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ADULT SOCIAL CARE DOMESTIC ABUSE FRAMEWORK

Applicable to:	All staff in Adult Social Care
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Approver	Richard Sparkes

Version Control

Version number	Purpose of the change or details of the change	Person making the change	Date
0 01	Initial drafting	Claire Bland	08/0/2014
0 02	Revisions following “Domestic Abuse” theme month	Clement Guerin	11/3/2015
1 00	Approved by Gill Vickers, Director of Adult Social Care	Clement Guerin	9/6/2015
1 01	Review – updates made	Maria Burton	05/11/2018
1 02	Review – insertion of Lambeth new DA strategy	Kate Buck/ Lizzy Lacey	24/03/2023
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1 Policy Statement

Lambeth Council has zero tolerance for violence and abuse. This policy will set out how Adults Social care in Lambeth will tackle domestic abuse, support victims and survivors¹ of domestic abuse and hold perpetrators to account.

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on victims and survivors, their families and the wider community. It can happen to anyone, in any type of relationship including ex-partners, family members or those who have or had parental responsibility for a child. We know domestic abuse is rarely confined to a single incident, may not involve physical abuse, and typically forms a pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour. We support the VAWG Strategy's recognition that the majority of victims and survivors are women², and the majority of perpetrators are men³.

This policy augments the vision for the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy – 'Lambeth is a borough where everyone is safe'.

We understand the serious and enduring impact which can be caused by domestic abuse. Therefore, identifying domestic abuse early and providing support to victims and survivors is a key priority for Adult social care.

This policy will be supported by the Adult social care Domestic Abuse Procedure which provides detail on how the policy will be practically applied.

2 Purpose, context and objective

The purposes are:

- So that all adult social care staff have an understanding of domestic abuse issues and how best to offer support and assistance to those affected.
- To help adult social care staff to feel confident when working with victims of domestic abuse and that those seeking assistance receive a positive response.
- So that adult social care staff and their managers are supported in dealing with these issues in a sensitive, fair and consistent manner.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk) (Nov, 2022)

- So that all staff in adult social care understand their duty to report domestic abuse where children are involved or present as family members to Children's Services. Exposure to domestic abuse is always abusive to children. Children are at increased risk of physical harm as well as emotional abuse where domestic violence is present.

The objectives are:

- To raise and maintain standards of service delivery in adult social care.
- To assist workers to help minimise risk of further harm to people experiencing domestic abuse.

3 Scope

All staff working within Adult Social Care.

4 Putting this policy into practice

Lambeth Adult Social Care is committed to raising awareness of domestic violence within the workforce and providing guidance and assistance to staff who work with Lambeth citizens who may experience domestic abuse. Our procedures and guidance will set out how we will do this.

These procedures and guidance may also inform the support we offer to any members of Lambeth staff that may be a victim, survivor or perpetrator of domestic abuse. Please see [here](#) for further information

5 Roles and responsibilities

All social care staff must familiarise themselves with the Domestic Abuse procedures, guidance and standards. Lambeth have also developed a new Violence against women and Girls strategy in the borough (2021-2027) which outlines a vision, approach and commitments to tackling VAWG in Lambeth. It can be found [here](#), practice should be carried out in line with these.

It is the role of the line manager/supervisor to provide front line staff with guidance, advice and support when working with people experiencing domestic abuse. This should be done by way of formal supervision however managers must also be available for "dynamic" informal supervision to support staff managing a crisis.

Line managers/supervisors must therefore ensure they are aware of all cases within their teams which have domestic abuse concerns. These should be discussed at every formal supervision session with the case holder, in order to ensure effective practice is maintained and poor practice can be remedied quickly.

Line managers/supervisors must ensure they maintain their knowledge of case law, available services and the range of legal options.

The responsibility for ensuring delivery of this domestic abuse policy shall rest with all social care staff, both front line and management, in line with their professional standards and accountability.

6 Civil crisis or emergency situations – Contingency considerations.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability of agencies to deliver coordinated safeguarding and support services. During the pandemic, many services, including mental health, housing, and domestic abuse support, shifted to remote or reduced operations. This led to a breakdown in communication, reduced face-to-face contact, and missed opportunities to identify and respond to escalating risk. Whilst the pandemic was an unprecedented event, its effects exposed vulnerabilities in the system's ability to safeguard individuals during a crisis.

During such times of civil crisis or emergency, where restrictions may be in place on how services operate, enhanced vigilance is required on any cases of reported domestic abuse, and there must be consideration to share concerns with other professionals working with the alleged victim or alleged person posing risk, in the interest of public safety.

7 Definitions and abbreviations

7.1 The government's definition

The Government defines Domestic Violence as “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, 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”

7.2 The Care and Support statutory guidance

The statutory guidance which accompanies the Care Act 2014 says, for the purposes of safeguarding adults work, that “Domestic violence include[s] psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence” and also “Many people think that domestic abuse is about intimate partners, but it is clear that other family members are included and that much safeguarding work ... that occurs at home is, in fact is concerned with domestic abuse.”