



Q&A: Children as Victims of DA webinar

September 2022

1. What about Young people (under 18) in relationships?

A: The new legislation covers 16-18 year olds that are in relationships together. So 16-18 year olds will be considered victims in their own relationships as well as in the 'connectedness' discussed in the webinar.

2. Please can you share the NSPCC stats from 2016 - what did the 95% relate to?

A: This will be sent with the links alongside the PP

3. Any advice on raising awareness to Children's Social Care/Early Help teams around this would be welcome. A number of cases at present where this is a feature, including EH workers suggesting mediation between mother and ex/abusive partner regarding child contact. How can we heighten their awareness of the risks and steer away from poor practice around this?

A: There is plenty of research/examples of practice where different models work. Safe and Together ([About the Safe & Together™ Model | Safe & Together Institute \(safeandtogetherinstitute.com\)](#)) and Engage (both Respect accredited) ensure the perpetrator is aware of their behaviour and once they take accountability for their behaviour it is about helping the family separate safely. These models are risk led, so support always comes to the victim first.

Child contact arrangements, assessments and plans and the re-traumatisation that may come with children having contact with the perpetrator should be more robust because of the new DA Act, as it covers post separation abuse, and if Social Workers and other frontline staff are aware of the impact, and are able to recognise non-violent domestic abuse, such as coercive control, this will help with evidence gathering so children aren't put at risk.

4. Do you know if the Government are planning to issue any formal guidance regarding this?

A: Yes, guidance can be found here [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

5. Do you have any toolkit that can be used to do direct work with children?

A: Depending on the work that will take place, there are lots of online toolkits on working with children who are victims of domestic abuse, how to work with them and what to consider such as age related/learning related levels and whether the child is being assessed/supported for trauma by mental health services etc.

Some of this came up on the webinar and whilst SafeLives have some toolkits on their website (see [Resources for frontline domestic abuse workers and Idvas | Safelives](#)), there are additional external services that have also good online toolkits:

**Beacon House
NSPCC
Respect**

Rockpool
Social Workers toolbox
Banardos
CAFCASS
Research in Practice (RIP)
The PACE model ([PACE - A Therapeutic Approach - Help Children Live Better](#)) or [P.A.C.E. \(danielhughes.org\)](#)
UK Youth
Violence Reduction Units (search locally)

As well as local safeguarding arrangements, which can be accessed by searching 'safeguarding children' and then local areas.

6. Will there be a Safe Lives risk assessment specifically for child victims of DA?

A: There is a young persons Dash Ric which was written for 13-17 year olds which you can find here [YP RIC guidance FINAL \(1\) \(1\).doc \(live.com\)](#) but is not for use with younger children. This is something we need to look at.

7. I am finding certain judges are not recognising the childrens needs in court and this is difficult to challenge, and CAFCASS

A: Courts and Cafcass are heavily reliant on the evidence that is produced, but we agree they must do better spending time with children and young people, gathering their voice. Please see some links for our Cafcass work below:

Summary/key findings doc: ["The family and criminal court system retraumatizes victims", according to a new report commissioned by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner | Safelives](#)

Report found here: [Understanding Court Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse \(safelives.org.uk\)](#)

8. Is there any training available around children and DA?

A: There should be locally led training within statutory organisations and local community responses as well. Safeguarding children should be a mandatory training offer in your area. SafeLives also has some training available, so you might find it useful to look on our website or speak to our training team: training@safelives.org.uk.

Alternatively, looking at trauma informed practices at a specialist training provider or internally would suit. Somewhere like [Trauma Informed Practice Training Course \(interfaceenterprises.co.uk\)](#) or [Innovating Minds | Home \(innovatingmindscic.com\)](#) can give a good level of trauma informed practice for practitioners. If IDAS work in your area or locally they often offer very comprehensive packages of training [IDAS](#).

9. Are you aware of any sort of specific guidance for police forces and how they are expected to respond to children as victims? Having spoken to several officers there is some confusion on how police need to respond.

A: Responses need to be individually led, case by case, child by child and family by family in different areas. Having this document from the CPS would be helpful [Domestic Abuse | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](#) which covers information from the new DA Act.

Working with Children specifically requires time and patience, disclosures of abuse via the Victim Personal Statement (VPS) need to be taken seriously, following the Victim Code of Practice ([MoJ Victims Code 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) and safeguarding procedures applied appropriately as these follow the Victim and the Officer to Court.

Womens Aid have a useful guidance page here [Police and the CPS - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](#) as to how to support victims, which includes children.

Operation Encompass should be known and utilised by the Police every time there is an incident in a family home as a matter of good practice [Home : Operation Encompass](#).

Practice skills that frontline officers will need centre around trauma informed principles, such as empathy, being non-judgemental, building rapport, taking time, showing use of active listening, and hearing what children are saying, but also what they're not saying. Cross referencing disclosures with other services that may know the children, such as schools and GP surgeries is also essential. NSPCC have these pages here [Recognising and responding to child abuse and neglect | NSPCC Learning](#) the college of Policing have this here [Communication | College of Policing](#) and Child Help have some thoughts here [How To Handle Child Abuse Disclosures - Childhelp](#) all of which can be helpful to know.

10. Are there nationally recognised best practice models for support for children in safe accommodation

A: Looking at what may be on offer locally is really important. There are few safe accommodation sites for young people so there isn't too much information or evidence readily available. Sheffield have a service called 'The Young Women's Housing Project' [Young Womens' Housing Project](#) [ProjectYoung Womens' Housing Project \(ywHP.org.uk\)](#) which is based on sexual abuse, but do house victims of domestic abuse and trafficking as well they might have more relevant nationwide links, whilst this government guidance might help [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). IDAS also hold some good information on refuges and children [Support for children in refuges - IDAS](#) and might be worth contacting.

11. Is there any training you can recommend for social workers/children's services that we can advise to support their understanding of how DA affects children as victims?

A: Training question answered above (Question 8)

12. Will there be a professionals' resource on safelives website in relation to this subject?

A: There are different levels of resource for different elements of the new DA Act and it's impact on children and young people. There isn't currently a resource that SafeLives have to offer, however many partners we work with have produced different resources and models.

13. What about language deprivation - does/would it have a huge impact on their developments/ and how to deal with their traumas in a safe way?

A: Language deprivation, much like other learning needs and developmental delays will definitely have an impact on a child who is a victim of domestic abuse. If a child has developmental delays, much of what was discussed in the webinar with regards to building relationships, trust and rapport, and knowing the child still applies. This is even more important because of their delays, whether that be visual, or audio, to spend time, building trust, so they, and you as practitioners can build in visual or audio aids that will enable them to disclose via art, or play. Using PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) as a model of intervention can help attempts to overcome barriers, alongside really working on your own non-verbal cues, remembering that 93% of our communication is non-verbal.

14. What changes are planned to increase awareness of DA in family court system?

A: With regards to new training for the family courts, the Judicial College are responsible for this. We are aware that the Judicial College are working with survivors to hear about their experiences and input into training. At SafeLives we're currently delivering training to family Lawyers: <https://safelives.org.uk/DA-Family-Lawyers-Training-Programme>

We do know that there is a new pilot in the family courts that will look to support domestic abuse victims better in the family courts: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pioneering-approach-in->

family-courts-to-support-domestic-abuse-victims-better so look forward to hearing about outcomes from this that can be replicated across the country.

15. What services are available for children?

A: Look at your local offer with your Local Authority and the community services that surround the DA offer.