



Northumberland

County Council

Domestic Abuse Procedure 2020

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1. Purpose

The Domestic Abuse Policy sets out our approach to identifying the signs of domestic abuse, or receiving a disclosure of domestic abuse, and offering the appropriate advice and assistance. This procedure underpins the Domestic Abuse Policy and is in place to ensure that we provide a service which effectively assists and supports any person living in one of our properties and experiencing, or being threatened with, domestic abuse.

2. Introduction

This procedure has been prepared to inform staff of NCC's approach to domestic abuse, and how to deal with a disclosure or report in a sensitive, victim-led way. It also gives details of our approach to taking action against perpetrators who live in one of our properties.

3. Scope

The procedures apply to all tenants of NCC, along with any members of their household, or visitors (where appropriate). The procedure covers:

- How to deal with a report or disclosure
- Reports made by a third party
- Identification of abuse by staff
- Identification of abuse by the R&M team or contractors
- Safeguarding
- Opening a domestic abuse case
- Interviewing victims of domestic abuse
- Referrals to MARAC
- Use of tools and powers
- Target hardening
- Housing needs
- Tenancy related issues
- Financial advice or further tenancy assistance
- Case closure.

4. Link to other strategies, policies and procedures

- NCC Tenancy Policy
- NCC Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Northumberland Common Allocation Policy
- NCC Domestic Abuse Policy
- NCC Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy

- NCC Tenancy Agreement

5. Responsibilities

All staff across NCC Housing Services who come into contact with customers, by whatever means, are responsible for reporting any concerns that they may have in relation to safeguarding, or if they believe that someone may be the victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse. This procedure is therefore closely linked to NCC's safeguarding procedures.

In addition, any member of staff who receives a disclosure of domestic abuse has a responsibility to signpost the victim to the correct support services and gather as much information as possible to enable their colleagues to investigate further.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team is responsible for investigating any reports, or dealing with any disclosures, and ensuring that the appropriate safeguards are put in place for the victim.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team must also consider whether enforcement action against the perpetrator is necessary and proportionate (depending on the needs and wishes of the victim)

6. How to Deal with a Report or Disclosure

Anyone reporting domestic abuse to NCC will be treated in a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgmental way. Any disclosure of abuse will be taken seriously, and advice and assistance will be given as a priority.

If a victim reports an incident in person at one of our offices, they should be offered a confidential interview with a member of staff straight away.

If possible, this should be with a member of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team or, if no one is available, a Domestic Abuse Champion.

***NO-ONE SHOULD BE TURNED AWAY
YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE GOING BACK TO***

You should take full details of the disclosure, and carry out a full DASH Risk Identification Checklist (RIC). Please refer to Section 16 for further information on how to do this.

If the disclosure is made over the telephone, or via email, the details should be passed to the Anti Social Behaviour team or Domestic Abuse Champion. Contact will be made immediately within that day.

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It is important to identify a safe method of contact (this could be via another family member or friend), as it is vital that we do not accidentally alert the perpetrator that a disclosure has been made

If you are in someone's home when the disclosure is made, it is important to get as much information as possible – **if it is safe to do so**. If the alleged perpetrator is at home, or is expected to return home imminently, you should pass the details to Anti Social Behaviour Team or a Domestic Abuse Champion who will try to contact the victim safely.

If the victim is already working with a member of staff this may be the safest way to make contact.

In all circumstances, it is important to safeguard the victim and ensure that our actions are not placing them at any additional risk

Before you begin the risk assessment:

- Find out how much time the victim has to talk to you; is it safe to talk now?
- Find out how you can contact the victim safely
- Establish the whereabouts of the abuser and any children
- Explain that you are going to ask a series of questions in order to gain a better understanding of their situation
- Explain confidentiality, information sharing and what the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are (see section 14).

Asking the questions:

- As early as possible in the interview, identify who the victim is frightened of
- Use gender-neutral terms such as partner/ex-partner so that LGBT victims can feel as at ease as possible
- Explain, in simple terms, that you will be carrying out a risk assessment, and that the purpose of this is to find out whether a referral to MARAC is required.
- Explain that the risk assessment will involve asking some very personal questions, but that it is vital to establish exactly what is going on, so that the appropriate next steps can be taken

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- Encourage the victim to answer all of the questions, but bear in mind that they may minimise the abuse or be reluctant to disclose the full extent of their situation
- If they reveal physical injuries or sexual abuse, encourage them to see a healthcare professional to examine and document their injuries
- Remember that your professional judgement is key to determining the level of risk.

Sharing the results of the risk assessment:

If someone is high risk, (if they score 14 'yes' answers or more on the risk assessment, or your judgement tells you that they may be at greater risk than it first appears) try not to frighten them – explain your concerns by using the information that they gave you and follow the procedures for making further referrals (MARAC, Children's Services etc.)

If someone is not high risk, manage this so that they don't feel that their situation is being minimised:

- Explain that high risk is linked to murder or serious harm
- Remember that risk can be fluid and circumstances can change quickly. Tell them to contact the Police or you if their situation changes.
- Make referrals for support (DASSN, NDAS, Children's Services etc.)

Please remember – trust your professional judgement. If you think that someone is high risk, it may be worth making the referral even if they do not meet the threshold

In all cases, whether the risk assessment meets the threshold or not, you should seek advice from the Anti-Social Behaviour Team Leader or Manager, as they are the points of contact for MARAC within NCC.

In cases where there is doubt over whether a referral is necessary, they will contact Northumbria Police and speak directly to the Senior Housing Services Officer (Homelessness), who can then assess the information and decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

7. Reports made by a third party

You may receive reports from a third party e.g. neighbour, or a family member,

stating that they suspect domestic abuse. Alternatively, a neighbour may report a noise nuisance, but the noise may be coming from shouting or arguing within the household.

Reports of this nature should be passed to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team for further investigation, who will contact the third party for further information, before trying to make contact with the potential victim in a safe way.

8. Identification of abuse by staff

If you suspect that a person may be suffering from domestic abuse, contact a member of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to raise and discuss your concerns.

Ideally, this should be done in person or, if this is not possible, via email, including as much information as possible as to why domestic abuse is suspected.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, these should be reported via OneCall at the earliest opportunity (see Safeguarding Adults & Children Policy for further details).

If any staff or contractors suspect that a person may be suffering from domestic abuse, you should send a 'Something Not Right?' email that will then be reviewed and investigated by a member of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team or a Domestic Abuse Champion.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility
Once you have completed your risk assessment you need to identify what risk is posed to the victim. Any subsequent action taken will be based upon the level of risk, and also the officer's professional judgement

The level of risk should be reviewed at regular intervals, but particularly after any new incidents of domestic abuse and/or an escalation in the seriousness of the abuse. The level of risk usually escalates when a victim decides to end the relationship.

If the victim has been referred to, and engages with, specialist support, it would be expected that they would take the lead on reviewing the level of risk; however, if something is reported to you and you are concerned that there is a heightened risk, **do not assume that someone else has followed this up** – you must ensure that you speak to the relevant specialist support agency and/or the Police as

necessary.

Close links must be maintained with the victim, and with any other support agencies who are involved in the case. ([See Appendix 3 for useful contacts](#))

All details of the case should be logged on NPS Housing Management System. Domestic abuse cases opened on NPS will automatically be classified as 'confidential' and the details will only be visible to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team

9. Use of Tools and Powers

Every case of domestic abuse will be assessed on its individual circumstances, taking into account the wishes and needs of the victim, the severity of the abuse, and any additional criminality

Domestic abuse is a clear breach of the Tenancy Agreement that every tenant has signed

These are the tools and powers that you can consider when dealing with cases of Domestic Abuse. Perpetrators of domestic abuse can access specialist support via DASSN, if they acknowledge their behaviour, want to change and consent to a referral being made.

9.2 Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders

If the Police have a reasonable belief that domestic abuse has occurred, they are able to serve the perpetrator with a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) as the first step to acquiring a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO).

A DVPO can prevent a perpetrator from returning to a residence, and from having contact with the victim, for up to 28 days. This allows the victim some time to consider their options, and to engage with some support.

Getting a DVPO is a two-step process:

- On being called to an incident of domestic abuse, if the Police have reasonable grounds to believe the victim remains at risk of domestic abuse, they can choose to issue an emergency non-molestation and eviction notice - the DVPN.

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Because the DVPN is a Police-issued notice, it is effective from the time of issue, thereby giving the victim the immediate support they require. The issuing of a DVPN requires Police authorisation at the rank of Superintendent or above.

- Within 48 hours of the DVPN being served on the perpetrator, an application for a DVPO must be made by Police, and heard in a Magistrates Court (Sundays and public holidays are excluded from this 48 hour time limit). The DVPN continues in effect until the court has reached a decision.

If the court rules that the victim requires continued support, they may issue a DVPO which would last for a minimum of 14 days, and a maximum of 28 days.

The law allows a magistrate to make a DVPO against the abuser even if the victim does not agree to it. In addition, the magistrates will take into account the welfare of anyone under 18 who the Police consider will be affected by the DVPO.

9.3 Restraining Orders

These can be made by a court in relation to a criminal case alleging domestic abuse, whether or not the case is upheld. A restraining order is made when there is a need for the order to protect a named person or persons from harassment or conduct that will put them in fear of violence.

A restraining order imposes prohibitions and may cover a range of behaviour. It can, for example, exclude a person from a specific geographical area, from contacting specific people, or behaving in a particular way. I

It lasts for one year from the date it is signed by the court, or until it is revoked. It can be renewed for one year at a time if the courts believe that the victim is still in danger.

It is a crime to breach a restraining order and a person doing so can be arrested and charged.

9.4 Civil Law

A person at risk of domestic abuse can make an application for an injunction. An injunction is a 'stay away' order which prevents the abuser from certain behaviour (e.g. contacting the victim) or compels them to action (e.g. to leave the home). There are two types of injunctions available: an occupation order, and a non-molestation order.

- Non-Molestation Orders

A non-molestation order can protect a person and any relevant child from violence or harassment. A person can obtain a non-molestation order against someone who has not been physically violent, but has been harassing, intimidating or pestering her. If an order is breached, a criminal offence will have been committed.

Non-molestation orders can run for a fixed period, or indefinitely. Generally they run until they are cancelled by a court.

- Occupation Orders

This is another type of injunction, which establishes who has the right to remain in a home. An occupation order can order the abuser to move out of the home, or to keep a certain distance from the home; it can order the abuser to stay in certain parts of the home at certain times (e.g. order him to sleep in a different bedroom), to let the victim back into the home if they have been locked out, or order them to continue to pay the rent or bills.

An order can last for 6-12 months, and some can be renewed.

A breach of an occupation order is not a criminal offence unless a power of arrest is attached. Breaching an occupation order with a power of arrest could lead to up to two years in prison or a large fine.

- Domestic Abuse Offender Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)

This scheme is administered by Northumberland Constabulary, and allows someone to make enquiries about their partner if they are worried that they may have been abusive in the past.

If Police checks show that there may be a risk, they will consider sharing the information.

An application can be made directly by the affected person if they have a concern that they may be at risk of harm; or any concerned third party (such as parents or friends) can also make an application if they are concerned.

However, if someone else applies, they would not receive the information; it would only be given to the person in the relationship, or someone who is in a position to protect them from the abuse.

Target hardening

The Anti-Social Behaviour team also have access to various home security devices

such as panic alarms, personal alarms, door alarms etc and can issue these if appropriate.

Please note: there may be some cases where the perpetrator is a tenant, but the victim is not, or where they hold a joint tenancy. We can not agree/arrange lock changes where it would mean that the legal tenant is unable to gain access to their own home

Housing Needs

You should reassure the person experiencing domestic abuse that they can remain in their own home if it is safe to do so. However, there may be occasions when temporary sanctuary/emergency accommodation is required whilst safety measures are put in place. If emergency accommodation is required, staff should liaise directly with support services.

If the victim feels that they want to move to alternative accommodation, and they need to move as a matter of urgency, the matter should be referred to NCC's Homelessness and Housing Options team (HOT) for assistance.

housinghomeless@northumberland.gov.uk

If they express a wish to move, assistance should be sought from the Homefinder Team and a Northumberland Homefinder application completed or updated at the earliest opportunity to reflect the change of circumstances. The Anti-Social Behaviour Team can submit supporting information to assist in the assessment of the application, if required.

Outstanding debt e.g. rent arrears, rechargeable repairs etc. should never prevent a person suffering domestic abuse from moving; however, they cannot be ignored, and a repayment plan will need to be discussed and agreed before rehousing is offered

Joint tenancies

Where a relationship has broken down as a result of domestic abuse, and there is a joint tenancy, we may seek to rehouse the perpetrator with their agreement. This is not a matter of NCC condoning their behaviour, but can have significant benefits for the person experiencing abuse, including:

- Quick removal of the perpetrator from the home, which also enables us and other agencies to make the house safe and secure
- Engaging with the perpetrator and offering them support to change their behaviour
- Enabling the victim to stay in their home and remain in contact with any

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support that they have around them, avoiding potential isolation, as well as avoiding the additional stress of a move. This is particularly important for households with children.

We may also allow the victim to terminate their joint tenancy and grant them a new, sole tenancy, depending on their wishes.

The person experiencing abuse may be able to access remedies to remove a perpetrator from the home, such as an injunction or a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO). The Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Police or any involved support agencies will be able to offer advice on this.

Sole tenancy in perpetrator's name

Where the tenancy is in the perpetrator's name, and the victim expresses a wish to move, they should be referred to Homelessness and Housing Options team.

Alternatively, dependent upon the level of risk, the victim could make an application directly to Northumberland Homefinder.

Sole tenancy in victim's name

Where the tenancy is in the sole name of the person experiencing domestic abuse, staff in the Anti-Social Behaviour can offer guidance on the options available to them.

If the person experiencing abuse wants the perpetrator to leave the home, we will provide support to them in conjunction with partner agencies e.g. Police. Often a request to leave will be resisted by the perpetrator, particularly if there are children involved, and may also heighten the risk of further abuse. Therefore, this process needs to be managed carefully.

Perpetrators may try to return home, and therefore NCC will need to liaise with their legal department or the victim's own solicitors, or support agencies, to explore the available options to keep them safe e.g. injunctions

Financial advice/further tenancy assistance

Victims of domestic abuse may often need financial help, particularly those who have been the victim of financial abuse. They should be referred to their Estates Officer, who can provide them with support and advice.

Case closure

Case closure should be agreed with the victim. Where the victim is not engaging and this results in case closure, all agencies involved with the case should be

informed.

If the victim has specialist support in place, is engaging well, and there is no longer a role for NCC to play, the case should be closed after discussion with the victim.

Forms/templates to be used

- [Appendix 1 - Checklist for Managing Initial Disclosure](#)
- [Appendix 2 - Occupation Rights and Options in Domestic Abuse Cases](#)
- [Appendix 3 - Useful Contacts](#)
- [Appendix 4 - Dash Checklist and MARAC referral form](#)

Appendix 1

Checklist for managing initial disclosure (Safety Plan)

Customer Name & Address

Actions Initial Safety Plan	Comment	Date	Initials
Where is the individual staying/calling from?			
Take number in case you are disconnected			
Is it a safe number to leave a voicemail?			
Is there any immediate danger?			
Is the individual pregnant?			
Are there any children present?			
Are there any children visiting regularly?			
Have the Police been called?			
Check whether refuge/temporary accommodation is needed			
Lock change needed?			
Are any other agencies involved?			
Forced marriage/honour based violence?			
Suicide/self harm?			
Complete DASH RIC			
Refer to MARAC if high risk (score 14 & above or professional judgement)			

Provide DASSN telephone number 01670 820199			
National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247			
Homelessness and Housing Options 0345 600 6400 (Emergency accommodation can be accessed via this number)			
<p>General advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Packing an emergency bag (money/passports/proof of ID & address/benefits info/phone/medication/clothes/ toys for children) ● Avoid rooms in the house where there are no exits, or rooms which contain potential weapons ● Is there someone close to them that they can turn to for help? ● Ask neighbours/friends to listen out for strange noises and to ring 999 ● Places to hide important phone numbers ● Teaching children to find safety/call for help ● Plan where to go if they leave 			
Contact any other agencies involved in the case e.g. Harbour, Police, Children's Services etc.			
Samaritans 116123 Rape Crisis Team 01325 369933			
Advise to call Police on 999 if an emergency			

Provide personal security equipment if appropriate			
Refer to Children's Services if child protection concerns			
Does the individual want to remain in the property?			
Housing: Refer to HOT Check if registered on Homefinder and, if not, arrange to complete an application Direct let? Refer to solicitor for legal advice if joint tenancy			
Advise to speak to solicitor re: non-molestation order/occupancy order/child custody and residency etc			
Record case notes on NPS			
Flag on address(es) on NPS (if appropriate)			
Police check required?			

Appendix 2

Occupation rights and options in domestic abuse cases (from the victim's perspective)

For the purpose of this note, 'victim' means the partner who is seeking to remove the other partner from the family home due to violence or threats of violence by the other towards that partner or towards a member of the family.

The situation will depend on the status of the occupants:

1. **Victim is a non-tenant partner and wishes to remain in the home.**

- a. If the tenant (perpetrator) is willing to end the tenancy (by Notice to Quit or Deed of Surrender) there shouldn't be a problem if DCH/DVH/EDH is willing to grant the victim a new tenancy. In this situation the new tenancy must accord with Northumberland Common Allocation Policy.
- b. If the tenant (perpetrator) refuses to co-operate the following matters arise:
 - i. If the victim is a spouse or civil partner he/she has statutory occupation rights and associated benefits by virtue of '**home rights**' under s30 Family Law Act 1996. However, these will only subsist so long as the marriage/civil partnership lasts. Any question of occupation thereafter should be addressed in the legal proceedings to end the marriage/civil partnership. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*
 - ii. If the victim is not a spouse or civil partner he/she has no such automatic rights BUT can apply to court for an '**occupation order**' under s30 of the Family Law Act 1996. This would confer equivalent rights to 'home rights' described above. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*
 - iii. If there is a danger that the tenant may seek to end the tenancy (by Notice to Quit) the victim may need to act quickly to obtain a court order (injunction) to prevent this from happening. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*
 - iv. The victim can apply for a court order transferring the tenancy

into

his/her sole name. This can be done in conjunction with court applications for an occupation order and/or an injunction as referred to above. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*

NB If the victim doesn't take the necessary action to protect his/her position, as described above, and the tenant serves a NTQ, the tenancy will end on expiry of the NTQ period and the occupants will become trespassers. As stated above, this will not be an issue if DCH/DVH/EDH is willing to grant the victim a new tenancy and the perpetrator has moved out.

2. Victim is the sole tenant and wishes to remove the non-tenant partner.

Whilst this may allow DCH/DVH/EDH to consider an ASB injunction the proper route would be for the tenant to consider a non-molestation order. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*

3. Victim is a joint tenant with the perpetrator.

- a. If DCH/DVH/EDH is willing to grant the victim a new sole tenancy and the perpetrator agrees to cooperate, you must firstly take steps to end the joint tenancy (by Notice to Quit or Deed of Surrender). You should arrange for both joint tenants to sign the NTQ or to execute Deed of Surrender. The new sole tenancy must accord with Northumberland Common Allocation Policy.
- b. If the perpetrator refuses to co-operate the following matters arise
 - i. If there is a danger that the perpetrator may seek to end the tenancy (by Notice to Quit) the victim may need to act quickly to obtain a court order (injunction) to prevent this from happening. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*
 - ii. The victim should apply for a court order transferring the joint tenancy into his/her sole name and does not need DCH/DVH/EDH approval to do so. This can be done in conjunction with a court application for an injunction as referred to above. *Signpost victim to independent specialist legal advice.*

NB If the victim doesn't take the necessary action to protect his/her position, as described above, and the perpetrator serves a NTQ (which doesn't require the victim's signature), the tenancy will end on expiry of the NTQ period and the occupants will become trespassers. As stated above, this will not be an issue if DCH/DVH/EDH is willing to grant the victim a new tenancy and the perpetrator has moved out.

- c. If the victim wishes to end the joint tenancy by NTQ, without obtaining the signature of the perpetrator, you must accept it provided the notice is for the usual 4 week period. DCH/DVH/EDH is then, once that NTQ is effective, free to enter into a new sole tenancy with the victim provided it accords with Northumberland Common Allocation Policy.

NCC should support victims to ensure that they have the home of their choice, be that staying at their current address or a new home.

Appendix 3

Useful contacts for further advice and support

Northumberland County Council Domestic Abuse Webpages

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Protection/Violence.aspx#usefulcontactsfordomesticviolenceabusesafeguardingissues>

Northumbria Police 101 (or 999 if an emergency)

<https://www.northumbria.police.uk/>

Northumberland Abuse

Victim Care 0303 0401 099 (9am– 8pm Mon to Fri, 9am - 5pm Sat)

<https://victimcareandadvice.service.uk/>

An independent charity helping people cope with the effects of crime, by providing free and confidential support and information.

Homelessness and Housing Options 0345 600 6400 (9:am to 5pm Mon – Fri) If someone is homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, Homelessness and Housing Options team can offer advice and assistance. housinghomeless@northumberland.gov.uk

Northumberland Refuge (DASSN) 01670 820199

Provides confidential, high quality specialist support and advice for women and men who are at risk of domestic abuse. DASSN@placesforpeople.co.uk

<https://livingplus.placesforpeople.co.uk/customer/our-services/domestic-abuse/>

OneCall 01670 536 400 Text phone: 01670 536 844 Open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day

Contact OneCall if you are concerned about a vulnerable adult or a child who is at risk of neglect or abuse in Northumberland

National Centre for Domestic Violence 0800 970 2070

<http://www.ncdv.org.uk/>

Text NCDV to 60777

The National Centre for Domestic Violence provides a free, fast, emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation.

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

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<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>

The 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, is a national service for women experiencing domestic abuse, their families, friends, colleagues or others calling on their behalf.

Action on Elder Abuse 0808 808 8141

<http://elderabuse.org.uk/england/>

Action on Elder Abuse work to protect and prevent the abuse of vulnerable older adults.

Halo Project 01642 683045 (9am to 5pm Mon – Fri)

<http://www.haloproject.org.uk/>

The Halo Project supports those at risk of honour based violence and forced marriage who live in the North East.

Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327 (9am to 5pm Mon – Fri)

<http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk/>

Offers advice and support for men in abusive relationships, both those experiencing violence and abuse from partners, and those concerned about their own violence.

Galop/National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline

0800 999 5428

www.galop.org.uk

Galop is an LGBT and anti-violence charity who offer support to victims of hate crime, sexual violence or domestic abuse.

Appendix 4

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

MARAC meetings are held fortnightly, in order to discuss cases of domestic abuse which are deemed to be 'high risk'. The MARAC is held in order to discuss various issues in relation to the safety and wellbeing of the identified person and, if appropriate, their children.

The meetings are attended by individuals from various organisations, including Northumberland County Council Children and Adult Services, Health Services, Police, Probation Service, domestic abuse specialist support services and the relevant housing provider.

Referrals to MARAC, Safeguarding or any other relevant agencies will be made after discussion with, and consent from the victim. However, if consent is not granted and the officer feels that the referral is necessary i.e. if it is felt that there is an immediate risk, or potential risk, to the victim or the victim's family, it will be made without their permission.

Please see below for:

- [SafeLives Dash risk checklist](#)
- [MARAC referral form](#)



SafeLives Dash risk checklist

Aim of the form

- To help front line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To decide which cases should be referred to Marac and what other support might be required. A completed form becomes an active record that can be referred to in future for case management.
- To offer a common tool to agencies that are part of the Marac^[1] process and provide a shared understanding of risk in relation to domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and 'near misses', which underpins most recognised models of risk assessment.

How to use the form

Before completing the form for the first time, we recommend that you read the full practice guidance and FAQs. These can be downloaded from:

<http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/FAQs%20about%20Dash%20FINAL.pdf>.

Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. It is good practice to review the checklist after a new incident.

Please pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a Marac or in another way. **The responsibility for identifying your local referral threshold rests with your local Marac.**

What this form is not

This form will provide valuable information about the risks that children are living with but it is not a full risk assessment for children. The presence of children increases the wider risks of domestic violence and step children are particularly at risk. If risk towards children is highlighted you should consider what referral you need to make to obtain a full assessment of the children's situation.

SafeLives Dash risk checklist for use by Idvas and other non-police agencies^[2] for identification of risks when domestic abuse, ‘honour’- based violence and/or stalking are disclosed

<p>Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned.</p> <p>Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.</p> <p>It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is not the case, please indicate in the right hand column</p>	<p>Y E S</p>	<p>N O</p>	<p>DON'T KNOW</p>	<p>State source of info if not the victim (eg police officer)</p>
<p>1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? Please state what and whether this is the first injury.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>2. Are you very frightened? Comment:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence? Please give an indication of what you think [name of abuser(s)] might do and to whom, including children. Comment:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends? ie, does [name of abuser(s)] try to stop you from seeing friends/family/doctor or others? Comment:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>6. Have you separated or tried to separate from [name of abuser(s)] within the past year?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>7. Is there conflict over child contact?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>8. Does [name of abuser(s)] constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you? Please expand to identify what and whether you believe that this is done deliberately to intimidate you? Consider the context and behaviour of what is being done.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>10. Is the abuse happening more often?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>11. Is the abuse getting worse?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>12. Does [name of abuser(s)] try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous? For example: in terms of relationships; who you see; being 'policed' at home; telling you what to wear. Consider 'honour'-based violence (HBV) and specify behaviour.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>13. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>14. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them? If yes, tick who: You <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>15. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever attempted to strangle / choke / suffocate / drown you?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.	Y E S	N O	DON'T KNOW	State source of info
<p>16. Does [name of abuser(s)] do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else?</p> <p>If someone else, specify who.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>17. Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of?</p> <p>If yes, please specify whom and why. Consider extended family if HBV</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>18. Do you know if [name of abuser(s)] has hurt anyone else?</p> <p>Consider HBV. Please specify whom, including the children, siblings or elderly relatives:</p> <p>Children <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Another family member <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Someone from a previous relationship <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>19. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>20. Are there any financial issues?</p> <p>For example, are you dependent on [name of abuser(s)] for money/have they recently lost their job/other financial issues?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>21. Has [name of abuser(s)] had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life?</p> <p>If yes, please specify which and give relevant details if known.</p> <p>Drugs <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Mental health <input type="checkbox"/></p>				
<p>22. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever threatened or attempted suicide?</p>				
<p>23. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever broken bail/an injunction and/or formal agreement for when they can see you and/or the children?</p> <p>You may wish to consider this in relation to an ex-partner of the perpetrator if relevant.</p> <p>Bail conditions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Non Molestation/Occupation Order <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Child contact arrangements <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Forced Marriage Protection Order <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>				

<p>24. Do you know if [name of abuser(s)] has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history?</p> <p>If yes, please specify:</p> <p>Domestic abuse <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sexual violence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other violence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Total 'yes' responses				

<p>Is there any other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may increase risk levels? Consider victim's situation in relation to disability, substance misuse, mental health issues, cultural / language barriers, 'honour'- based systems, geographic isolation and minimisation. Are they willing to engage with your service? Describe.</p>	
<p>Consider abuser's occupation / interests. Could this give them unique access to weapons? Describe.</p>	
<p>What are the victim's greatest priorities to address their safety?</p>	

<p>Do you believe that there are reasonable grounds for referring this case to MARAC?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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If yes, have you made a referral?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Signed		Date	
Do you believe that there are risks facing the children in the family?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please confirm if you have made a referral to safeguard the children?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date referral made	
Signed		Date	
Name			

For consideration by professional

Practitioner's notes

This document reflects work undertaken by SafeLives in partnership with Laura Richards, Consultant Violence Adviser to ACPO. We would like to thank Advance, Blackburn with Darwen Women's Aid and Berkshire East Family Safety Unit and all the partners of the Blackpool Marac for their contribution in piloting the revised checklist without which we could not have amended the original SafeLives risk identification checklist. We are very grateful to Elizabeth Hall of CAF/CASS and Neil Blacklock of Respect for their advice and encouragement and for the expert input we received from Jan Pickles, Dr Amanda Robinson and Jasvinder Sanghera.

[1] For further information about Marac please refer to the 10 principles of an effective Marac:

<http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/The%20principles%20of%20an%20effective%20MARAC%20%28principles%20only%29%20FINAL.pdf>

[2] Note: This checklist is consistent with the ACPO endorsed risk assessment model DASH 2009 for the police service.



MARAC REFERRAL FORM

Complete this form with as much information as possible and forward to your agencies MARAC SPOC with the completed risk assessment form (SafeLives DASH risk checklist)

**** Do not forward directly to the relevant MASH ****

If you do not know who your MARAC point of contact is, please contact Northumberland MASH on
01670 536485

Your agency SPOC will then email it to: northumberland.mash@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

Date of referral:	Agency:
Name of referring practitioner: Contact details Your shift pattern/availability for contact from Police/agencies: Telephone: Mobile: Email:	Address:
Victim	Perpetrator
Forename(s) Surname Alias: DOB Address	Forename(s) Surname Alias: DOB Address
Ethnic origin	Ethnic origin

PHYSICAL-SEXUAL- ECONOMIC - PSYCHOLOGICAL- DISCRIMINATORY

Religion	Religion
Disability	Disability
Sexual orientation	Sexual orientation
Language	Language
Safe contact number (please state is there is not one)	
Relationship between victim and offender	
If Refugee / Asylum seeker (victim only)	
Nationality	Status
GP details if known (victim only)	
CONSENT	
1. Is the victim aware the MARAC referral has been submitted? (if 'No' you MUST answer question 3) YES / NO	3. Please document your rationale for sharing information without consent?
2. Has the victim consented to MARAC? (if 'No' you MUST answer question 3) YES / NO	
LIST ANY CHILDREN OR OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OR LINKED TO EITHER PARTY:	
Name DOB: Address: School:	Name DOB: Address: School:
Name DOB: Address:	Name DOB: Address:

School:	School:
Name DOB: Address: School:	Name DOB: Address: School:
Name DOB: Address: School:	Name DOB: Address: School:
INCIDENT REPORTED:	
<p>(Information for referrer only)</p> <p>Victims will often disclose abuse that amounts to criminal offences, eg: physical/sexual assaults/coercive control. Please explain to the victim that Police have a duty to record such offences. Police may wish to investigate these crimes, taking into account the victims wishes.</p> <p>The following information is vital to assist the Police in the recording of crimes, as per national guidelines dictate. The below information will assist in decision making whilst remaining victim focussed.</p> <p>Please include the following details:</p>	
Has the victim already reported the incident to the Police and what was the outcome? Does the victim have any log/crimes numbers if already reported?	
If not already reported to the police would the victim like the police to investigate this information and if not why not?	
Date/s incident/s occurred?	

Location/s incident/s occurred?	
Injuries the victim sustained?	
<p>(Information for referrer only)</p> <p>In liaison with the referrer the Police have to decide whether an investigation should be commenced and whether the offender should be spoken to. The Victims wishes are paramount to the decision making process - please document the victims wishes below – including any perceived risks to the victim/children/family that may be caused by Police commencing any investigations:</p>	
<p>If the person is aware of the MARAC referral and it is safe to contact them please consider the following questions:</p>	
Who is the victim afraid of? (to include all potential threats, and not just primary perpetrator)	
Who does the victim believe it is safe to talk to?	
Who does the victim believe it is not safe to talk to?	
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	
<p>Please provide FULL details of the circumstances/concerns that lead you to believe the victim meets the high risk threshold – High risk means the victim is at imminent risk of serious harm or homicide.</p> <p>NOTE: If there are less than 14 ticks on the risk assessment please include rationale as to</p>	

PHYSICAL-SEXUAL- ECONOMIC - PSYCHOLOGICAL- DISCRIMINATORY

why you believe the victim is high risk.