Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service

Family Intervention Team
supporting families in Somerset with children affected by domestic abuse

Information for Parents and Professionals

Helping Hands

helping to keep you safe
Domestic abuse
Domestic abuse is more common than people think; one in four women and one in six men will experience it at some point in their lives. It can happen to anyone, in all types of relationships, regardless of race, ethnicity, religious group, class, disability, sexuality, lifestyle, nationality or age. It is rarely a one-off occurrence, but usually a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
- psychological  
- emotional  
- physical

Controlling behaviour
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
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, which is not a legal 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.

What is domestic abuse?
Domestic abuse can take many different forms, and victims may be made to feel responsible and guilty for the abuse. It can go on for years, often increasing in frequency and severity.

If you, or someone you know, is in an abusive relationship, you can:
- Recognise it is happening
- Accept that you (or the person you know) are not to blame
- Seek help and support
How domestic abuse affects children?
The effects of domestic abuse on children can be severe and long-lasting. Some children may become withdrawn whilst others may become aggressive and display challenging behaviour; children may blame themselves for the abuse. Some children may cope better than others.

We believe that all children living in a household with domestic abuse will be adversely affected. Sometimes families tell us that “the child wasn’t in the room” or “they didn’t really know what was happening” and therefore they haven’t been affected by the abuse. In our view this is very rarely the case. The children haven’t just witnessed the abuse, they have lived with it; they will hear, see and observe it and may even try to intervene. Children will also be aware of tensions in the home. Domestic abuse will have an impact on children and they may as a result show some of the signs below:

- Withdrawal
- Aggression, tantrums or bullying
- Vandalism
- Self-harm
- Problems in school
- Attention seeking
- Nightmares, bed-wetting or insomnia
- Flashbacks
- Conflict between family members
- Low self-esteem and confidence, feelings of inferiority
- Limited social skills
- Anxiety, depression, fear of abandonment
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Re-enacting abuse witnessed
- Eating disorders
- Constant colds, headaches, ulcers, eczema, stomach aches

With the right help and support, children can cope with and recover from domestic abuse.
Family Intervention Team
The SIDAS Barnardo’s Family Intervention Team is here to support children aged 3 to 15 years recover from the trauma and impact of the domestic abuse they have experienced. This is the first time there has been a dedicated county-wide service for children affected by domestic abuse in Somerset.

It is important to highlight that we are a recovery service. This means that if domestic abuse is ongoing, if there are still high levels of risk and concern you may need to be supported by a different part of the SIDAS service. You can call the Somerset Domestic Abuse Support helpline on 0800 69 49 999 to talk to our colleagues who can help you to understand what level of risk you’re experiencing.

We aim to

- Help parents develop a greater understanding of how their children have been impacted by the domestic abuse
- Build self-esteem and confidence, resilience, understanding of their behaviours, increase feelings of safety, increase awareness and understanding of perpetrators and domestic abuse and knowledge of healthy relationships

We achieve this by

- Developing individual support plans
- Undertaking 1:1 work with children and their parents
- Using a wide variety of resources, mediums and techniques such as stories, puppets, play, arts and crafts, worksheets, DVDs, which enable children to express their feelings and emotions safely

I am less angry and getting on better with my brothers. (aged 10)

I have a much better relationship with my son now.

My family has got happier. (aged 5)
How to refer to the SIDAS Family Intervention Team

For parents
Please call the Domestic Abuse line on 0800 69 49 999 and a self-referral will be completed with you over the phone.

For professionals
Call the Domestic Abuse line on 0800 69 49 999 and request the SIDAS Family Intervention Worker referral forms. These will be e-mailed to you.
In line with Somerset County Council procedures you will need to show that you have completed an Early Help Assessment for the child indicating at which level they require support.

If a child is at Level 3, they can be referred to the Family Intervention team for support from an allocated Family Intervention Worker. This is a recovery service, therefore the child and family need to be in what is deemed to be a safe and stable place in order to receive effective family intervention support.

For children below Level 3 a referral can still be submitted but they will not be allocated a Family Intervention Worker. The family will be sent a support pack and supporting professionals are invited to attend Barnardo's training.

After a referral has been made
Once a referral has been received a member of the Family Intervention Team will contact thereferrer to inform them that the referral has been received and ensure they have all appropriate contact numbers for the service.

Once a Family Intervention Worker has been allocated they will contact the family and arrange a first visit. During this visit the Family Intervention Worker willcomplete an assessment and together with the family look at how the service can best support them to recover from their experiences of domestic abuse.

The Family Intervention Worker will work alongside other professionals supporting the family to ensure that all relevant information is shared and all professionals have a clear plan on how they will be supporting the family. The Family Intervention Worker will also signpost and support the family to access other services if required.
If you require any more information about the SIDAS Family Intervention Team please do not hesitate to call us.

**Domestic abuse helpline**

**0800 69 49 999**

General enquiries: heretohelp@knightstone.co.uk

Referrals: call helpline to make a self-referral (parents) or to request referral forms (professionals).

### Other useful contacts

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Website/URL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>getset</td>
<td>0300 123 2224</td>
<td>getsetsomerset.org.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARSAS</td>
<td>0808 801 0456</td>
<td><a href="http://www.saras.org.uk">www.saras.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Aid</td>
<td>0808 2000 247</td>
<td><a href="http://www.womensaid.org.uk">www.womensaid.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hideout</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.thehideout.org.uk">www.thehideout.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChildLine</td>
<td>0800 1111</td>
<td><a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Support</td>
<td>0300 303 1972</td>
<td><a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lighthouse</td>
<td>call 101</td>
<td>lighthousevictimcare.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Minds</td>
<td>0800 802 5544</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Somerset Survivors</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk">www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk</a></td>
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Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service is in partnership with Livery, Barnardo’s and Somerset County Council.