

Domestic Abuse

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic violence and abuse is widespread and enduring and affects all aspects of society.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour - 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 - 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.

Domestic abuse in Liverpool

- In Liverpool there were 13,182 incidents of domestic abuse reported to Merseyside Police between July 2016 and end of June 2017
- Liverpool Multi Agency Risk Assessment conference (MARAC) coordinates action planning support for approximately 1,000 high risk families suffering domestic abuse each year
- There have been 12 domestic homicides that have been reviewed in Liverpool over the last 5 years - 20 victims lost their lives
- Families who experience the 'toxic trio' of substance misuse, mental health issues and domestic abuse are most at risk of harm or death
- A large proportion of families involved with children services and early help support have domestic abuse as a factor within the family

- There is a major overlap between direct harm to children and domestic abuse: 62% of children exposed to domestic abuse (Safe Lives 2016)
- Liverpool city council and partners are in the process of writing a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan with the aim of developing the strategic approach to domestic abuse across the city
- Education representation is often missing within the strategic forums discussing domestic abuse

Cause & Effect of domestic abuse

Cause

A number of myths exist about domestic abuse, however, it is in fact caused by a persons need to control another person (within an intimate relationship or by a family member(s)) in order to gain and maintain power over them.

Effect

Domestic abuse may affect the individual's physical and or sexual health, mental health and misuse of substance. It can lead to feelings of isolation, co- dependency, lack of trust, the development of coping strategies, debt, prison and ultimately death.

Signs and Symptoms that may be displayed by a Child or Young Person experiencing Domestic Abuse	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor reflective functioning • Limited capacity to explore & play, • Poor emotional regulation • Poor conflict resolution skills • Increased internalizing symptoms (withdrawn) • Externalizing problems (acting-out) • Decreased cognitive functioning • Issues with social skills • Appear anxious and frightened of parent (s) • Aggressive or confrontational behaviour • Appear concerned for parent (s)/ protective of parent (s) or siblings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disordered Attachments • Hyper-vigilance, hyper-activity & heightened arousal • 'Symptoms' may be misdiagnosed or wrongly assessed as illness (ADHD, Conduct Disorder, Anxiety, Depression), learning difficulties or naughtiness • Lack of school attendance/attainment • Low self esteem • Distrustful • Appear desensitised to certain behaviours • Unexplained or frequent illness

If you are a member of the public and have a concern about a child please contact Careline on 0151 233 3700 or Merseyside Police on 0151 709 6010 or 999 in an emergency.

You should report your concerns if you feel that:

A child needs protection – if a child is suffering harm, neglect or abuse, we can investigate and act to protect them.

A family is under stress – we can offer support and advice and help families access support from other services.

A child is seriously ill or disabled – we can arrange an assessment of the child's and families needs and provide support.