



Safe Parenting: Domestic Violence

This fact sheet can be made available in other languages or formats on request by contacting 0161 222 6666. For further information please see our detailed fact sheet - **Information for all**.

"I crept downstairs because I heard arguing. Dad was standing over mum kicking her. I made sure that my sister did not see, but we still heard. When mum came upstairs, her nose was bleeding and we all cried. We stayed there until dad went out."

Your job as a parent is one of the most difficult there is - it can be both challenging and rewarding. It is a job where very little training is given to prepare parents for what lies ahead.

Every family experiences difficulty from time to time and this can test the best of parents. When additional pressures come along, these can make a hard job nearly impossible. At these times it may be hard to think about what help or information you might need. When things go wrong it does not mean that someone has failed in parenting - things go wrong for everyone. It is often the way difficulties are handled that can make a difference to your children, both now and in the future.

There is no such thing as the perfect parent. However, there are some ways that you can make it a less stressful and more rewarding experience.

This fact sheet aims to give you help and advice if you are experiencing domestic violence.

How does domestic violence affect children?

Domestic violence is a crime and a major social problem affecting many families. In 90% of reported domestic violence incidents, children have either been present in the same or a nearby room.

Children who witness, intervene or hear incidents are affected in many ways. What can be guaranteed is that children do hear, they do see and they are aware of violence in the family.

Children will learn how to behave from examples parents set for them. Domestic violence teaches children negative things about relationships and how to deal with people.

For instance:

It can teach them that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict.

They learn how to keep secrets.

They learn to mistrust those close to them and that children are responsible and to blame for violence, especially if violence erupts after an argument about the children.

Many people find it difficult to understand why people remain in or return to violent situations. A combination of fear, love, the risk of homelessness and financial issues can make it very difficult for partners with children to leave and some may not want to.

Short-term effects:

Children are affected in many ways by violence, even after a short time. These effects include: feeling frightened, becoming withdrawn, bedwetting, running away, aggressiveness, behavioural difficulties, problems with school, poor concentration and emotional turmoil.

Long-term effects:

The longer children are exposed to violence, the more severe the effects on them are. These can include:

A lack of respect for the non-violent parent.

Loss of self-confidence, which will affect their ability to form relationships in the future.

Being over-protective of a parent.

Loss of childhood.

Problems at school.

Running away.

If you are worried about domestic violence, discuss it with someone else.

If you are violent and have children, you can seek help to stop what is happening.

If you are a victim you can apply, without the need for a solicitor, for a Non-Molestation Order in the Family Proceedings Court. Contact the duty clerk.

If you would like details of solicitors in your area who deal with family law, contact the Law Society on 020 7242 1222 or look in the Yellow Pages.

The warning signs

Any violence between adults will negatively affect children.

Seek support and help as soon as possible.

The longer it lasts the more damaging violence is.

Taking action

Report your concerns about yourself or someone else to the police.

If you are worried that your child might be affected, talk to them about what is happening.

Spend time together talking through worries they have.

What to say

Children need time to discuss the feelings they have about violence.

Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way relationships should be.

Prevention

A violent partner can take responsibility for violence by seeking help to stop. Make sure that you offer a positive role model for children so that they learn other ways of behaving.

Remember

- Domestic violence teaches children to use violence
- Violence can affect children in serious and long-lasting ways
- Where there is domestic violence there is often child abuse
- Children will often blame themselves for domestic violence
- Alcohol misuse is very common when violence occurs in families
- Pregnant women are more vulnerable to domestic violence

Contacts

Police Domestic Violence Unit

0161 856 8961

Oldham Family Crisis Group Helpline

0161 628 4991

Greater Manchester Domestic Violence Helpline

0161 839 8574

We value your comments and suggestions about Social Services

We want to provide good quality services for people in Oldham and as we are a public service, you have a say in everything we do. We want you to be completely satisfied with our services, but to ensure this we need to know what you think. What do we do best? Where could we improve things? Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Only by listening to you can we give you the service you deserve. Our Complaints & Representation Officer welcomes everything you have to say and will read each and every one of your suggestions and reply to you individually, responding to any specific issues you raise.

The Complaints & Representation Officer can be contacted at:

Freepost
Children Young People and Families
Complaints and Representations Officer
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
PO BOX 4
Civic Centre
Level 8
West Street
Oldham
OL1 1UL
Tel: 0101 770 1129
Fax: 0161 770 3222
E-mail: cypf.complaints@oldham.gov.uk

The Complaints & Representation Officer only speaks English however if you wish we can arrange to visit you with an interpreter.

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