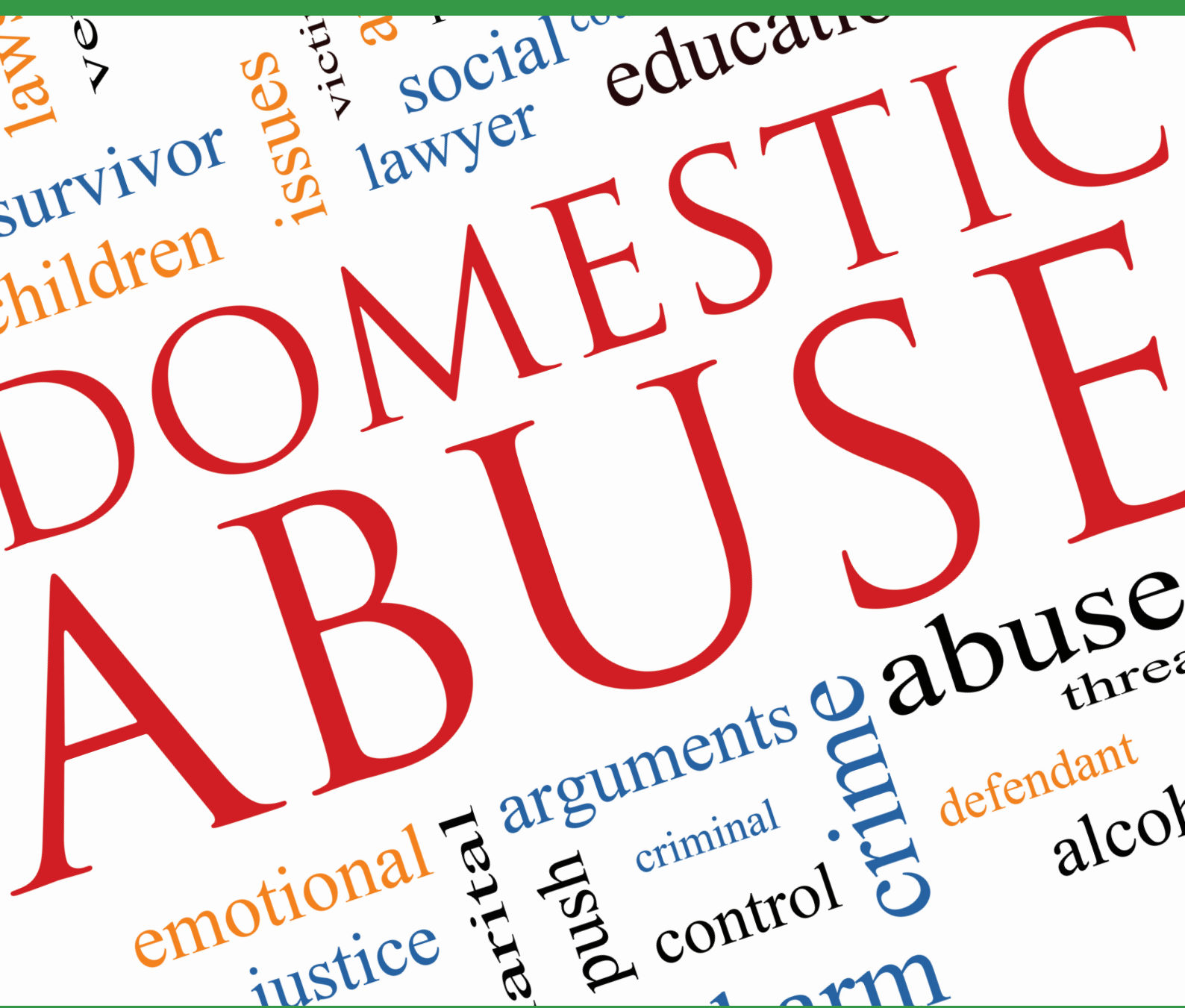


Domestic abuse handbook



2018/19



This booklet is intended to give basic information and an overview of domestic abuse support and services in North Somerset and is aimed at workers. For more information please visit www.endabuse.org.uk or contact one of the agencies listed directly.

For further copies, to amend details, or make additions to this booklet please contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator

tel: **01934 426 343** or
email: **community@n-somerset.gov.uk**

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Telephone and online support

Local Domestic Abuse FreeFone Service (DAFFS line)

0800 694 9999

From 9am-5pm on weekdays this number is answered by Next Link who provide local support. Callers can get advice and contact details for the best North Somerset service for anyone, male or female, affected by domestic abuse.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247 – 24 hours a day
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

This helpline is for women affected by domestic abuse, although male victims have reported that the call handlers are helpful to them too. It is staffed by fully trained and experienced female helpline workers and volunteers. If there is a very high volume of calls there may be an answer phone but if callers leave their contact details someone will get back to them as soon as possible.

The Helpline is an emergency service and is not intended to offer general information on domestic violence. Helpline staff respond according to each caller's needs and may for example:

- Refer women (with or without children) to emergency safe accommodation.
- Provide information about legal, housing or welfare rights and options and referral to relevant services and professions.
- Carry out online crisis and safety planning.
- Offer emotional support and (if appropriate) refer to counselling services.
- Refer women to face-to-face local support.
- Refer callers to the online Survivors Handbook or send them an information pack, with a range of help and information leaflets that are all available in different languages.

- In addition to offering confidential support and information, Helpline staff are a source of practical help and information about housing rights and entitlements, information on getting injunctions or reassurance about calling the police.

Safer Stronger North Somerset

Saferstrongerns.co.uk/domesticabuse

Information on local support for professionals and those affected by domestic abuse

This is not an excuse

thisisnotanexcuse.org

An Avon and Somerset wide website which gives practical information and details of support services for anyone affected by domestic abuse or sexual abuse, including family and friends.

The Lighthouse

101 • lighthousevictimcare.org

The website provides details of independent support available for victims of crime in all areas of Avon and Somerset. Staff act as the link with the Criminal Justice System for victims of domestic abuse crimes.

National Samaritans

08457 90 90 90 – 24 hours a day
www.samaritans.org

Samaritans provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for anyone who is experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Relationship problems are amongst the most common reasons for calling.



National MALE Men's Advice Line

0808 801 0327 and 0808 802 4040

Monday – Friday 10am–1pm and 2–5pm

www.mensadvice.org.uk

The Men's Advice Line offers emotional support, practical advice and information on a wide range of services for men affected by domestic abuse.

If the lines are busy or outside of service hours, if callers leave a message with their name and a safe number MALE will call them back within two working days. People can also email on: info@mensadvice.org.uk and they will reply within two working days. The website has a downloadable booklet with advice and guidance specifically for male victims.

National LGBT helpline

0300 999 5428

Mondays and Thursdays 10am-8pm,
Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am-5pm

www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

This is a national helpline specifically for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic abuse and violence.

Local Victim Support

0808 1689 111 – national support line

www.victimsupport.org.uk

The Victim Care Unit offers confidential support and information to victims of domestic abuse.

08005 999 247 'Honour' helpline for advice on forced marriage and so called 'Honour' based violence.

Domestic abuse definition

Domestic abuse 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
- 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."

This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

People may endure years of abuse before admitting it to anyone. Therefore, giving people the opportunity to talk about domestic abuse can be very important as it may be the only time that someone feels able to ask for help.

Supporting someone affected by domestic abuse

Asking about domestic abuse

- “opens the door” to considering options and reducing isolation, that s/he is not alone, and that there are people who can help
- indicates your willingness to discuss the issue when s/he’s ready
- shows how important you believe this subject to be
- plants the seed that certain behaviours are abuse, and abuse is wrong
- shows that you care.

Professionals should never assume that someone else will be dealing with the domestic abuse – they may be the only person the victim has told about it.

How to ask

The person asking about domestic abuse needs to make it easy for the person to talk about their experiences; supporting and reassuring them, and to be non-judgemental.

Framing the question:

(some examples of ways to introduce the subject):

- *“because, unfortunately, domestic abuse is so common in our society, I have started asking all of my clients about it”.*
- *“I don’t know if this is a problem for you, but many of the people I see are dealing with abusive relationships. Some are too afraid or uncomfortable to bring it up themselves, so I’ve started asking about it routinely”.*
- *“domestic abuse affects many families. Abuse in the home may result in physical and emotional problems for you and your child. We are offering services to anyone who may be concerned about domestic abuse in their home”.*

Asking the question:

Victims are usually afraid or uncomfortable to raise the issue themselves, so people must ask sensitively, but preferably directly:

- *“Can you tell me what’s been happening?”*
- *“You seem upset, is everything alright at home?”*
- *“It sounds to me as though something frightening has been happening to you. Have you ever been threatened or hurt by your partner?”*
- *“Does your partner or ex-partner ever make you feel afraid?”*
- *“Do you every feel afraid to make a particular decision or to do certain things because of what your partner might do or say to you or to the children?”*
- *“Has your partner ever threatened to harm the children or to take them away from you?”*

Screening for abusers

Men may find it particularly difficult to admit that they are experiencing domestic abuse and to ask for help. Unfortunately many male perpetrators claim to be victims at some time and agencies need to be aware of this.

However, this does not in any way imply that many men do not suffer from domestic abuse. The following screening questions may help with the process of identifying genuine victims in order to help them:

Genuine survivor of abuse	Predominant abuser
Fearful of their partner	Does not express or demonstrate fear of partner
Fearful of the abuse	Does not express or demonstrate fear of the abuse
Confused about what's happening	Presents themselves confidently
Has tried to leave (unsuccessfully) or tried to repair the relationship	Partner has recently left or is in the process of leaving
Feels empathy for their partner's current problems or childhood experiences	Little or no empathy with partner. Focussing solely on themselves
Minimises the severity of the abuse but is able to provide details in a chronological order, given time	Is good at focussing on one incident but is vague about incidents or events when you enquire further
Feels ashamed of the abuse and of being a victim	Assertively claims the victim status and does not find fault in themselves
Feels guilt or remorse for having retaliated	Feels aggrieved and in the right
Excuses the actions or expectations of their partner and carries the responsibility for the problems in the relationship	Blames their partner for the abuse, presenting them, for example, as an unreasonable or unstable character
Worries about how it is affecting the children	Doesn't consider the children's experiences or feelings
Feels a sense of obligation to protect the abusive partner	Negative or unreasonable attitudes or statements about their partner

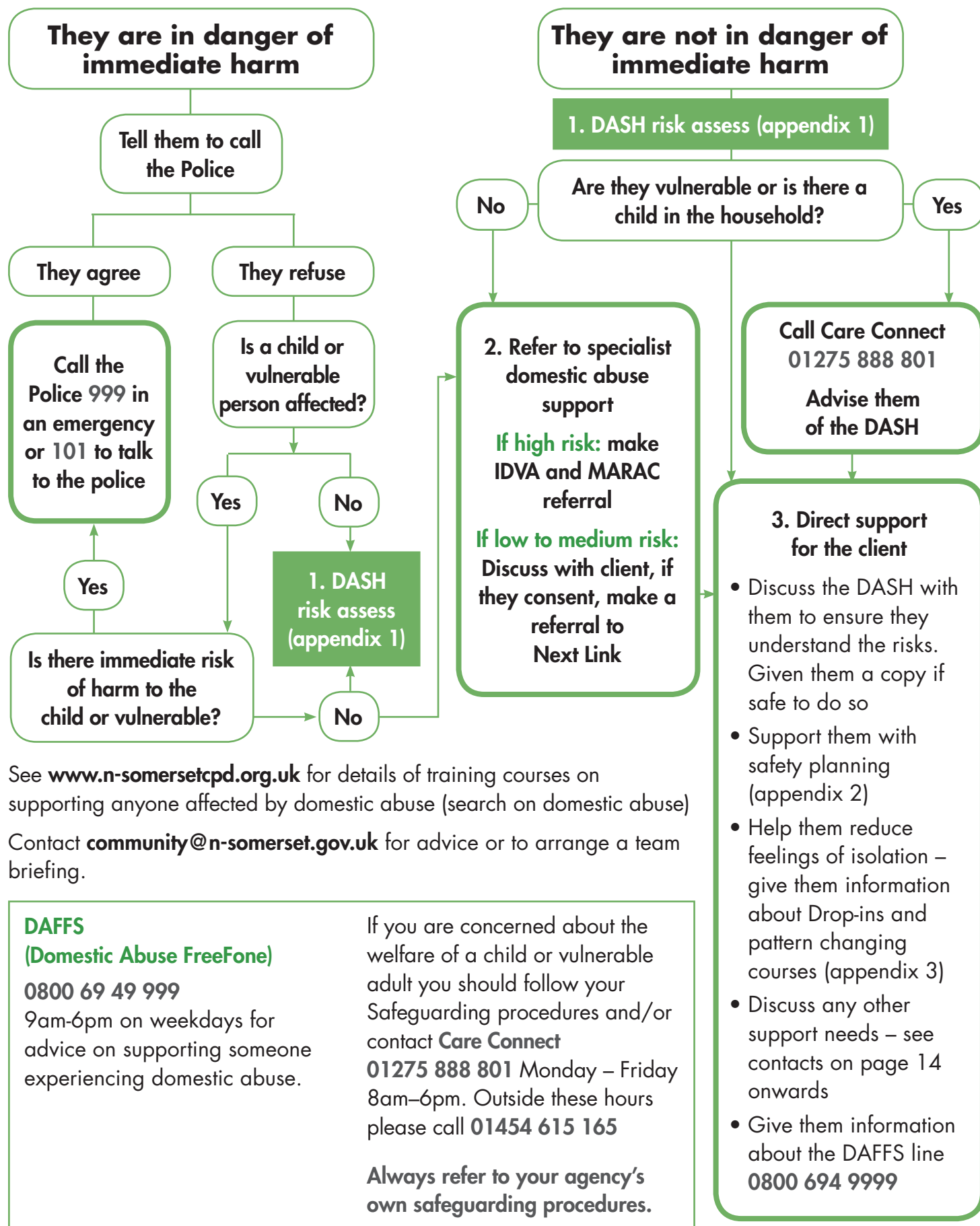
The MALE helpline has expertise in screening for domestic abuse and offers advice and support for male victims. Its number is **0808 801 0327** (Monday – Friday 10am-1pm and 2-5pm).

Further information on screening for domestic abuse perpetrators may be found at www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Responding to domestic abuse – flowchart

What to do if an adult discloses domestic abuse

This flowchart is designed to be used with the guidance which follows.



Guidance on responding to domestic abuse – how to support someone who discloses domestic abuse

Refer to flowchart on previous page

Next Link offer safe houses for families, single women and men, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support for high risk victims of domestic abuse and community outreach support for low/medium risk victims as well as The Freedom Programme for survivors.

The following section gives guidance on how to make a referral to each of these. However, it is important to realise that not everyone wants specialist support and also that the service has a finite capacity. It is therefore important to remember that you may be best placed to support someone in this situation, particularly if you are already working with them or have a good relationship.

The following information is aimed at helping professional to make referrals and/or support individuals affected by domestic abuse directly.

All forms and leaflets in the appendix can be obtained online from www.saferstrongerns.co.uk

Immediate considerations

If the person you are supporting is in imminent danger you should contact the police for advice or, preferably, enable them to do so.

If a child or vulnerable adult is involved you must follow your agency's safeguarding procedures. If you are not sure about these, talk to your manager or call Care Connect on **01275 888 801** for advice. Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm. Outside these hours please call **01454 615 165**.

If the person is not in imminent danger and there is not a safeguarding concern then follow these steps:

1 Assess the risk

It is important to determine the risk and the tool for this is the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment checklist (DASH) (appendix 1). Fill this in with as much detail as possible, preferably with the victim. The form includes guidance to help with this.

There are DASH risk assessment forms in different languages and further information on risk assessment at www.safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-identifying-risk-victims-face

2 Consider a referral to specialist support

The service provided to domestic abuse victims is based upon the level of their risk: either a) high risk or b) low/medium risk. See below for the referral routes.

a) High risk cases

A case is high risk if:

- It scores 14 or over ticks on the DASH form, or
- is escalating, or
- you think it is high risk based on your professional judgment, or
- it was a MARAC case within the previous year.

In any of the above cases you should make a referral to the IDVA service and the MARAC.

You should try to get the client's consent as good practice. However, this is not compulsory as referrals can be made without consent if the case is high risk. But, if the client withholds consent, or it is not safe to tell them about the MARAC, you must complete the referral without consent form (appendix 2).

b) Low and medium risk cases

If the case does not meet the high-risk criteria it is classified as low or medium risk. If the client would like specialist support, you can make a referral to Next Link.

Please note, the victim needs to give consent to this referral unless they are vulnerable. If you do not have secure email, need to discuss the case, or simply do not feel confident about completing a DASH form or making a referral, call Next Link on the DAFFS line at **0800 694 9999**

For details of how to make referrals to Next Link and for copies of all referral forms visit www.saferstrongerns.co.uk/domestic-abuse and click on Information for Professionals

3 Support the client directly

Help the person you are supporting to plan for any future abuse and enable them to think about how they can reduce the risk they may face. Fill in a blank **safety plan** with the client (appendix 5) and give them a copy if it is safe to do so.

You could also give them a copy of the DASH form if they would find this helpful and it is safe to do so.



Tell them about informal support which they can access:

Next Link facilitate The Freedom Programme which is a groupwork course for survivors of domestic abuse and also offer a range of tools and ideas to help survivors recover from their experiences.

There is online support through webchats and the Women's Aid Discussion Forum which helps survivors contact other survivors to share experiences and advice. There is information on these and links at www.saferstronger.ns.co.uk/domesticabuse in the Support for Domestic Abuse section.

If they are not ready to access support, give them information to get further help when they are ready

- The DAFFS or Domestic Abuse Helpline is answered between 9am-5pm on weekdays by Next Link **0800 694 9999**. Lipbalsms are available with this number or from community@n-somerset.gov.uk.
- The National 24 hour helpline offers round the clock support **0808 2000 247**.
- The Women's Aid website www.womensaid.org.uk features advice and a survivors' forum.
- A group of local survivors of domestic abuse have produced a Survivors' Handbook – contact community@n-somerset.gov.uk for a copy.
- There is a **leaflet** with useful information (**appendix**) – give them a copy.

Discuss any other support needs they may have. There are contact details of useful local services on page 14

Support for anyone supporting someone affected by domestic abuse

- For help with a case contact Next Link on the DAFFS line **0800 694 9999**.
- For further advice and information on domestic abuse and referral pathways email community@n-somerset.gov.uk or call **01934 426 343**.
- Visit www.saferstronger-ns.co.uk for up-to-date guidance and downloadable referral forms, leaflets and publicity materials.
- Book on to multi-agency training at www.n-somersetcpd.org.uk (search for domestic abuse).
- Arrange a team briefing with the Council's Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator email community@n-somerset.gov.uk

One Front Door

One Front Door is a new way of multi-agency working with regard to domestic abuse in North Somerset, ensuring that agencies support the whole family in a joined-up way. For now, all referrals to One Front Door come via the police. To find out more about this good practice approach visit www.safelives.org.uk/one-front-door

Local domestic abuse support

Domestic Abuse FreeFone DAFFS

0800 694 9999

A direct line to Next Link for details of the support they offer and confidential advice and information

Reclaim Project (formerly the Women's Project)

0791 944 0233 (answer machine)

Reclaim Project offers free counselling to any adult in North Somerset who has been affected by domestic abuse.

Victim Support

0300 303 1972

Monday – Friday, 9.30am-6pm, Saturday 9.30am-12.30pm (outside these hours call the national helpline 08 08 16 89 111

Offer emotional and practical support for anyone affected by crime.

The Mankind Initiative

01823 334 244

Monday – Friday, 10am-4pm and 7-9pm
www.mankind.org.uk

This helpline gives emotional and practical support to any man affected by domestic abuse or anyone supporting him.

Standing Together, North Somerset

01934 426 343

This group works to provide limited funding support to anyone with difficulties in accessing domestic abuse support in North Somerset due to an equalities issue. This may be due to:

- No recourse to public funds
- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- People trafficking
- Another equalities issue agreed by the committee on a case by case basis

Self referrals are not generally accepted so anyone wishing to apply should contact Next Link or one of the other local support services to discuss.

Peer support

Survivors of domestic abuse often say that they particularly appreciate being able to meet others who have been there too. Call the DAFFS line 0800 694 9999 for information on drop-ins and courses (see appendix 4)

Support for children affected by domestic abuse

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 makes it clear that children suffer harm when seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, particularly in the home. This does not mean that all families experiencing domestic abuse require Children's Social Care intervention but that all agencies need to work together to risk assess and respond to domestic abuse.

The North Somerset interagency protocol and practice guidance – **Safeguarding Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse** sets out the responses which agencies will make to domestic abuse and gives good practice guidance. Anyone working with children and young people who may be affected by domestic abuse should obtain a copy of the guidance by contacting the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator 01934 426 343 or community@n-somerset.gov.uk .

Support for children affected by domestic abuse

If anyone is concerned that a child is at immediate risk of harm from domestic abuse they should call the police on 999 or contact:

Children's Social Care (Child Protection)

01275 888 808 Child Protection Team
Monday – Thursday, 8.45am-5pm and
Friday, 8.45am-4.30pm.
(Outside these hours **01454 615 165**)
www.northsomersetlscb.org.uk for local procedures.

Information for Parents and Carers

If anyone is worried about how domestic abuse is affecting their children they are advised to:

- Seek support and help as soon as possible – the Family Information Service can give advice on local supportive agencies. Phone them on **01934 426 300**
- Look at the survivors' handbook on the Women's Aid website which includes a section on supporting children www.thehideout.org.uk. If someone does not have internet access the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator can provide a hard copy of the survivors' handbook **01934 426 343**
- Report their concerns about their family or someone else to the police
- Talk to their children about what is happening and encourage them to visit the Hideout website www.thehideout.org.uk which has information and support for children and young people
- Parents need to know that children need time to talk about the feelings they have about violence. They need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way it should be.
- Contact community@n-somerset.gov.uk for copies of "Talking to Children about Domestic Abuse" which gives tips and advice on how to discuss this subject with them

- Many agencies in North Somerset offer support for children including those who have been affected by domestic abuse, the Family Information Service **01934 426 300**, www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk can give details. In addition, the following services have some specialisation in domestic abuse support:

Links with Schools:

North Somerset Council has produced guidance for schools, youth workers and day care providers, including childminders, day nurseries, pre schools and children's centres in supporting children affected by domestic abuse – Guidelines for Those Working with Children and Young People in North Somerset. For the latest information visit the website or contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator – details below.

In addition, the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group is keen to work with schools to explore healthy relationships with all children and has produced guidance on this – Domestic Abuse – a Guide to Supporting Preventative Work with Young People. The group has helped plan and facilitate sessions in various schools and has a library of resources for use by schools.

Support for vulnerable adults affected by domestic abuse

The definition of a vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over, who depends on others for care and who may be less able to protect themselves from being abused than the general population. When a vulnerable adult experiences domestic abuse it is important that the response is sensitive and supportive and that agencies work together to ensure the best response for the individual.

If there are concerns that someone is being abused or may be at risk of abuse contact:

Care Connect

01934 888 801 or **01275 888 801**
Monday – Friday, 8am-6pm.
Outside of these hours **01454 615 165**

Multi-agency training:

A rolling programme of training sessions cover:

- Domestic Abuse Awareness and also working with adults and families affected by domestic abuse
- Understand definitions of domestic abuse
- Consider the cycle of abuse and why women stay
- Understand the experience from the point of view of a survivor
- Become familiar with police role and responses
- Become aware of local resources and support available
- Raise awareness of the MARAC and its objectives
- Increase understanding of the MARACs process and how to make a referral
- Increase understanding of risk assessment and give practical examples of using the CAADA DASH risk assessment
- Explore options for responses to domestic abuse cases

● Safety planning

Other multi-agency courses on domestic abuse cover issues such as, the impact upon children and peer abuse.

For details of all courses visit

<http://nsomersetcpd.webbased.co.uk> and search for domestic abuse

For further information or to book a place on any of the above courses visit the CPD online website <http://nsomersetcpd.webbased.co.uk/> and search on domestic abuse for details and dates of these and all current courses.

For team briefings or other training or information on domestic abuse contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator
01934 426 343 or
community@n-somerset.gov.uk



Contact details for other support in North Somerset

The following agencies provide support which may be required by someone experiencing domestic abuse. However, they do not specialise purely in domestic abuse support provision.

Alcohol and Substance

With Are With You (formerly Addaction)

01934 427 940

Battle Against Tranquillisers

08448 269 317

Benefits

North Somerset Jobcentre Plus Offices:

Weston-super-Mare Jobcentre Plus
Regent House, High Street
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1JH

0845 604 3719

textphone 0845 608 8551

Clevedon Jobcentre Plus
28 Old Street, Clevedon BS21 6DF

0845 604 3719

textphone 0845 608 8551

National Job Centre Plus Advice and Claim line

0800 055 6688 Textphone: 0800 023 4888

Monday – Friday, 8am-6pm

For advice and to claim benefits for those who: are on a low income, have dependent children, are ill, disabled, a carer, over 60, bereaved or pregnant who may be entitled to some benefits

Housing Benefits and Council Tax

01934 888 144

www.n-somerset.gov.uk

(search under B for Benefits)

For advice and to make a claim for housing benefits and council tax benefit

Citizens Advice North Somerset (CANS)

03444 111 444

Monday – Friday, 10am-2pm

nscab.org.uk

advice@nscab.org.uk

Badger Centre, 3–6 Wadham Street
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1JY

Support and advice on claiming benefits as well as debt and money problems and legal matters

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) support

BME network

01934 414 455

ns-bmenetwork.org.uk

12 Orchard Place

Weston-super-Mare BS23 1QP

The BME network can provide support for people from all ethnic backgrounds. It has over 500 members from 52 different countries and has groups in Weston-super-Mare, Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead.

Multicultural Friendship Association

Organise social events for people to meet and share experiences of living in a new country

Children

North Somerset online directory

nsod.n-somerset.gov.uk

Search for information on services using keywords such as childcare, activities, parenting or call

01934 888 888

Children with complex needs

Contact Care Connect for information on support for children with additional needs.

01275 888 801

Counselling

Positive Step

positivestep.org.uk

Contact your GP if you feel you would benefit from a referral to an agency which can help you cope with low mood or other mental health issues

Wellspring Counselling

01275 810 879

The Reclaim Project

07919 440 233

The Reclaim Project offers free counselling to all survivors of domestic abuse in North Somerset

counselling-directory.org.uk

For contact details of private therapists and counsellors in the UK

Disability support

DIAL (Disablement Information Advice Line)

01934 419 426

www.westondial.co.uk/

West of England for Inclusive Living (WECIL Ltd)

0117 947 9911

www.wecil.co.uk

minicom: 0117 377 1013

Health

Hospitals

- Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI)
0117 9230 000
- Clevedon Hospital
01275 872 212
- Weston General Hospital
01934 636 363

Hate Crime

Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI)

0800 171 2272

To provide support for any victim of hate crime, including racist, faith-based, disablist, homophobic, transphobic, age-based or gender-based.

Housing

North Somerset Council HomeChoice and Housing Advice Team

01934 426 330

For housing advice, homelessness applications and to join the HomeChoice register

Out of Hours emergency housing (evenings and weekends) 01934 622 669

Shelter

0808 800 4444

For independent housing advice

Refuges

If you want to find a refuge ANYWHERE ring the Women's Aid 24-Hour Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

Pets

RSPCA Pet retreat

0300 123 8278

Legal advice (see also solicitors section)

Citizens Advice North Somerset

03444 111 444

Monday – Friday, 9.45am-1pm

online advice citizensadvice.org.uk

For provision of free advice in North Somerset.

Sexual Abuse

www.survivorpathway.org.uk

A guide for anyone wanting to find support around sexual abuse

The Bridge

0117 342 6999

www.thebridgecanhelp.org.uk

24 hours for forensic medical service, other services are 9am–5pm

- The Bridge supports anyone (men, women and young people) in Avon and Somerset who has been raped or sexually assaulted. Experienced professionals provide:

- Sexual health information and referral services;
- Information about reporting to the police and judicial processes;
- Forensic medical facilities;
- Counselling;
- Post-sexual assault follow-up care;
- Support through the criminal justice system;
- Practical support and referrals to other community services;
- Consultation services to other professionals

Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS)

0808 801 0456 for women.

0808 801 0464 for men and boys

www.sarsas.org.uk

Monday and Friday, 11am-2pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 6-8.30pm

(Male helpline Monday and Tuesday only)

Email support@sarsas.org.uk for confidential advice

A confidential specialist support service for girls and women who have experienced rape or sexual abuse at any time in their lives. Includes structured support by a trained volunteer, counselling, helpline and email support.

LGBT support

Bristol Lesbian and Gay Switchboard (BLAGS)

0117 922 1328 – 7 days a week, 10am-11pm

National Helpline

0300 999 5428

Mental health

Community Mental Health Team

01934 523 600 – Under 65 years old

01275 335 300 – Over 65 years old

Second Step

01934 622 292 – Weston-super-Mare

01275 342 368 – Clevedon

www.second-step.co.uk

MINDLINE

0808 808 0330

SANELINE

0300 304 7000

Support for perpetrators

RESPECT

0808 802 4040

www.respect.uk.net

This national helpline offers advice and information to people who are worried that they are abusive to their partners and who wish to change.

Crime and police

In an emergency dial **999** • Non-urgent calls **101**

Solicitors

Find a Solicitor Online

by visiting <http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk> or call The Law Society's Helpline **020 7320 5650**

The following solicitors have indicated that they provide legal advice around family law and domestic abuse. Non-inclusion of a solicitor does not mean that they do not provide advice on this issue. Find a Legal Aid Solicitor at find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk or ask solicitors for advice on what their charges may be. Many offer free or reduced advice in the first instance

Solicitors in Weston-super-Mare

Berry Redmond, Gordon and Penny

01934 414 161

Avon and Somerset Family Law

01934 641 191

John Hodge and Co 01934 425 999

Powells 01934 623 501

Wards 01934 413 535 (Boulevard) or 01934 428 811 (Worle)

Solicitors in Clevedon

John Hodge 01275 879 292

Wards 01275 850 470

Solicitors in Congresbury

Laurence Holmes 01934 838 445

Solicitors in Nailsea

Star Legal 01275 858 266

Wards 01275 858 515

Solicitors in Portishead

Burroughs Day 01275 843 213

David Playford & Co 01275 840 111

24hr Tel Emergency No: 07802 822 682

Star Legal 01275 877 277

Wards 01275 850 460

Solicitors in Winscombe

Berry Redmond, Gordon and Penny
01934 842 811

Solicitors in Yatton

John Hodge 01934 833 208

The Dash risk assessment form

The Dash risk assessment form (overleaf) is an important tool to assess situations where there is domestic abuse. It is necessary for professionals to complete this in order to make a referral but it is also a very useful checklist of issues which need to be considered with anyone experiencing domestic abuse. A copy of the Dash, with guidance, follows in order to inform discussions. A downloadable version is available at www.saferstrongerns.co.uk/domesticabuse in the Support for Domestic Abuse section.

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Developing a safety plan with someone affected by domestic abuse

By raising the issue of domestic abuse, we create opportunities to explore ways in which women and children can be safe. A safety plan is a semi-structured way to think about steps that can be taken to reduce risk, before, during and after any violent or abusive incidents. It is important to stress that although a safety plan can reduce the risks of violence, it cannot completely guarantee victim's and children's safety.

This safety plan has been adapted from a variety of existing plans. It should be used with victims who are escaping violence. Remember it may not be safe for a victim to fill in the plan and take it with them. Always offer to keep any information or documentation on your premises. Drug and alcohol agencies may wish to ask additional questions about how their perpetrator's substance use is affecting the violence they are experiencing.

People living with abuse should not keep the safety plan where it may be discovered by the abusive partner.

People experiencing violence will already have survival strategies they find effective. It is essential to acknowledge these and use them as guidance for your work. A safety plan is about allowing victims to identify the options available to them within the context of their current circumstances. Some questions to ask in drawing up a safety plan:

- Who can you tell about the violence who will not tell your partner/ex-partner?
- Do you have important phone numbers available e.g. family, friends, refuges, police? Do your children know how to contact these people?
- If you left, where could you go?
- Do you ever suspect when your partner is going to be violent? e.g. after drinking, on payday, after relatives visit.
- Can you go elsewhere if you suspect your partner is going to be violent?
- Can you keep a bag of spare clothes at a friend's or family member's house?
- Are you able to keep copies of any important papers with anyone else? e.g. passport, birth certificates, benefits book.
- Which part of the house do you feel safest in?
- Is there somewhere for your children to go when your partner is being violent and abusive? (don't run to where your children are as your partner may harm them as well)
- What is the most dangerous part of your house to be in when your partner is violent?
- Have you discussed with your children a safety plan for what they need to do during an incident (e.g. do not intervene, but get away and get help)?

Sample personal safety plan

Suggestions for increasing safety – in the relationship

- I will have important phone numbers available to my children and myself.
- I can tell _____ and _____
- about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- If my children are hurt, I will tell _____
- If I leave my home, I can go to (list four places):

- or _____
- I can leave extra money, car keys, clothes, and copies of documents with _____
- When I leave, I will bring _____
- To ensure safety and independence, I can: keep change for phone calls with me at all times/keep my mobile on me at all times: open my own savings account; rehearse my escape route with a support person; and review safety plan on (date).

- When the violence begins which areas of the house should I avoid? For example, bathroom (no exit), kitchen (potential weapons)

Suggestions for increasing safety – when the relationship is over

- I can: change the locks; install steel/metal doors, a security system, smoke detectors and an outside lighting system.
- I will inform _____
_____ and _____
that my partner no longer lives with me and ask them to call the police if s/he is observed near my home or my children.
- I will tell people who take care of my children, and my children themselves, the names of those who have permission to pick them up. The people who have permission are:

_____ and _____
- When I make phone calls I can use 141 so my number cannot be traced.
- I can tell _____
_____ at work about my situation and ask _____
_____ to screen my calls.
- I can avoid shops, banks and _____
_____ that I used when living with my abusive partner.
- If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can call _____
_____ for support.

Important phone numbers

Police

Helpline **DAFFS 0800 694 9999**

Friends

Other

Items to take checklist

- Identification
- Birth certificates for me and my children
- Benefit books
- Medical cards for me and my children (e.g. children's "red books", school immunisation records etc)
- Phone card, mobile or change for a pay phone
- Money, bankbooks, credit cards
- Keys – house/car/office
- Keys to a friend or relative's house
- Medicine or medication for me and my children
- Driver's license
- Change of clothes for me and my children
- Passport(s), Home Office papers, work permits, national insurance numbers
- Divorce papers and legal orders
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed
- Mortgage payment book, current unpaid bills
- Insurance papers
- Address book
- Pictures, jewellery, items of sentimental value
- Children's favourite toys and/or blankets
- Any proof of abuse, notes, tapes, diary, crime reference numbers, names and numbers of professionals who know.

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