relevant services:

If the child is at immediate risk call the Police on 999.

First response: 0117 903 6444 for the right help, in the right place, at the right time

Your phone call may result in:

- Information, advice and guidance being given about services to help families.
- A referral to the Early Help team who can provide support to children, young people and families.
- A safeguarding referral to a social work team.

ⁱ <http://www.education.gov.uk/a0072231/forced-marriage>

ⁱⁱ http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforteachers/classroomresources/sexual_bullying_definition_wdf68769.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Munro, E (2011) *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report - A child-centred system*

^{iv} Lazenbatt, A (2010) The impact of abuse and neglect on the health and mental health of children and young people, NSPCC