



Save the Children



# Safe Learning

How to support the educational needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence



women's aid  
until women & children are safe

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of children and young people  
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Jenny Mill and Diane Church



**+** women's aid  
until women & children are safe



**Save the Children**

**Save the Children fights for children in the UK and around the world who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice and violence. We work with them to find lifelong answers to the problems they face.**

**Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that co-ordinates and supports an England-wide network of over 370 local organisations which provide over 500 services working to end violence against women and children. Women's Aid campaigns for better legal protection and services, providing a strategic "expert view" to government on laws, policy and practice affecting abused women and children.**

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Children's and young people's names have been changed to protect identities.

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# Introduction

*“Pupil performance and well-being go hand in hand. Pupils can’t learn if they don’t feel safe... (The government) will strongly support... the work schools are already doing to raise educational standards by supporting closer working between universal services like schools and specialist services so that children with additional needs can be identified earlier and supported effectively.”*

*Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools  
(Department for Education and Skills, 2004a)*

Children and young people need to feel confident and safe if they are to learn effectively. However, this can be an extremely challenging goal, especially when trying to encourage and support the learning of vulnerable children and young people, such as those affected by domestic violence.

It is very important that these children, who have already had their childhood blighted by the harrowing experience of being exposed to domestic violence, do not miss out on their education. It is vital that they receive positive and encouraging support from education professionals, whether the contact is through school, home learning, pupil referral units or out-of-school clubs.

This resource guide, *Safe Learning*, is the result of research carried out by Save the Children in conjunction with local Women’s Aid services. The research focused on four groups:

- children and young people in refuges
- professionals in local authorities
- school staff
- staff in local Women’s Aid refuges.

The research revealed that education professionals are often unclear about the best way to address the needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence. It also showed that these professionals are often uncertain about who is responsible for providing support. See Section 1.1, ‘Background to this guide’, on page 3 for more details.

*“When I was in the refuge I didn’t go to school. [The refuge worker] phoned them up and asked them to send me some work and they wouldn’t.”*

Sophie, 14

*Safe Learning* aims to address those concerns. It is aimed at professionals working directly with children and young people who are, or who may be, affected by domestic violence. The main target audiences are:

- all school staff – including teachers, governors, learning support assistants and administrative staff
- out-of-school teaching and administrative staff at pupil referral units and specialist learning centres, as well as home tutors
- staff in local authorities who are responsible for developing services for children and young people
- staff and volunteers in domestic violence organisations, such as refuges and outreach services, who work with school-aged children and young people.

*Safe Learning* will also be of interest to education professionals within local authorities who are responsible for setting up and running services that include children and young people who are, or may have been, affected by domestic violence.

The aim of *Safe Learning* is to provide practical information to help professionals respond more effectively to the educational and safety needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence. Its aim is to clarify statutory responsibilities and to advise readers where they can go for further support, advice or resources.

The guide explains how specialist domestic violence services (such as women's refuges and local Women's Aid organisations) operate, and how they can assist children and young people's education. It brings together positive examples of work that is being done by schools, local authorities and refuges that could be adopted by others.

Section 1 gives an introduction and background to the guide. Section 2 gives a definition of domestic violence, provides some key facts and looks at the impact of domestic violence on children. Section 3 provides up-to-date information on the latest legislative changes and policies, including the Children Act 2004, and shows how these can be applied to improve the education of children affected by domestic violence.

Section 4 is aimed at schools, pupil referral units, home tutors and so on. It is for teachers, learning support assistants, administrative staff, out-of-school activity staff and volunteers (including breakfast and after-school clubs) – that is, anyone who comes into direct contact with children and young people within a learning environment. Section 5 is aimed at refuge and outreach workers supporting children aged 5 to 18 years affected by domestic violence. Section 6 includes a list of useful websites, key organisations working in this field, helpline numbers for children affected by domestic violence, relevant publications, and a list of training resources and providers.

Some of the suggestions in this guide are simple and straightforward. Others will require greater commitment in terms of time and financial resources. A caring and supportive response, which focuses on increasing children's safety, can help children and young people affected by domestic violence recover from their experiences and build a

*"I wanted to learn a bit but I also wanted to help my mum... At break and dinner I'd walk home to see if she was OK and then came straight back [to school]."*

Jack, 11

positive life for themselves as adults. This guide will help education professionals working directly with children and young people to provide this. It includes information to improve understanding of domestic violence and its impact, and practical advice on how to prioritise children's safety. By working together, agencies can help children and young people affected by domestic violence to attain a good education.

*"I think it's hard for kids when they have to move school because they move away from their friends, which can sometimes cause behavioural problems."*

Jade, 15

## 1.1 Background to this guide

In 2003, Save the Children published two key reports relating to domestic violence and children's education: *Missing Out on Education* and *Children and Domestic Violence in Rural Areas*. Both of these highlighted a huge variation in the way that women's refuges and local education authorities (LEAs) support the educational needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence.

As a result, we decided to undertake further research into this issue, with the aim of producing a resource guide to be used by schools, LEAs and domestic violence services to help them ensure that young people affected by domestic violence do not miss out on education.

Many professionals working in these areas are already doing excellent work to support the education of these children. However, because of a lack of time and resources, this work is not always shared with other services in different parts of the country. In this guide we aim to share this good work through case studies.

### How we did it

A detailed questionnaire was sent out to the Women's Aid national network of local domestic violence services and a range of LEAs (see appendices for the full questionnaires). The questionnaires asked:

- what educational support do you already provide to children affected by domestic violence?
- what are the key issues for the education of these children?
- do you have any examples of good practice in this area?
- what information would you like to see in the guide?

Questionnaires were completed by 27 refuges (including three who work specifically with Jewish, Asian and black women); 23 LEAs; and seven schools across England. Save the Children researchers then followed up all the questionnaire responses with telephone interviews.

The researchers also carried out face-to-face sessions with nine children and young people from three different refuges. The children were six girls and three boys aged between 5 and 15 years.

*"I used to change school, like, every term because my mum used to move a lot. I've been, like, to every school in [home town]."*

Paula, 11

The two key focus points of the sessions with these children and young people were:

- what would – in an ideal world – support your educational experiences?
- what models of good practice have you experienced in refuges or schools that you would like to share with others?

An advisory group was also established, comprising members of different organisations, to offer expert advice on the development of this guide and to gather feedback from within those organisations. The organisations represented were: Women's Aid, the Local Government Association, the Greater London Domestic Violence Project, Islington LEA and Save the Children.

A workshop was held at the Women's Aid 2005 national conference to explore the usefulness of the guide with practitioners, and their views were incorporated into this resource.

## 2.1 What is domestic violence?

The government's definition of domestic violence is:

*"...any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."*  
(An adult is defined as any person aged 18 years or over. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or stepfamily.)

This definition is a 'catch all' description to include all possible incidents of domestic violence. In reality, domestic violence is not an isolated incident, but a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour.

Crime statistics and research both show that domestic violence is most commonly experienced by women and perpetrated by men (Mooney, 1994; Walby and Allen, 2004; Home Office, 2005). Domestic violence does also occur in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships and is also experienced by men in heterosexual relationships; but the most serious injuries (up to and including death) are caused by men assaulting women. Any woman can experience domestic violence regardless of ethnic or religious group, class, disability or lifestyle. Domestic violence also includes forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'. Domestic violence is repetitive, life-threatening, and can destroy the lives of women and children.

For the reasons outlined above, throughout this document, victims/survivors of domestic violence are referred to as female and perpetrators as male. This is to reflect the overwhelming majority of those who use existing services.

Domestic violence has a particularly detrimental effect on children, as they are reliant upon their parents to provide love and support, as well as to be responsible for practicalities. When domestic violence occurs, the family – which should be a safe and secure haven and the main support in their lives – becomes a source of trauma, division and pain.

## 2.2 Key facts about domestic violence

- An average of two women are killed every week by a current or former partner in England and Wales (Home Office, 2001).
- One in four women will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives (Council of Europe, 2002).
- 89 per cent of the victims of domestic violence incidents in England and Wales are women (Walby and Allen, 2004).
- At any one time, more than 10 per cent of women (one in nine) will be experiencing domestic violence in the UK (Mooney, 1994).
- In homes where there are children living, 90 per cent of incidents involving domestic violence occur with children in the same or next room (Hughes, 1992).
- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence, and nearly three-quarters of children on the 'at risk' register live in households where domestic violence occurs (Department of Health, 2003).
- In 2003/04, 18,569 women and 23,084 children were supported in refuges and 142,526 women and 106,118 children were supported by support and advocacy services in the community (Women's Aid, 2004).
- It is estimated that in the UK, the police receive a call from a victim of domestic violence every minute (Stanko, 2000).
- Domestic violence incidents make up 16–25 per cent of all violent crime in the UK (Home Office, 2002).

## 2.3 How domestic violence affects children and their education

### Emotional and psychological issues

*“Children who have experienced, witnessed or lived with domestic violence are at risk. They are at greater risk of exposure to poverty and homelessness, and detrimental effects on their short-term welfare and long-term life chances.”*

(Home Office, 2005)

A body of research has shown that there are dramatic and serious effects for children and young people who witness or experience domestic violence. However, the impact of the violence differs from child to child – often within the same family. This can depend upon familial relationships, the child's personality, their experience of the violence and other factors. It must be realised that all children who have experienced domestic violence are affected by it – even if they do not show any obvious emotional or behavioural changes.

As well as physical abuse, children may see or hear their mothers being emotionally abused. They may witness threats, intimidation, sexual jealousy and abuse. The family – including the children – may be kept short of money or the abuser may take money from other family members. They may also experience isolation from their relations and friends. Children typically know far more of what is going on than their parents think. They may be in the next room listening or lying awake in bed. They don't even have to see the violence – children are very perceptive and they know when their mother is upset or has been hurt or is anxious.

Abusers may involve children in the abuse in a range of ways, such as making them watch or encouraging them to be abusive towards their mothers.

### Physical and sexual abuse

There is a recognised overlap between domestic violence and child sexual and physical abuse. Many violent men who are abusive to their partners also punish children inappropriately and too harshly. Some make threats against the children, or hurt them, to frighten their mother (Hester *et al*, 2000; Edleson, 1999; Humphreys and Thiara, 2002).

Many children want to protect their mothers and may put themselves at risk in the process. Research shows that girls, in particular, seek to protect younger siblings during violent episodes and offer support or reassurance in the aftermath of violent behaviour (Jaffe *et al*, 1990). Children may be at physical risk if they get in the way during an attack or if they intervene. When they have contact with fathers after separation, children may take on even greater responsibility to protect their mothers or siblings from violence or neglect (Hester and Radford, 1996). Many children are also abused during post-separation contact orders. For example:

- The government's Green Paper *Parental Separation* recognises that of the ten per cent of cases that get to family courts, in at least 35 per cent of cases there are concerns about the safety of the child and a number of these cases also involve domestic violence. (Department for Education and Skills/Department for Constitutional Affairs, 2004b).
- In 1999, a study of 130 abused mothers found that 76 per cent of the children who were ordered by the courts to have contact with a violent parent were said to have been abused (Radford *et al*, 1999).
- A 2003 study involving 178 refuge organisations in England and Wales found that: only three per cent of organisations think that adequate safety measures are taken in most contact cases involving domestic violence; only six per cent believe that children who say they do not want contact with a violent parent are listened to and taken seriously; and six per cent of refuges know of cases where contact orders (including some orders for unsupervised contact) have been granted to parents convicted of offences against children (Saunders and Barron, 2003).
- A 2004 study of 29 child homicides in England and Wales that occurred as a result of contact arrangements found that with three of the 13 families studied, the court granted orders for unsupervised contact or residence to very violent fathers. These decisions were made against professional advice, without waiting for professional advice or without requesting professional advice (Saunders, 2004).

*"The effect of domestic violence on children is such that it must be considered as abuse. Either witnessing it or being the subject of it is not only traumatic in itself but is likely to adversely impact on a child's behaviour and performance at school."*

(Department for Education and Skills, 2004a)

### Disrupted education

Children affected by domestic violence may have to move home or change schools to escape the violence. Any change of school can be difficult for a family, but if the move is to escape domestic violence, it can be even harder. This is particularly true if there is a delay before a school place can be found. If the mother changes her address often or enters a refuge to escape her violent partner, social isolation and loss of friends add to a child's insecurity. Although getting to a refuge means a child is safe and supported, often for the first time, some children and young people may have to go through this disruption many times.

These experiences can affect children and young people in a number of different ways. Each child or young person affected by domestic violence responds in an individual way. Some may display a number of emotional or behavioural changes. Others may display no outward changes at all.

Domestic violence places children and young people at a huge risk of missing out on their education. The impact for these already vulnerable children and young people of having their education disrupted can be significant. In the short term, they may lose friends and key support networks, as well as the stability and normality that school can bring to children whose home lives are disrupted by domestic violence.

In the long term, the damage caused by missing out on education can be even greater. Many mothers and their children experience poverty as a result of fleeing domestic violence. Education offers a positive way forward. As the government says in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools* (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a): "Doing well in education is the most effective route for young people out of poverty and disaffection."

### Practical issues

- School placements can be hard to find, especially at secondary school level, and it can be difficult to place siblings in the same school. For children and young people with special educational needs, it can take even longer to find a school place.
- Many schools do not have adequate training and knowledge of issues related to domestic violence and its effect on children and young people, and how to support children and prioritise their safety.
- Children whose families have fled to a new area because of domestic violence may wish to continue at their old school. However, they may be prevented from doing this because they may not be able to get help with transport costs, or it may not be safe to do so.
- Women leaving domestic violence may not be able to afford a new school uniform for children starting at a new school. However, a lack of uniform can exclude a child further and mark them out as different.
- Many children affected by domestic violence may not be identified as such by the school, and therefore will not get access to any support that is available.
- Many schools do not have dedicated resources to support children and young people affected by domestic violence.
- There is confusion over who holds responsibility for the placement of a child who has had to move because of domestic violence – the local authority or schools.

The quotes below are all taken from questionnaires and interviews conducted as part of the research for this guide.

#### **What the children and young people said**

“I would like a refuge worker to come into the school to support me – but they would have to be anonymous.”

“My ideal situation would be for a teacher to come into the refuge to help us.”

“If I got a new house I wouldn’t want to change schools.”

“In English lessons we had ‘talk partners’ like buddies, which was good.”

“I would like one teacher I could talk to who knew my situation.”

#### **What the LEA staff said**

“There need to be joined-up services and clear communication between all agencies working with children and families affected by domestic violence.”

“Teachers are not always aware of the emotional trauma associated with domestic violence and how this may impact on a child’s education.”

“Often the mothers I work with [in refuges] have had bad experiences of school. If I can turn that around it can make a huge impact on the child’s education.”

#### **What the refuge workers said**

“A lack of commitment from statutory agencies to fund specialised work with children and young people affected by domestic violence is jeopardising the service we deliver.”

“It is very difficult for children and young people to fully engage in and benefit from education when they have an insecure base, when they feel fearful, anxious and uncertain, when they feel helpless, when their mother is possibly disorganised, depressed and even neglectful.”

“Most of the children only stay at the refuge for a short while but they still need their educational needs met. We need to provide a service that helps from the start.”

“The education of children living in refuges relies on good relationships between refuges and schools – but this issue is not high on the agenda of either.”

**What the teachers said**

“We should bring together all professionals and the parents involved with the child (affected by domestic violence). At the moment there are possibly four to five people working autonomously and not together.”

“One of the key issues is stopping young people affected by domestic violence ‘slipping through the net’. Once a school is aware of the situation, a great deal of support can be given, but if there is no communication (either formal or informal) to the school about a situation then the school will not be giving the support that the young person probably needs.”

## 3.1 Legislation and policy developments

Children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. This protection is the responsibility of the whole community, including teachers and other education staff, who are in a unique position to identify and help children affected by domestic violence. It is a guiding principle of the law and child protection procedures that the protection and welfare of the child must always be the first priority.

This section gives an overview of legislation and policy developments that relate to the protection and education of children affected by domestic violence.

### *Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004*

Government policy and legislation on services for children are going through a period of massive change. This will affect the way schools, local authorities and other agencies work together to meet the needs of children and young people.

The Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (Department for Education and Skills, 2003a) showed that there was an unacceptable gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and their better-off peers. As a result, the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme aims to deliver five outcomes for all children and young people, which are:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being.

The Children Act 2004 aims to implement the proposals outlined in *Every Child Matters*. In doing so, it seeks to make fundamental changes to the way children's services are delivered across a range of agencies. In particular, it places a duty on partner agencies to co-operate to improve children and young people's well-being and a duty on agencies to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

Key elements include:

- **accountability:** by 2008, at the latest, local authorities will have appointed Directors of Children's Services, and lead members
- **partnership:** local authorities must ensure co-operation between the council and key partners to improve the well-being of children

- safeguarding: by April 2006, statutory Local Safeguarding Children's Boards will replace the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committees
- improved information sharing and a Common Assessment Framework: the Common Assessment Framework is aimed at improving the consistency and quality of assessments by introducing a non-bureaucratic common assessment process that can be used across agencies
- inspection: Joint Area Reviews of children's services will assess how successfully services are working together to improve outcomes
- development of a common core of skills and knowledge.

### Children's trusts

Children's trusts are a delivery mechanism to make sure that agencies work together to put the needs of the child centre stage. Local authorities will develop these trusts to integrate front-line services for children. The trusts will work together with local partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to assess needs, agree priorities and commission local services.

Children's trusts will have to work together with local schools to fund places for hard-to-place pupils and local protocols should now be in place.

### Extended schools

The government is looking to all schools, over time, to provide a 'core offer' of extended services, either on site or across a cluster of local schools and providers. This core offer includes study support, family learning and parental support opportunities, opening up facilities such as sports, arts and information and communications technology (ICT), and better referral systems to multi-agency support where needed.

More information is available on the government's Every Child Matters website ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)).

### Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 received Royal Assent in November 2004, and was introduced to increase the protection, support and rights of victims and witnesses. Measures include:

- making breach of a non-molestation order a criminal offence. Breach will be punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. This makes it an offence for which a police officer can arrest without a warrant. This measure will also require the court to consider, whenever it is deciding whether to issue an occupation order, whether it should also issue a non-molestation order
- giving cohabiting same-sex couples the same access to non-molestation and occupation orders as heterosexual couples
- making couples who have never cohabited or been married eligible for non-molestation and occupation orders

- issuing guidance on the setting up and conduct of domestic violence homicide reviews
- making common assault an arrestable offence by adding it to the list of offences for which a police officer may arrest without a warrant
- enabling courts to impose restraining orders when sentencing for any offence. At present, such orders may only be imposed on offenders convicted of harassment or causing fear of violence
- enabling courts to impose restraining orders on acquittal for any offence (or if a conviction has been overturned on appeal) if they consider it necessary to protect the victim
- giving any person mentioned in a restraining order the right to make representations in court if an application is made to vary or terminate the order.

At the time of writing, these measures have not been given commencement dates, and implementation will depend on available resources.

While it is not specifically related to the education of children affected by domestic violence, this act aims to improve legal protection for victims of domestic violence, strengthen the powers of the police and the courts to respond more effectively to domestic violence, and provide a clear message that domestic violence is often a criminal offence and that it will not be tolerated.

### **The Adoption and Children Act 2002**

In January 2005, under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the legal definition of harming children was extended to include the harm they suffer by seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another – particularly in the home. This change, Section 120, came in response to evidence that children can suffer serious long-term damage when they live in a household where domestic violence and abuse is taking place, even when they have not themselves been directly harmed.

### **The Children Act 1989**

The Children Act 1989 is the main legislation for child welfare and for protecting children from abuse. Section 27 of the act places a duty on a number of agencies to assist social services departments acting on behalf of children and young people in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need and to provide a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

Section 47 of the act requires local authorities to make child protection enquiries if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, and requires LEAs and other organisations to assist them with those enquiries if asked to do so.

### **The Education Act 2002**

One aspect of this act, which is particularly relevant to children and young people affected by domestic violence, is a new statutory duty on schools: to safeguard children, to promote their welfare and to ensure everyone plays their full part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect. In September 2004, the Department for Education and Skills issued guidance to schools to help them put this into practice.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires LEAs and the governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions to make arrangements to ensure that they carry through the necessary functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to put in place arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at their school.

### **Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 1999**

These regulations require the governing bodies of non-maintained special schools to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the health, safety and welfare of their pupils.

### **The National Domestic Violence Plan 2005**

The Home Office has developed a National Domestic Violence Plan setting out priority activities and key performance measures. In its section on children and domestic violence, the report states that domestic violence should not be treated as a separate issue but mainstreamed and integrated throughout the children's agenda. The government has made a commitment to ensure that this happens in the following ways:

- guidance to underpin the new duty to 'safeguard children and promote the welfare of children' introduced in the Children Act 2004 will promote the role of all the agencies subject to this duty and should help them respond to children and families affected by domestic violence
- a Common Core of Skills and Knowledge is being developed for those working with children, young people and their families. It will set out six areas of expertise that everyone working with children, young people and families should be able to demonstrate. It will provide a basic description of essential skills and knowledge for practitioners, which can be adapted and enhanced for use in different services and differentiated as appropriate to recognise that in some roles very detailed knowledge may be required, particularly in areas such as safeguarding
- domestic violence will be reflected in the framework according to which new children's structures will be inspected.

### **Forced Marriage Unit**

The government's definition of domestic violence includes forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), launched in 2005, is a joint initiative between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Home Office.

The FMU deals with casework, policy and projects, providing confidential information and assistance to potential victims, their friends and concerned professionals, including children and young people.

The unit can also provide information about existing networks within the UK, including police, social services and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as advice about legal remedies in the UK and overseas. It has produced a series of awareness-raising materials including a step-by-step guide for black and minority ethnic victims of domestic violence. It has also produced separate guidance documents for the police, social services and education professionals. Hard copies can be obtained from the FMU or downloaded from the website (<http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/faith/forced-marriages/>).

### **National Standards for Under Eights Day Care**

These standards came into effect in April 2003. All services providing daycare to children under eight now need to be registered with Ofsted if they are to provide more than two hours of care per day under national standards. These standards have serious implications for many refuges that provide daycare for children because the number and ages of children in refuges can vary from one day to the next, and there are cost implications involved in meeting all the required national standards and getting registered. As a result, many support services for children in refuges may be forced to close or reduce the hours they operate. This will have a further detrimental effect on young children affected by domestic violence.



Schools are essential for social integration and personal development as well as academic learning. This is particularly important for children affected by domestic violence, who may be denied other social opportunities. As well as providing an education, schools have a vital role to play in bringing stability into the lives of children affected by domestic violence.

*"I'd like to have just one person, one teacher to help me. It gets confusing."*

Amber, 11

Schools and specialist education providers such as pupil referral units face many issues when addressing the best ways to support children and young people affected by domestic violence. These issues fall into four main areas:

- raising awareness and understanding of domestic violence among teachers and pupils
- identifying children and young people affected by domestic violence
- ensuring the safety of these children
- supporting the education of these children and young people, including integrating those who have moved into the school at short notice to escape abuse.

### How schools can help: the views of mothers

Mothers affected by domestic violence said:

- their children would have found it easier to cope if they had more support from schools, especially other children to talk to
- getting help from schools to increase their child's safety was difficult, as some demanded proof of domestic violence
- they wanted all schools to have a consistent policy on domestic violence, and to provide domestic violence awareness training for all teachers
- they felt strongly that children were not taught early enough – or at all – in schools about respecting women, about equality and non-violent relationships.

Women's National Commission, 2003

## 4.1 Raising awareness and understanding

### The challenges

The need to raise awareness of domestic violence among children and young people is clear: it is a shocking fact that one in three teenage boys agrees with the statement: "some women deserve to be hit", and one in five girls of this age is also of this opinion (Mullender *et al*, 2002b). To address these attitudes, prevention programmes in schools need to start before the age of 11, before attitudes begin to harden. When consulted,

*"I'd like mum to drop me off at school, like my friends."*

Jack, 8

young people have overwhelmingly said they want lessons in school, preferably discussion-based, to help them understand why violence happens and what can be done about it (*ibid*).

### Practical steps for schools in raising awareness

#### Provide training for staff

Training and support for staff to increase their understanding of domestic violence before they teach children and young people about the subject is essential, because teachers themselves are subject to the myths and stereotypes around the issue of domestic violence that are prevalent in our society.

As well as helping to educate all children and young people about violence-free relationships, improving staff's understanding of these issues will also increase their chances of identifying children who are experiencing domestic violence and will better equip staff to support them (see 'Practical steps to identify children affected by domestic violence', p 21 and 'Supporting pupils affected by domestic violence', p 27).

Schools should contact local domestic violence services, which may be able to offer assistance with providing training on the dynamics of domestic violence. This should be made available to all school staff, including school nurses, those involved with lunch-time duties, out-of-school clubs and extra-curricular activities. Teachers with designated lead responsibility for child protection should receive training in inter-agency procedures that enables them to work in partnership with other agencies, and gives them the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their responsibilities. Such staff should undertake refresher training at two-yearly intervals.

Some local authorities employ a dedicated domestic violence education worker for schools, whose role is to provide free training and awareness raising. Contact your local authority to find out if there is one in your area. (See Resources, Section 6.3, p 46, for details of training providers.)

#### Raise pupils' awareness

To help raise awareness and change attitudes, all pupils should be educated about the issues surrounding domestic violence. The citizenship curriculum provides an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of domestic violence, to promote cultural and social understanding, and to consider wider issues of personal safety for both young women and men. (See case study: St Jude & St Paul's Church of England Primary School, p 19, for details of the work one London school is doing in this area.)

Education about domestic violence should address issues of gender discrimination, racism and homophobia. It should always be talked about as a violation of human rights.

Studying these topics is important because they provide a context to some of the most common forms of violence in our society, and help tackle the assumptions, stereotypes and myths that contribute to domestic violence.

### Case study: St Jude & St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Islington

This small primary school got involved early on in Islington's Home Safe Project, which aims to prevent domestic violence through education. The school volunteered to take part in a pupil and staff needs analysis on domestic violence prevention and support.

During this research exercise, staff noted that they would appreciate guidance on domestic violence awareness. As a result, an Inset was booked for training. The whole school staff attended two Insets of one hour each, covering what domestic violence is, its impact on survivors, how to recognise signs, how to respond to disclosures from parents and children, and school responses to domestic violence for the present and future.

Following this, the school was allocated a four-week Theatre in Education programme funded by the Metropolitan Police in the borough, on domestic violence, conflict and gender stereotypes. It was important that the whole school staff had received domestic violence awareness training before this programme began, to ensure that staff were able to respond to any disclosures or questions the children raised as a result of the drama work.

Prior to the Theatre in Education programme taking place, key leads on Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) provision met with the Home Safe Project Officer to analyse how the school's current PSHE curriculum contributed to domestic violence prevention education. It was clear that the provision was already exemplary, covering in depth topics such as safe relationships, bullying, prejudice and safe communities, all of which are part of addressing domestic violence. The only gap identified was in terms of gendered violence and gender discrimination. A free Westminster Domestic Violence Forum Domestic Violence Prevention for Schools pack was given to the school and further lesson plans tailored to cover this gender perspective, such as lessons from the Leeds Inter Agency Project pack – *Break the Silence – Stop the Violence* (see Resources, p 48).

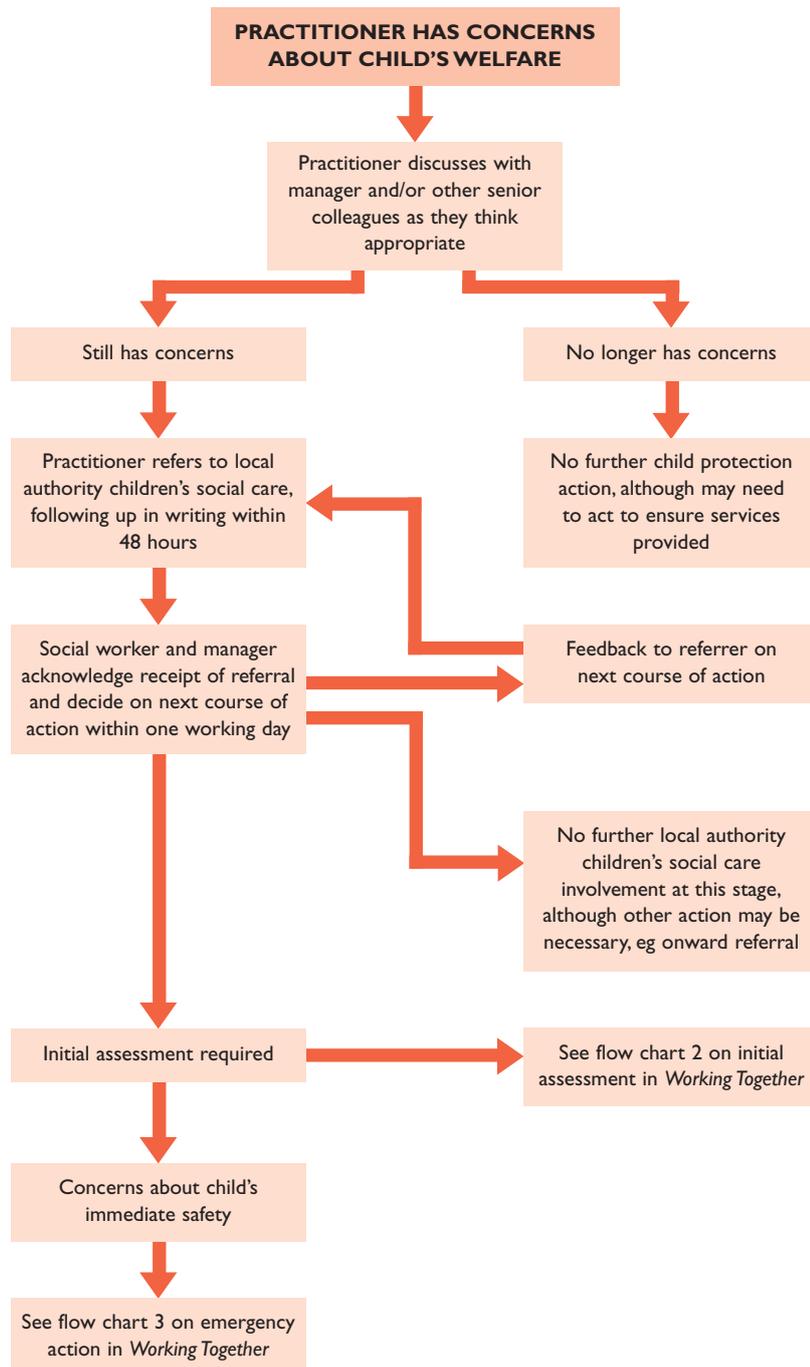
One teacher at the school said: "The pack we use is very good, but I had been aware of not naming violence in the home and family, it just didn't come up specifically in these lessons. So it's good to have new materials on ways to raise this difficult issue so we're not hinting at things, we're actually teaching about them and speaking out."

Local authorities are being encouraged to develop domestic violence education packs for use in schools in consultation with their local domestic violence forum, as part of the government's Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) on domestic violence, 225. However, as schools are increasingly independent of local authorities, there is no statutory requirement for schools to use these education packs.

There are also many existing resources on domestic violence available for schools to use in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship lessons. They include materials produced by the women's rights organisation WOMANKIND Worldwide, Westminster Domestic Violence Forum and Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence Team. The materials are available free for schools (see Resources, Section 6.5, p 49, for details.) In addition, Women's Aid has a selection of posters and leaflets available to be displayed in schools, in a variety of different languages as appropriate – targeting both children and parents (see Resources, Section 6.1, for contact details).

## 4.2 Identifying domestic violence

The following flow chart has been adapted from *Working Together to Safeguard Children and Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations* published by the Department for Education and Skills (2005). It gives useful advice on what to do if you have concerns over a child's welfare.



### The challenges

- Staff do not always have sufficient training to understand the dynamics of domestic violence, to recognise domestic violence or to address the problem. This is partly because of a lack of funding for such training. As a result, staff may avoid identifying signs or asking about domestic violence because if disclosed, they fear they would not know how to respond.
- Headteachers may not know who to contact if there are concerns about domestic violence. Not all local authorities have a single contact person responsible for domestic violence issues. However, this situation should be improving as the Home Office has made extensive short-term funding available for such posts since April 2004. Most local authorities have a domestic violence co-ordinator, but in many cases the key contact for a school with such concerns would be a child protection/welfare worker.
- Pupils don't confide easily and are often frightened to disclose domestic violence to staff or friends in case they are taken into care or bullied by other children or simply not believed. They may also feel that confiding would betray their mother in some way or they may fear retribution from their violent parent.
- Because of these fears, pupils are more likely to disclose domestic violence in a one-to-one situation. However, teachers, especially at secondary level, often try to avoid one-to-one situations because of concerns about abuse accusations.

### Practical steps to identify children affected by domestic violence

#### Make sure that non-teaching staff are included in domestic violence training

It is well known that children and young people are most likely to disclose problems in a one-to-one setting with a staff member who has their trust. This may be a teacher, dinner worker, school nurse, out-of-school or breakfast club worker or an administrative worker. They are also very likely to talk to friends in the first instance (see below).

School nurses in particular are well placed to offer support to children as they are often more accessible than teachers. Usually they are available at set times of the week and children can go and see them without having to reveal to anyone else the real reason behind their visit. Also, the trauma and anxiety created by domestic violence means that children in these circumstances are frequently sick during school hours. Regular trips to the school nurse enable a relationship of trust to be built up with that child which, in turn, makes disclosure easier.

For these reasons, it is important that school nurses and other non-teaching staff are included in any domestic violence awareness training offered to school staff. School nurses may also wish to consult the latest version of the Department of Health handbook, *Responding to Domestic Violence* (2006), which is available on the Department of Health website.

#### Set up peer support systems

Children and young people frequently say they want to talk to their friends when they have problems. Therefore a friend may often be the first person a child discloses domestic abuse to. This friend may not know what to do to support their friend, or

*"It makes me better when people talk to me and want to be my friends. It is really hard going otherwise."*

Matthew, 12

*"I'd rather get an education on my own. I'd learn more than I do coming to school."*

Jade, 14

whether to tell anyone about it. Schools can help by raising the awareness of all children and young people of how to respond in this situation. They can do this by providing training for children and young people on peer support skills. This can include safety planning and when to tell an adult what is happening. Some schools, for example, have a quiet space at play times where there are two peer support counsellors to talk to if needed.

### **Be aware of the Common Assessment Framework**

As part of the government's move to integrate services under the Every Child Matters programme, a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for all the different agencies working with children was published in 2005. The aim is to improve the mechanisms for identifying concerns about children, to help identify when a pupil's needs can be met within the school, and to enable referral to other specialist services to be better targeted. Local authorities will be expected to introduce this framework to their areas by 2008. Schools should contact their local authority to find out when they can expect a CAF in their area.

### **Recognise signs that children may be living with domestic violence**

There are no consistent behaviour patterns for recognising domestic violence. Even children in the same family may react in very different ways to what they have experienced. However, children and young people may illustrate or experience one or more of any of the following:

- behaviour issues – having witnessed or experienced violent behaviour; some children or young people may display increased aggression or hostility toward others. Others may be withdrawn or depressed or express their anxiety through self-harm
- lack of confidence and low self-esteem – this may be displayed through school work and lack of faith in their abilities or through difficulties making or maintaining friendships
- lack of willingness to talk about personal or home life – children and young people grow up having to 'hide' domestic violence from the outside world. The secrecy and shame of domestic violence can prevent children sharing their worries and seeking support
- ill-health caused by stress – above-average reporting of headaches, stomach aches and/or absenteeism because of sickness
- an increased need for attention – because of a lack of attention or support at home, children may seek greater support, reassurance or information from school staff
- absenteeism or lateness – children are often reluctant to go to school because they worry about what may happen to their mother while they are away. At the same time, the mother may not want their child to go to school for fear they may be contacted or abducted by the abuser. The mother and her children may also be reluctant to be apart because of their emotional dependence on each other at a time of crisis
- bullying or being bullied – children may feel stigmatised or be bullied because of domestic violence, their involvement in child protection proceedings, or because they have been made homeless or are staying in temporary accommodation
- anti-social and high-risk behaviour, including drug and alcohol misuse and self-harm – children and young people develop their own coping strategies to deal with their experiences and these can include misusing drugs or alcohol

- difficulties concentrating on school work or working extra hard and being very well-behaved to distract them from events at home
- not attending extra-curricular activities, if the abuser keeps tight control of the family leisure time or finances
- falling behind with school work because of a lack of support or inability to concentrate at home
- lacking parental attention – children at primary level not being taken to or picked up from school; parents not coming to parent evenings or responding to school letters.

Schools need to be aware, however, that these symptoms may also appear in other situations, for example, the child could be a young carer, experiencing sexual or physical abuse, or have a mentally ill or substance-misusing parent. They don't specifically identify domestic violence but domestic violence can be one explanation.

Depending on the age and development of children, disclosure may be facilitated by sensitive questioning or through play and artwork. The very fact of raising such issues is crucial in showing children that adults working with them are aware of the existence of domestic violence and it gives children permission to disclose it in the knowledge that they will be believed.

Here are some suggested questions for teachers if they suspect a child is experiencing domestic violence:

1. What happens when your mum and dad (mum and stepdad, dad and stepmum) disagree?
2. What does your dad do when he gets angry?
3. Did you ever hear or see your dad hurting your mum?
4. Who do you talk to about things that make you unhappy?
5. What kind of things make you scared or angry?
6. Do you worry about mum and dad?

Adapted from the Children's Subcommittee of the London (Ontario)  
Co-ordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse (in Mullender and Morley, 1994, p 233)

### **Be aware of signs of domestic violence among mothers**

Mothers experiencing domestic violence sometimes avoid school involvements and support as they:

- may have low self-esteem, lack confidence and may suffer from depression. As a result, they are less likely to ask schools or local authorities for help with their child's education
- may spend their lives trying to keep the domestic violence a secret, so they can be reluctant to seek support for fear of being 'found out'. They may also fear that their children will automatically be taken into care if the violence becomes public knowledge. In fact, this doesn't happen in most cases, but perpetrators often use it as a threat to prevent mothers seeking help
- may rely on older children for emotional support and practical help and so be unwilling for the child to go to school
- may devote a great deal of mental and emotional energy to trying to keep themselves and their children safe, so they cannot provide necessary support to their children with school work.

### 4.3 How to deal with disclosure of domestic violence

CEA@Islington, London Borough of Islington's education partner, has issued the following guidelines for schools as part of its new domestic violence prevention and support project, entitled Home Safe. (See Resources, Section 6.2, p 44, for details of CEA@Islington's website, which contains this and other information relating to domestic violence.)

#### When a parent discloses:

- **Don't** feel that you have to take responsibility to solve everything – at a minimum it is very important that you can simply listen to the parent, give them space to talk and give them correct information on where to get help.
- **Don't** say that you will be able to sort everything out. That is not your job.
- **Don't** offer total confidentiality, which you can't guarantee because of child protection duties.
- **Do** listen to what they have to say.
- **Do** let them know that everybody deserves to feel safe, nobody deserves to be abused and that domestic violence is wrong and against the law.
- **Do** tell them they are not alone, that many women and children experience domestic violence.
- **Do** make it clear that you understand there are many risk factors in living with and fleeing domestic violence for parents and children and that support agencies can help them improve their safety, whatever they decide to do, and draw up emergency plans.
- **Do** make it clear that the school is there to support them and their children.
- **Do** explain that because domestic violence puts children at risk you will have to tell your designated child protection manager about the situation, who will contact the parent to explain child protection procedures and discuss how to work together to protect them and their child.
- **Do** remember that supporting the abused parent is the best form of child protection.
- **Do** explain that the school can provide information and certain support to enable the parent to make their own decisions about their situation and will not judge them, whether or not they leave the violent relationship.
- **Do** explain that there is support out there for financial, housing and legal problems. Bear in mind that some parents may not be entitled to claim benefits or legal aid, for example, if they are asylum seekers, and some parents may need specialist agencies offering translators – Women's Aid can refer you to appropriate local services.
- **Do** remember that all survivors are individual and have different needs. Black and minority ethnic women may be wary of contacting agencies due to their experience of racism, and may need interpreters. Women may have different levels of support from family and friends. They may have limited finances or be without recourse to public funds.
- **Do** ask if they are in immediate danger/need of healthcare and/or if they need to use a telephone in the school to contact a relative, friend, the police, hospital or their GP or a helpline number.

- **Do** give contact details for domestic violence helplines and agencies (see Resources, Section 6.6, p 49, for details).
- **Do** ask if they would like to come back to the school for a meeting to discuss what support the school can offer to them and their children.
- **Do** remember to check contact arrangements – is it safe to contact them at home by letter or phone? Do they feel their child is being affected and how would they like the school to respond? Have they separated from their violent partner and do you need to clarify who can and can't pick up children from school? Do you need a photo of their ex-partner to look out for them on school grounds if they present a threat? (See Section 4.4, Ensuring a child's safety, p 26.)

#### **When a child discloses:**

- **Don't** ignore what the child says. Listen and take them seriously.
- **Don't** offer total confidentiality, which you can't deliver because of child protection issues.
- **Don't** give confidential information to the abusing parent, especially home contact details.
- **Do** say that everybody deserves to feel safe, nobody deserves to be abused and that domestic violence is wrong and against the law.
- **Do** work with the parent, designated member of staff, social services, and other agencies as appropriate who are working with the family to make sure the child's progress and welfare is monitored.
- **Do** tell them they are not alone, that many women and children experience domestic violence.
- **Do** make it clear that the school is there to support them and their parent to be safe.
- **Do** explain that there is support out there, and that you can give their parent this information.
- **Do** tell them they have a right to support for themselves. Explain that they can see a school counsellor if you have one or be referred to another agency that can help them, explain what help is available and ask them what help they would like. Explain exactly what will happen in the referral procedures.
- **Do** explain that you understand that living with domestic violence can have lots of negative effects, including effects on their school life and work, and stress that the school wants to help them manage their stressful situation, not blame or draw attention to them. For example: they may not be able to get to school on time if they have fled violence to new accommodation further away; they may be absent because they have to attend appointments; they may have difficulty concentrating if they are worrying about their abused parent.
- **Do** explain that because domestic violence puts children at risk you have to tell the designated child protection manager in your school about their situation; stress that only certain teachers will know about it and that other teachers generally will not be told, and other pupils will not know about it.
- **Do** report the disclosure to the designated child protection manager in your school, who will report to social services.

*Reproduced with kind permission of CEA@Islington*

*"In English lessons we had 'talk partners' like buddies, which was good."*

Jordan, 13

## 4.4 Ensuring a child's safety

### The challenges

Schools may not know how to ensure a child's safety, especially around school pick-up time, in cases where the parents are having disputes about contact. Many school staff are unsure of the legal situation surrounding a parent who is a perpetrator of domestic violence, and what rights they have to see their child.

### Practical steps to ensure a child's safety

#### Have child protection policies in place

Schools have responsibilities to ensure that child protection policies are in place and that procedures are well established and accessible. Governing bodies should ensure schools have senior members of staff designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with all child protection matters, including domestic violence.

All staff and volunteers who work with children should be given a written statement about the school's policies and procedures on domestic violence and child protection, and the name and contact details of the designated person when they start work in a new establishment (Department for Education and Skills, 2004c).

#### Liaise with the mother

In cases where there is a risk to a child or mother from a perpetrator of domestic violence, schools should liaise closely with the mother to minimise the risk. They should encourage mothers to share information about any court orders that may be in place, and if necessary, ask for a photo of their ex-partner so that staff can look out for them on school grounds if they present a threat.

Where there is a history of domestic violence, the court may make an order preventing the perpetrator from going within a certain distance of the school, or preventing all contact between him and his children. If there is a non-molestation order in place, and the perpetrator breaches, this will be a criminal offence under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

Schools generally should not give out contact details of any child to a person other than the resident parent without first checking with that parent. Nor should they give out any details of pupils or their resident parents over the phone.

#### Share information safely

The exchange of information about children affected by domestic violence can be very dangerous to the non-abusing parent and children, as it could lead to the perpetrator tracking them down. At the same time, failure to exchange information can put mothers and children at serious risk.

Professionals need to work within the law, balancing the risks of information-sharing with the potential benefits of enhanced safety and protection for victims this might

*"It would be good to have one teacher I could talk to who is aware of my situation."*

Jade, 14

bring. To help them, the Home Office has issued guidelines for people working with women and children, including teachers, on safe information-sharing in cases of domestic violence (Home Office, 2004). Safe information-sharing is also covered by the Common Assessment Framework.

Comprehensive information-sharing guidance will also be launched by the government in 2006. See the Every Child Matters website for further details ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)).

Some domestic violence forums also have a protocol in place for safely sharing information. If this is the case in your area, find out how you can sign up to this protocol. Women's Aid has published a directory of local domestic violence forums, available on its website ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)).

## 4.5 Supporting pupils affected by domestic violence

### The challenges

- Children and young people who have experienced domestic violence may have missed substantial periods of their education, either because they have had to abandon their home at short notice, because they have become disengaged with education services after long periods of absenteeism, or because they have stayed at home for substantial periods to support or protect their mother.
- The procedures for sorting out general issues such as funding are unclear – how to get money for transport or uniform costs, and so on.
- It can take several weeks for a pupil's records to reach the new school, so they have to be assessed and monitored each time they start a new school, which can be time-consuming, open to error and frustrating.
- Children affected by domestic violence may not stay at a school for long and can require intensive support while there.
- The child may be distressed and find it difficult to concentrate because of what they have experienced.
- Children's development and recovery from domestic violence may be affected if teachers have no understanding of their experience, as they move from one blaming environment to another.
- Since the 1988 Education Reform Act, schools are under pressure to do well in league tables and may have concerns about taking in a child or young person regarded as 'at risk' or 'problem' as they could influence the school's overall exam results and school performance.

The greater the support a school provides to a child affected by domestic violence, the greater their potential for successful reintegration. If you have a pupil at your school who is affected by domestic violence, whether they have fled from home to escape violence, or are still living at home with a violent parent, there are a number of ways you can support them.

### Raising awareness

In order to fully support a child affected in this way, staff and other pupils need to be aware of the issues surrounding domestic violence (see 'Raising awareness and understanding' in this section, p 17).

### One-to-one support

Designate a teacher or learning mentor to support the child or young person. This teacher should ensure that the pupil is adequately supported and should take responsibility for setting and marking their school work. This one-to-one contact will also give the pupil the space to talk about their experiences, if they so wish.

### Case study: Cheshire local authority

Cheshire has been operating a multi-agency approach to domestic violence for seven years. In 1998, Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (CDAP) established a multi-agency training programme on issues around domestic violence jointly delivered by local Women's Aid services and the statutory agencies, with six courses a year. These are attended by police, social workers and health workers, as well as education professionals and other agencies including the voluntary sector.

More recently the LEA has set up a family liaison team, with one worker assigned to each of the four refuges in the area, so that each refuge has a named contact. The team has a number of roles: liaising with schools and refuge children's support workers to place children in schools; providing training, advice, resources and support to schools to develop a safe and welcoming environment for children affected by domestic violence; supporting individual families in the refuges, including running support groups for mothers and ten-week support programmes for children funded by the Children's Fund; raising awareness in schools and in the community about the scale and impact of domestic abuse by delivering PSHE and citizenship programmes in schools to address the issue of domestic abuse. Having a family liaison team has helped break down barriers between refuges and schools in the area.

The family liaison team has a small fund of £5,000 to enable transport to be provided immediately for children in refuges. They may need a bus pass to

travel to their old school outside the area, or may need to travel to school by taxi because of a risk that the perpetrator may track them down.

The team tries to ensure that a child's transition to a new school is as painless as possible. In one recent case, a woman came into one of the refuges who could only speak Urdu. The team arranged for language support to be available to the mother and child as soon as they arrived at the child's new school.

The team's awareness-raising work includes Heartstrings, a drama aimed at secondary schoolchildren that explores the changing dynamics of a family experiencing domestic abuse, and the effect this has on the children's emotional and educational development. This is now available on DVD with an accompanying resource pack. For primary schoolchildren there is a story-telling project called 'Can you keep a secret?', which has toured primary schools in the area. This is also available on video.

The education adviser for child protection at Cheshire says: "As we go into the Common Assessment Framework, the family liaison team will become key workers. Their role is very important, as many families are afraid of social services, and schools don't always have the resources to support families and children affected by domestic violence." It is vital that all agencies in CDAP work together to ensure that the safety of children and their mothers is given the highest priority.

### Developing links with the home environment

This could either be with the mother where safe to do so, or a link person if the child is living in a refuge or other temporary accommodation. The school can advise this person on school work and other issues. Young people regard support outside of school as a crucial factor in securing their successful return to education.

*"It would be good to have children from one refuge in the same school. That way I'd have someone to play with."*

Luke, 9

### Providing opportunities to catch up with school work

Many children affected by domestic violence have no quiet space at home to do their homework, either because they are in temporary accommodation or because of tension at home. Schools could help by providing a room for the child to work in at school breaks or before or after school, or offering a place in a homework club.

### School uniforms

School uniforms are a key factor in making a child feel part of the school, yet many families affected by domestic violence are unable to afford them. Schools could support pupils by arranging funding for a new school uniform through the local authority, providing a school uniform (washed and ironed) from the school lost-property box, or encouraging parents of children leaving the school to donate their uniforms (see case study on Calderdale, p 31).

### Accessing help with transport costs

Children who have had to move to escape domestic violence may need help with transport costs for a number of reasons: they may still want to attend their old school, even when they have moved out of the area; they may be placed in a school which is not within walking distance of their new accommodation; or they may have to travel by taxi for safety reasons, if the perpetrator is trying to track them down. Some local authorities have special funding available for this purpose (see the case study on Cheshire local authority opposite), but this varies hugely from area to area. Find out what support is available from your local authority so that you can provide information to parents and children.

### Building links with other agencies

Schools should be able to refer parents/children to domestic violence support services in their area and should know the range of support on offer. Women's Aid publishes the *UK Gold Book*, a directory of local domestic violence services, and has just recently published a survivors handbook; both are available on the website ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)). They also have a dedicated website on domestic violence to provide information and support for children and young people, ([www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)).

Other agencies responsible for domestic violence issues in local areas will include the local domestic violence forum, the local Safeguarding Children Boards and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), all of which should have a multi-agency membership. These groups help all relevant agencies to work more closely together and can help schools obtain a resource list of services and referral procedures in their local area. Under the new Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI)

on domestic violence, 225, local authorities are now required to produce a directory of domestic violence services.

When communicating with other agencies, it is vital that information about individual families is shared safely (see 'Share information safely', p 26).

### **Providing practical information**

Another way schools can support a child is by providing practical information to parents and children experiencing domestic violence on issues such as:

- entitlement to free school meals
- information about English classes for families whose first language is not English
- information about local services such as local Women's Aid or other domestic violence services providing support for women and children in the community
- details of national and local helplines for people affected by domestic violence.

See the Resources section for details of domestic violence helplines, websites and other resources containing practical information for people affected by domestic violence.

## **4.6 Supporting newly arrived pupils who are affected by domestic violence**

Children and young people affected by domestic violence have a wide range of support needs that need to be addressed. However, one of the most important factors, with regard to education, is a willingness by, and commitment from, schools to help. Our research suggests that, while some primary and secondary schools have excellent procedures in place to welcome and support children affected by domestic violence (see case studies in this section for examples), others are reluctant to enrol these children and young people, as they may move on after a short period of time and they may take up significant school resources during their short stay.

### **Integrating new pupils who have experienced domestic violence**

#### **Being aware of the problems these pupils may face**

When supporting a new pupil who has missed periods of education because of domestic violence, schools need to be aware of the difficulties that prolonged absenteeism can create for these children. These include: missing out on particular areas of the curriculum, having to get back into the habit of going to school, and difficulties in making new friends. Some children also have personal safety issues that can make it difficult for them to integrate. For example, some children and young people have to change their names or are not allowed to give away personal information, to avoid the risk of the abuser tracking them down.

*"My head of year really helped me to fit in."*

Jordan, 13

### Case study: Calderdale

In the Calderdale area, an infant school has developed close links with a local Asian women's refuge. The refuge contacted the school when it was first set up around ten years ago. At the time, the school was able to take children from the refuge at short notice because it was undersubscribed. But now, even if a class is full, the school will still take on a child from the refuge at very short notice, usually the day after they receive a call from the refuge. The shortest period a child from the refuge has spent at the school is one day and the longest is eight months.

The refuge refers children to the school because refuge workers know the children will be safe there. The school never asks the children or the parents where they come from. The headteacher believes this information is only relevant to schools that are taking a child on a permanent basis.

When a child from the refuge arrives, they are given a free uniform so that they feel part of the school. The uniforms are mostly donated by parents whose children have left the school, while some items may have been left in lost property. In some cases, if there is no uniform available in the right size for a child,

then the school business manager will give them a new one.

The school also runs a 'buddy scheme' whereby a 'buddy', chosen by the class teacher, is allocated to each child who attends from the refuge. The aim is to make the new child feel included and to ensure they have a friend while they are at the school.

For safety reasons, children from the refuge cannot leave the premises without their mother or, in certain circumstances, a refuge worker. On no occasion is a child from the refuge allowed to leave with a male. If necessary, the child may be taken back to the refuge by the school business manager.

Also for safety reasons, the only information the school business manager puts on the database is the name of the child and their date of birth. She does not include the address of the refuge, not even the PO Box number. This can cause problems with the local authority, but the school believes that any more information may put the child at risk. Only the headteacher and the school business manager have the telephone number for the refuge.

### Developing a welcoming environment

Schools need to ensure that the ethos and atmosphere of the school fosters and promotes respect for all and an understanding and awareness of diversity. Training for teachers and education for pupils about domestic violence can make a huge impact in creating a welcoming environment for new pupils affected by domestic violence.

### Tackling bullying

Children affected by domestic violence may be bullied by other children in the school, especially if they are new to the school. The violence they have seen at home may also cause them to bully other children.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance, launched by the government in 2004, has regional co-ordinators in all areas who can provide schools, local authorities and parents

with practical help, advice and support in tackling all forms of bullying in schools. For more information, see the Alliance's website ([www.anti-bullyingalliance.org](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org)).

The Department for Education and Skills has produced a useful anti-bullying video and guidance pack for schools, which sets out what schools can do to address this problem, entitled *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence* (2002). The pack includes a specific section on domestic violence and bullying.

*continued on p 34*

### Case study: North Tyneside local authority

North Tyneside employs a full-time teacher to provide educational support and advice to families living in temporary accommodation in the area. This includes families escaping domestic violence, as well as other groups. An important part of the teacher's role is providing a link between the local refuge and schools. She also works very closely with multi-agency colleagues in the area.

When a new family arrives in the refuge, refuge workers contact the teacher, who visits the mother and the children and then helps them find a school placement for the children. This normally takes two to three days. Most of the younger children are placed in one of two schools very near to the refuge – a first school and a middle school. The high school places take a little longer to organise, perhaps up to one week. The teacher has developed close links with all schools. A flexible working partnership has been established to allow for regularly fluctuating numbers of children needing immediate access to education due to their difficult circumstances. This is achieved thanks to support from schools, the local authority and the refuge. Once a school place has been found, the teacher accompanies the mother and the children to the school on the first day. The teacher also provides weekly teaching support in school if this is requested and aims to respond quickly if any problems arise. "For women who have come into the refuge, school may not be the first priority", says the teacher. "I gently explain to the mother that school is stability for children. They need to be given the opportunity to be children. But it's important to do this in a way that shows empathy with the mother's situation."

The teacher has made a book about a regularly used school, which contains information and pictures showing what the school looks like, what the uniform is like, who the key members of staff are. She gives this to the child and mother to read together to prepare for the first day at the new school. She also keeps a cupboard full of school uniforms at the refuge.

When the mother moves out of temporary accommodation and into her own tenancy, the teacher supports her in finding the children a new school place and maintains contact for a period of four weeks, gradually withdrawing support.

The teacher's knowledge and experience of working in a range of schools is key to her role in building positive relationships with schools: "I know what it's like for the teacher when you have a child where there's domestic violence but there's no one talking about it." She does regular training sessions for all school staff to help them understand the effects of domestic violence on the whole family.

The teacher also runs a weekly homework club at the refuge. She liaises with the schools and encourages them to provide the children with homework tasks. She also works with the mothers to help them support their children. The teacher has a range of age-appropriate resources, which she uses with the children to consolidate their learning. "Often the mums have had bad experiences of schools. If I can turn that around it can make a huge impact on the child's education."

### Checklist of key action points for schools

#### Raising awareness

- Provide domestic violence awareness training for all school staff, including school nurses, dinner, breakfast and after-school club workers.
- Raise pupils' understanding of the issues surrounding domestic violence through citizenship and PSHE lessons.
- Always talk about domestic violence as a crime.

#### Identifying domestic violence

- Ensure that child protection policies are in place and that there is a designated lead person in the school for dealing with child protection.
- Ensure that all new staff are aware of these policies and have contact details for the lead person.
- Set up peer support systems so that children know how to respond if a friend discloses domestic violence.
- Be alert to signs that a child may be affected by domestic violence.

#### How to deal with disclosure of domestic violence

- Follow established guidelines for what to do when a parent or child discloses abuse.

#### Ensuring a child is safe

- If a family is known to be affected by domestic violence, check whether there are court orders preventing the perpetrator coming into the school, and liaise with the mother to minimise risk.
- Do not give out contact details of any child in the school, or resident parent, over the phone.
- Follow guidelines on safe information-sharing in cases of domestic violence (see 'Share information safely', p 26).

#### Supporting children affected by domestic violence

- Be aware of the problems these pupils may face.
- Develop a 'buddy' scheme and other peer support systems to enable children to support each other.
- Build links with other schools which have experience and good practice in this area.
- Designate a teacher or learning mentor to support the child or young person.
- Develop links with the child's home environment. This could either be with the mother, where safe to do so, or a link person in a refuge or temporary accommodation.
- Provide opportunities for the child to do their homework.
- Arrange funding for the child to get a new school uniform, or provide a second-hand one (donated by parents or from lost property) free to the child.
- Build links with other agencies to find out what support they can offer children affected by domestic violence.
- Provide practical information to parents and children affected by domestic violence, for example, on services available to them, entitlement to free school meals and so on.

**Developing a 'buddy' scheme**

These schemes match new pupils with a peer who can support them and introduce them to others. See the case study on Calderdale, p 31, for an example of how one school operates such a scheme.

**Building links with other schools**

Within your local authority there are likely to be schools that regularly take on pupils affected by domestic violence. These will include schools situated close to temporary accommodation, where families fleeing domestic violence may be housed. The domestic violence co-ordinator at your local authority will have an idea of which schools are experienced at dealing with domestic violence issues or have good practice in this area. Speak to these schools' headteachers about their experiences and practices for addressing domestic violence issues.

**Hand-held records for mobile pupils**

Schools should encourage their local authorities to develop a system whereby pupils affected by domestic violence have a hand-held written record of their educational progress and/or academic achievement. This would assist schools and new local authorities to respond in a more co-ordinated way to a young person's educational needs when they are admitted to a new school. It could also include a section where children can raise their worries and concerns about moving schools and this will help new schools to identify and address those concerns. Likewise, make sure you pass on information to a pupil's new school as quickly as possible, if requested. However, it is vital that information is shared safely (see 'Ensuring a child's safety', page 26).

# Guidance for domestic violence services

## 5

In the early 1970s, when the women's refuge movement began, the first agencies to address domestic violence were established by women's groups. It took a long time before the issue was 'mainstreamed' and recognised as the much wider social issue that it is, impacting on society at many levels. By 1987, the police began to respond and by 1995 had developed clear procedures and allocated specific officers to domestic violence issues. But there was still a long way to go. The first domestic violence co-ordinator was not employed by a local authority until 1992 and the probation service only implemented its first accredited programme for abusers in 2003.

However, progress has been made. Domestic violence is no longer of concern only to women's groups and voluntary organisations. The work of the government and a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies has led to the development of multi-agency partnerships working to address domestic violence. Recent changes in the law have also meant that many positive moves have taken place. But despite these changes, the bottom line is that the number of women in the UK who are killed by their male partner each year is about the same today as when records began – around 100 a year. Domestic violence is still an entrenched part of our society.

Women's Aid in England today co-ordinates and supports a network of over 300 organisations providing over 500 refuges, helplines, advocacy and support services for women and children experiencing domestic violence. In England, refuge organisations

### Case study: Bassetlaw Women's Aid

At Bassetlaw refuge, a child's educational needs are assessed on arrival, as part of an overall assessment. To help meet their educational needs, children's services runs groups for children and young people aged 8–11 and 11–16. These groups address issues that influence the education of children affected by domestic violence, such as bullying and self-esteem. As well as children in the refuge, the groups include children who have moved on from the refuge into the community. The aim is to build up a support network for these children.

Most of the young people involved in the 11–16 groups are struggling with attendance and attainment

at school, and the group work has had a positive impact. For example, one of the groups has developed a pack. This pack aims to help young people "discuss things about domestic violence, for example, with a support worker, in a school project, or in any discussion-based work with (other) young people about relationships". Creating this pack had a very positive impact on the young people involved. As a result, one boy who was about to be excluded from school, decided to get one-to-one counselling and attend behaviour management classes to change his behaviour patterns. He has gone back to school and is doing well.

*"If I got a new house, I would not want to change schools."*

Amy, 15

provide accommodation for about 23,000 children a year and support services for over 105,000 children a year. These services face many challenges. The problem of domestic violence is too large to be addressed by existing provision.

## 5.1 The challenges

- **Underfunding.** It is much more difficult for refuges and outreach services to secure funding for children's workers doing crucial child protection work than it is to secure funding for specialist support for women. This lack of a consistent and long-term financial commitment makes it much more difficult to plan adequate and effective children's services. Most funding for services aimed at children and young people affected by domestic violence is only for two or three years.
- **Shortage of services.** The general shortage of specialist domestic violence provision means that most funding, when it is available, is targeted at women. While these specialist workers – both within refuges and outreach – do their best to meet children's needs, their remit and primary responsibility is supporting the mothers through safety planning, developing self-esteem, advocacy, help with benefits and so on. They do not have the resources or time to properly address children's needs. Also many women's refuges have struggled to meet the government's national standards for under-8s daycare since the new criteria were introduced. As a result, many refuges are being forced to reduce educational provision for vulnerable young children to under two hours a day. To meet the national standards, many refuges would require extra staff and refurbishment – something they cannot afford.
- **Quality differences.** Because not all refuges are funded to provide children's support workers, the level and quality of children's services varies. Children's support workers have a key role in ensuring that the educational needs of children and young people are disrupted as little as possible, so the education needs of many children and young people remain largely unmet.
- **School admissions.** Domestic violence workers – both refuge and outreach – can experience difficulties securing admission places for children in local schools, especially at secondary school level.

### Case study: Oxfordshire Women's Aid

Oxfordshire Women's Aid children's workers work with mothers of preschool children in the refuges to help them support their children's early learning. This is supported by the local charity, PEEP (Peer Early Education Partnership). PEEP developed materials to encourage mothers to play the role of early educators with their children. PEEP also offers group sessions and home visits to all mothers of preschool age children in the local area.

Although PEEP is not specifically aimed at children affected by domestic violence, its materials and support are being successfully used in the refuges.

Oxfordshire Women's Aid has developed a good working relationship with local schools, who take children most of the time.

### Case study: Oldham Family Crisis Group

One problem facing older children in refuges is a lack of private space where they can do their homework or spend time away from younger children. To address this, the Oldham Family Crisis Group refuge has created a teenagers' room where they can do homework or just sit and chill. The room is also equipped with a TV, video and teenage library. The young people are given both emotional and educational support by a children's worker who encourages them to be proud of their achievements.

During the day the room is used as a sensory space for younger children or those with special educational needs who are not as yet in school. The room helps to support these children's interaction and communication by stimulating their senses and

increasing awareness of their surroundings. The room makes use of fabrics such as furry carpets and silk pillows, textured wallpaper and beading stuck to the walls. It has a coloured light ball, a fibre optic light source and music is played there.

For children aged 18 months to four years, Oldham holds four play sessions a week based around developmental play. These sessions promote social skills, reading time and messy play and aim to help prepare the children for school. The refuge also works closely with local Sure Start programmes and encourages mothers to take their children to other local play groups to encourage the children to socialise with others of the same age.

- **Unclear procedures.** Domestic violence workers are hindered by unclear procedures about who to contact within the local authority or local schools about education matters. These can include admission procedures, advice about additional pupil support and advice about who is responsible for general issues such as transport costs when children attend schools outside their local area.
- **Long breaks.** Schools can take several weeks to sort new admissions while they wait for a child's educational record to arrive from their previous school. This makes it very difficult for domestic violence workers to support children and young people's educational needs between schools.
- **Confidentiality.** Refuges provide all outside contacts – including schools and local authorities – with PO Box address details to avoid abusers tracing their partners or children via their school.

## 5.2 Practical steps for domestic violence services

Staff in domestic violence services – refuges, advocacy, outreach and children's services – have a key role in communicating a child's educational needs to schools and other education services. Through their links with these agencies, domestic violence staff can develop support networks with schools and the LEA to help address some of the issues facing children and young people.

There are a number of ways refuge, advocacy and outreach services can support children and young people's educational needs. These include:

- encouraging local schools to identify a member of staff as a key worker on domestic violence issues to support pupils living in refuges and in the community. This key

*"I'd like more friends at school."*

Amire, 8

### Case study: Barika project, Tower Hamlets, London

Barika project works with children and women who are living with domestic violence. The aim of the project is to prevent the breakdown of relationships between women and their children who have experienced domestic violence. Home-based support to women and children is provided where there are early signs of disturbance in order to help get families back on track and strengthen relationships. Barika project is unique in its design and innovative in service delivery as it places the child at the centre of all interventions. As a result, Barika is able to address the social and mental health needs of children who have

been exposed to domestic violence by providing holistic services based on solution-focused approaches to working with children and their mothers.

Barika also provides a range of support services for women and children. These include: one-to-one counselling and group work, giving the children and their mothers the opportunity to explore their feelings and experiences; practical advice for women on parenting; and advocacy support on how to access services, including health, education and social services.

worker can provide extra support and advice and can visit the pupils at school or at the refuge to provide additional support

- developing protocols with the LEA and, with the assistance of the local domestic violence forum, campaigning to help improve educational support for children and young people affected by domestic violence
- developing closer links with the voluntary sector and other networks such as Connexions, youth services and local community groups to provide adequate educational support for teenagers affected by domestic violence who are either living in refuges or in the community
- improving communication between schools and domestic violence services. This could include getting the pupils to talk to teachers about domestic violence awareness and life in a refuge; getting refuge staff, outreach staff or a mother to discuss the effects of domestic violence; encouraging mothers to visit the school and meet teachers to break down barriers. Refuge, advocacy and outreach workers could also work with schools to develop citizenship and PSHE lessons. Much good work has already been done in this area and sample lessons and courses on domestic violence are available (see Resources and further information, p 41)
- building positive relationships with the schools. This helps when support or school placements are needed and could include setting up a network with local primary schools and inviting school liaison officers, heads and deputy heads to find out more about the issues facing children affected by domestic violence
- developing workshop sessions with children and young people affected by domestic violence who are living at the refuge or in the community – as well as those who have moved on – to consider issues of bullying, keeping safe, and so on (see the case study on Bassetlaw Women's Aid, p 35)
- getting details of educational websites from local schools or your local authority that pupils can access to catch up on their learning. These can also help support children's learning if they are living in a refuge or have moved home and are waiting for a new school placement.

*"It would be good to have a youth club connected to the refuge, but not at the refuge, so I could meet friends after school."*

Marie, 14

In addition, refuges can help further support children and young people's educational achievements by:

- giving them a couple of days to settle at the refuge before making appointments with schools. This gives refuge staff or volunteers time to make an initial assessment about the child or young person's needs, the risks they face, how long the mother and her children are likely to be in the refuge, and whether it is worth enrolling the child at school
- organising play sessions for preschool children and encouraging mothers to help their children learn through play, and also persuading mothers to take their children to other play groups so they can socialise with others of the same age (see the case study on Oldham's Family Crisis Group, p 37)
- allocating specific times in the children's play room for when it can be used by older children and young people at the refuge, giving them their own space away from their parents or younger siblings. This space and time could provide them with a place to do their homework or to relax (see Oldham Family Crisis Group case study, p 37)

### Case study: Sutton children and young people's strategic partnership

The London Borough of Sutton has sought to address the issue of domestic violence by implementing a programme for children affected by domestic violence that offers concurrent groups to mothers to enable them to support their children through the healing and recovery process. It includes training for a wide range of agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, who are responsible for children or work with them. Partner agencies include health, probation, behaviour support teams, education welfare officers, social services and child and adolescent mental health services. Staff take part in delivering the group programme to children and their mothers and for many staff new to this area of work it has helped them develop improved skills in identifying and responding to domestic violence issues. More than 100 staff have been trained so far, initially by a team from Canada, from where the model originates.

Mothers and children affected by domestic violence attend a 12-week rolling programme that aims to address safety issues and minimise further harm to mother and child. In addition, children become clearer about what violence is and who is responsible for

violence, and learn positive conflict resolution strategies. Women and their children attend the same programme separately, with mothers starting one week earlier, so they know in advance the issues that will be covered with their children.

For many children this is the first space and time that they have been given where they can discuss their feelings about the domestic violence they have experienced. Many children choose not to talk about the past or current violence to their mum for fear of upsetting her further:

Benefits of the collaborative approach are that: it raises awareness across agencies; it increases knowledge and expertise; the skills developed through the group work are often transferable to other settings; it takes a gendered approach to the issue; it is very cost effective; and it takes place within a community setting.

The partnership has proven so successful that the London Borough of Sutton now intends to launch a new group called SWAM (Supporting Women as Mothers) to supplement the work of the programme.

- setting up a peer support group for young people living in the refuge who are nervous about re-entry back into school after a long period of absenteeism. Ideally, the group should include young people who have experienced similar fears and are now back at school
- developing an education support plan with the child's school for each school-aged child at the refuge to encourage the child's learning. This could include: allocated time in a quiet area to complete homework; staff support with homework; access to a computer and the internet at the refuge
- providing homework clubs or support sessions after school, where children can get basic support with their school work. In some cases, LEAs run homework clubs at refuges
- identifying a key person within the local authority who is responsible for school admissions. This can speed up the admission process and make it easier to co-ordinate communication. Also, refuges should identify a key person responsible for school admissions and support for pupils in schools. This person should be the main contact with the local authority and they should develop protocols with the local authority and, with the assistance of the domestic violence forum, help improve educational support for young people living at the refuge.

This section is not a complete guide to all resources available on domestic violence, but a selection of those that have been used by, and recommended to, Save the Children while researching this report.

## 6.1 Useful organisations

### **Women's Aid Federation of England**

Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that co-ordinates and supports an England-wide network of over 370 local organisations, which provide over 500 services working to end violence against women and children. Women's Aid campaigns for better legal protection and services, providing a strategic 'expert view' to government on laws, policy and practice affecting abused women and children. In partnership with its national network, Women's Aid runs public awareness and education campaigns, bringing together national and local action, and developing new training and resources.

Women's Aid provides a package of vital 24-hour lifeline services through its publications (available in 11 languages), its websites ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) and [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)), and the Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline it runs in partnership with Refuge. Women's Aid is a registered charity, number 1054154.

The Women's Aid website contains general information about domestic violence as well as details of the work done by Women's Aid nationally and locally. Women's Aid provides a range of resources for survivors, professionals and the public on domestic violence. The following are resources that are of particular relevance to professionals working with children.

### ***The Survivor's Handbook***

*The Survivor's Handbook* is a guidebook especially designed for anyone experiencing domestic violence and has been written in an accessible and easy-to-read format. It covers domestic violence in general and how to increase women's and children's safety and guides survivors through the legal protection framework. *The Survivor's Handbook* also provides practical information about housing options and the range of refuge and other domestic violence services available. There is also information about the impact

of domestic violence on children. The handbook contains contact details and signposts survivors to other supporting organisations. You can access the handbook via the Women's Aid website.

**The Hideout [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)**

National website for children and young people giving information about domestic violence – see 'Useful websites' section for further details.

***Safe and Sound: A resource manual for working with children who have experienced domestic violence (2002)***

*Safe and sound* provides a comprehensive guide to every aspect of providing services for children who have experienced domestic violence, ranging from record keeping and safety planning, to group work, circle games and using art and information technology. It also looks at disclosures of abuse, advocacy and child contact. The resource manual draws on the experience of Women's Aid refuge organisations in providing services for children. It will be of interest to anyone working in this field including schools, children's charities and family centres.

***safe – the domestic abuse quarterly***

This is the UK's first and only dedicated journal on domestic abuse. *safe* supports effective responses to reduce domestic violence by reflecting the current issues and developments in the field. Each issue is packed with practical initiatives, research reviews, new strategies, policy development and national and international news. *safe* is published four times a year – April, July, October and January.

***Twenty-nine Child Homicides – lessons still to be learnt on domestic violence and child protection***

Published in December 2004, this report examines the serious case reviews that followed the deaths of 29 children (in 13 families) killed by their fathers as a result of child contact and residence arrangements in England and Wales between 1994 and 2004. Ten of these children were killed in the last two years. The report makes a series of recommendations for government and child protection professionals to ensure safe contact arrangements to protect children in the future.

***The UK Gold Book: A guide to refuge and domestic abuse services (2006)***

This is the only UK directory that provides public contact details for refuge and domestic abuse services for women and children. It is a key resource that enables survivors of domestic violence, agencies and relevant professionals to locate appropriate services with ease and efficiency. *The UK Gold Book* provides comprehensive information about the range of domestic abuse services across the UK as well as supporting information for women and referral guidelines.

### **Women's Aid leaflets, posters and resources**

Women's Aid also provides leaflets on *Domestic Violence – the risks to children*, *Domestic Violence – the myths*, *Housing*, *Your Legal Rights*, and *Getting Free From Domestic Violence*. Leaflets are also available in Braille, on tape and in large print. Posters on domestic violence, mental health and substance misuse have also been produced by the charity.

Contact: Women's Aid Federation of England, PO Box 391, Bristol BS99 7WS

Tel: 0117 944 4411

Email: [info@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:info@womensaid.org.uk)

Website: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

### **Domestic violence forums**

There are now over 150 multi-agency forums in England, in which police, social services, housing services, probation, health services, legal professionals, a range of voluntary agencies and, of course, Women's Aid, work together to tackle domestic violence.

Women's Aid has compiled a directory of domestic violence forums across the country, available on its website.

### **The Greater London Domestic Violence Project (GLDVP)**

This is a second-tier service for the London domestic violence sector, which aims to increase safety for survivors of domestic violence and to hold abusers accountable for their behaviour. It works to strengthen the sector by identification of common goals, promoting joint planning between agencies, disseminating good practice and increasing the effectiveness of inter-agency work. GLDVP is the key capacity-building and co-ordinating project working on domestic violence in Greater London.

Contact: [www.gldvp.org.uk](http://www.gldvp.org.uk)

### **Parentline Plus**

This is a UK-registered charity that offers support to anyone parenting a child: the child's parents, step-parents, grandparents and foster parents. They have a website and freephone helpline. You can also access an email helpline service via their website.

Website: [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Freephone helpline: 0808 800 2222

## 6.2 Useful websites

### [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

This website, produced by Women's Aid, provides help and support for children and young people who are living with domestic violence. The Hideout is the first national website for children and young people to inform them about domestic violence and help them identify whether it is happening in their home. The site provides indirect and informal support to children and young people living with domestic violence or to those who may want to help a friend.

The Hideout uses fun language, graphics, checklists, quizzes and interactive games to help children think through the issues that surround domestic violence. The site includes content on increasing safety, and points out other sources of information and help. The Hideout is a place for young people to learn that domestic violence is not ok, that it is not their fault and that they are not alone.

### [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that co-ordinates and supports an England-wide network of over 370 local organisations, which provide over 500 services working to end violence against women and children. Women's Aid campaigns for better legal protection and services, providing a strategic 'expert view' to government on laws, policy and practice affecting abused women and children.

### [www.newhamdvf.org.uk](http://www.newhamdvf.org.uk)

This is the website of the domestic violence forum in Newham, east London. It includes a directory that aims to promote an appropriate and efficient response to women who are fleeing or experiencing violence. It includes detailed information on how to respond effectively to domestic violence as well as a detailed directory of organisations and groups that can be used to access relevant services.

### [www.islingtonschools.net/Services/dmv/](http://www.islingtonschools.net/Services/dmv/)

This is the schools website of the London Borough of Islington's education partner CEA@Islington. It contains child protection guidelines, lists of local and national support agencies, information on how to respond to disclosures and details of CEA@Islington's free domestic violence awareness training for schools and domestic violence prevention education programmes.

### [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org)

The Anti-Bullying Alliance was launched by the government in 2004 to provide schools, LEAs and parents with practical help, advice and support in tackling all forms of bullying in schools.

### [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

This website gives legal advice for survivors, teachers and other professionals, explaining things such as parental responsibility and other issues that affect schools.

**[www.jfw.org.uk](http://www.jfw.org.uk)**

The Justice For Women website includes information about the legal situation surrounding domestic violence and how women are treated by the law as well as the injustice they face.

**[www.teachers.org.uk](http://www.teachers.org.uk)**

The National Union of Teachers has just produced national guidelines on domestic violence for teachers, called *Silence Is Not Always Golden*, available on this website.

**[www.eaves.ik.com](http://www.eaves.ik.com)**

Eaves Housing For Women provides refuges in London, and carries out research and campaigns on violence against women as well as providing the only refuge in the UK for women trafficked into the country.

**[www.whiteribbon.ca/](http://www.whiteribbon.ca/)**

This is the website of Canada's White Ribbon Campaign, whose slogan is: 'Men can stop violence against women'. The website contains some inspiring posters which could be used in schools to involve men and boys.

**[www.crimereduction.gov.uk/dv01.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/dv01.htm)**

This government website contains a domestic violence mini-site with lots of useful information, including a good practice report: *Tackling domestic violence: Providing support for children who have witnessed domestic violence*, by Audrey Mullender (see references/bibliography).

**[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/domesticviolence/index.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/domesticviolence/index.html)**

The Home Office website contains facts about domestic violence and information on what the government is doing about it.

**[www.dca.gov.uk/family/famfr7.htm](http://www.dca.gov.uk/family/famfr7.htm)**

The Department for Constitutional Affairs website contains information on the government's work on proposals for tougher legislation to protect the victims of domestic violence and increase support for victims. This includes details of an information-sharing pilot between police and family courts.

**[www.refuge.org.uk/](http://www.refuge.org.uk/)**

Refuge is the country's largest single provider of specialist emergency accommodation and support to women and children experiencing domestic violence. Refuge's website offers support and information about domestic violence in a variety of different languages.

**[www.lga.gov.uk/home.asp](http://www.lga.gov.uk/home.asp)**

The Local Government Association website has information about domestic violence, including links to helpful local authority sites, as well as information on the Children Act.

**[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)**

Contains detailed information about Every Child Matters and the Children Act.

**<http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/faith/forced-marriages/>**

This Home Office website contains information about forced marriage, what the government is doing about it, and what help is available for people forced into marriage.

## 6.3 Training providers

**DVR – Domestic Violence Responses**

DVR is run by Thangham Debonnaire, who has provided courses for the Westminster Domestic Violence Forum. DVR offers consultancy, resources, research, publications and training.

Contact: [dvr@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:dvr@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Leeds Inter Agency Project**

This project (which also provides resources for schools, see below) offers domestic violence ‘train the trainers’ courses by national facilitators who can travel to any area. Usually voluntary and statutory groups will get together enough people for a course and then hire the trainer.

Contact: Community Safety, PO Box 612, Leeds LS2 7WH  
Tel: 0113 395 2140

**PEEP (Peer Early Education Partnership)**

This Oxford-based charity has developed materials to encourage mothers to play the role of early educators with their children. It offers educational materials, group sessions and home visits to all mothers of preschool-age children in the local area. It is not specific for children affected by domestic violence, but is being used to support the children in a local refuge.

Contact: [www.peep.org.uk](http://www.peep.org.uk)

## 6.4 Theatre in Education providers

### The Trust Theatre Project

Contact: Susie McDonald  
Office 25  
54 Haymarket  
London SW1Y 4RP  
Tel: 020 7968 4825  
Email: [susie@tender.org.uk](mailto:susie@tender.org.uk)

### Theatre ADAD

Contact: Neill Kirkham, director  
17 Cavendish Road  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire AL1 5EF  
Tel: 01727 765 975

### Futures Theatre Company

Contact: Caroline Bryant, artistic director  
The Albany  
Douglas Way  
London SE8 4AG  
Tel: 020 8694 8655  
Email: [admin@futurestheatrecompany.co.uk](mailto:admin@futurestheatrecompany.co.uk)

### Scary Little Girls Productions

Contact: Rebecca Morden, director  
4 Fletcher House  
Howard Road  
London N16 8TP  
Tel: 020 7503 1363  
Email: [becca@scarylittlegirls.co.uk](mailto:becca@scarylittlegirls.co.uk)  
[www.scarylittlegirls.co.uk](http://www.scarylittlegirls.co.uk)

## 6.5 Materials for use in schools

### Cheshire local authority

Cheshire has developed a number of resources for use in schools (see the case study on Cheshire local authority, p 28).

Contact: Chris Greenwood, education adviser for child protection, Tel: 01606 814300

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

The FCO's community liaison unit, set up to handle the problem of forced marriage abroad, has produced *Tying the Knot*, an educational video on marriage and freedom of choice. This is for use in schools, youth groups, and other organisations working with young people. It examines the question of marriage across various cultures, and is designed to promote discussion on the issues it raises.

The video is available for schools and voluntary sector organisations for £15.  
Contact: The FCO's community liaison unit, Tel: 020 7008 0135 / 0230 / 0199  
or fax 020 7008 0199 or email: [CLU@fco.gov.uk](mailto:CLU@fco.gov.uk)

### Leeds Inter Agency Project

This project has produced domestic violence packs for primary and secondary schools: *Break the Silence – Stop the Violence*. The packs are full of activities in a clear lesson plan format.

Contact: Community Safety, PO Box 612, Leeds LS2 7WH  
Tel: 0113 395 2140

### Leeds Animation Workshop

This group has produced a very useful animated video on children's experiences of domestic violence, entitled *Home Truths*. It is suitable for children aged eight upwards and comes with a booklet of additional information, lesson plans and suggestions.

Contact: Leeds Animation Workshop, 45 Bayswater Row, Leeds LS8 5LF  
Tel: 0113 248 4997  
Email: [law@leedsanimation.demon.co.uk](mailto:law@leedsanimation.demon.co.uk)  
[www.leedsanimation.demon.co.uk](http://www.leedsanimation.demon.co.uk)

### NSPCC, Barnardo's and the University of Bristol

*Making an impact: children and domestic violence* is a pack of training materials produced by the NSPCC, Barnardo's and the Domestic Violence Group of the University of Bristol for those who work directly with children affected by domestic violence. The pack was updated in 2003.

The complete pack costs £130 (inclusive of VAT and postage and packing within the UK), the reader costs £15.95 inclusive, and the 2003 update is £75 inclusive.  
Contact: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence Team

The team has produced guidelines for schools called *U can stop it!*

Contact: Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence Team, Tel: 020 7364 5441 / 4380

### Westminster Domestic Violence Forum

This forum has produced a video and training pack for use in schools. These materials are recommended by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Home Office.

The pack costs £45, the video £20 (including post and packing).

Contact: WDFV c/o fsu Queen's Park (fsuQP), 604 Harrow Road, London W10 4NJ or email [stefania@westminsterdomesticviolenceforum.org.uk](mailto:stefania@westminsterdomesticviolenceforum.org.uk) and an invoice can be issued to your organisation.

[www.westminsterdomesticviolenceforum.org.uk/](http://www.westminsterdomesticviolenceforum.org.uk/)

### WOMANKIND Worldwide

This is a UK charity dedicated to working internationally to raise the status of women. It has produced its own education programme, which is intended to address all forms of violence against women through materials to use in PSHE and citizenship lessons.

The materials are available free for schools.

Contact: Sian Morgan, Education Campaign Officer, Tel: 020 7549 0375

[sian@womankind.org.uk](mailto:sian@womankind.org.uk)

[www.womankind.org.uk](http://www.womankind.org.uk)

## 6.6 Helplines for families affected by domestic violence

### Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247

In England, this helpline is run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge. It offers information and support for women experiencing domestic violence, including referral to local refuges and support services. Language Line and TypeTalk are available.

**Northern Ireland – 24 Hour helpline 0800 917 1414**

**Scotland – Domestic abuse helpline 0800 027 1234**

**Republic of Ireland – 24 Hour helpline 1800 341900**

**Wales – Domestic abuse confidential helpline 0808 8010 800** (this helpline is open between 8am and 2pm and 8pm and 2am)

### Jewish Women's Aid – 0800 591203

This organisation runs a front line service for Jewish women and children experiencing domestic violence.

### Beverley Lewis House (For women with learning disabilities) – 020 7473 2813

### The Powerhouse (For women with learning disabilities) – 020 7366 6336

### Southall Black Sisters – 020 8571 9595

A front line service and helpline for black and minority ethnic women and children experiencing domestic violence including abuse by same sex partner, other family

members, forced marriage, dowry-related abuse, honour crimes, elder abuse, stranger rape, trafficking, women escaping prostitution and child residency issues. Southall Black Sisters will not turn any woman away but priority is given to women with local connection ([www.southallblacksisters.org.uk](http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk)).

**Broken Rainbow – 08452 60 44 60**

Hotline number for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people affected by domestic violence.

**Respect – 0845 122 8609**

Freephone helpline for men worried about their violent behaviour to their partners and wanting help to stop.

**The Samaritans – 08457 909090 (UK)  
1850 60 90 90 (Republic of Ireland)**

The Samaritans is a nationwide charity which provides 24-hour confidential emotional support for anyone in crisis. The Samaritans has introduced a single national telephone number to link up all branches with one easy-to-remember, low-cost number – although callers will still be able to use their local branch number if they wish. This number can be found in your local telephone directory.

**Freecall message home – 0500 700740**

This is a free, confidential, non-traceable service for those who have left home but want to pass on a message to family and friends without communicating directly. Women escaping domestic violence can use this service without having to give details of where they are.

**The National Child Protection Helpline (NSPCC) – 0808 800 5000**

This is a free, confidential service for anyone concerned about children at risk, including children themselves. The service offers counselling, information and advice.

**Careline – 020 8514 1177**

A national, confidential counselling line for children, young people and adults on any issue including family, marital and relationship problems, child abuse, rape and sexual assault, depression and anxiety.

# Appendix I: Questionnaire for schools and local education authorities

**All the information will remain confidential and LEA/schools will not be identified unless we are instructed otherwise or prior consent is sought by Save the Children.**

**Q1** Children and young people missing out on education due to domestic violence are often included in general truancy statistics. Does your school have any figures for those children and young people missing out on education specifically due to domestic violence? Or is there any informal way of tracking numbers? Do you have a rough idea of how many young people in your school are affected by domestic violence?

**Q2** Does your school have, or has it had, a protocol for dealing with young people who are affected by domestic violence (and specifically for young people missing out on education)? If so, what does this protocol involve? If not, are there any plans to work on a protocol?

**Q3** Are there formal relations between your school and any local refuge organisations? If so, what structures and processes are in place to support this? If not, have there ever been any formal/informal contacts?

**Q4** Are there formal relations between your school and your LEA for dealing with young people affected by domestic violence (specifically young people missing out on education)? If so, what structures and processes are in place to support this? If not, has this issue ever been raised by yourselves or the LEA?

**Q5** Which members of the pastoral team work with young people affected by domestic violence? What does their work involve?

**Q6** Do you offer children and young people affected by domestic violence any additional support with their education? If so, could you briefly describe what this entails?

**Q7** We are keen to identify examples of good practice in supporting the educational needs of children, so that these might be replicated elsewhere. Could you outline any examples of good practice in relation to supporting the educational needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence in your school and/or are you aware of any other good practice either locally or nationally that may be worth replicating?

**Q8** Could you briefly outline what you think the key issues/problems are in supporting the educational needs of children affected by domestic violence?

**Q9** The practical guide that we are developing is intended to assist refuge organisations, schools and LEAs to support the educational needs of children and to improve the relationships between refuge organisations, LEAs and educational establishments (eg schools). What do you believe would be helpful to include in this practical guide and what issues need to be addressed?

# Appendix 2: Telephone follow-up questionnaire for schools and local education authorities

Name of LEA:  
Name of school:  
Name and position of person questioned:  
Contact tel no:

**All the information will remain completely confidential and LEA/schools will not be identified unless we are instructed otherwise or prior consent is sought by Save the Children.**

**Q1** Children and young people missing out on education due to domestic violence are often included in general truancy statistics. Does your school have any figures for those children and young people missing out on education specifically due to domestic violence? Or is there any informal way of tracking numbers?  
Do you have a rough idea of how many young people in your school are affected by domestic violence?

**Q2** Does your school have a protocol for dealing with young people who are affected by domestic violence (and specifically for young people missing out on education)?  
If so, what does this protocol involve – get copies of this if possible.  
If not, are there any plans to work on a protocol?

**Q3** Are there formal relations between your school and any local refuge organisations? If so, please describe what structures and processes are in place to support this.  
If not, have there ever been any informal contacts?

**Q4** Are there formal relations between your school and your LEA for dealing with young people affected by domestic violence (specifically young people missing out on education)?  
If so, please describe what structures and processes are in place to support this.  
If not, has this issue ever been raised by yourselves or the LEA?

**Q5** Which members of the pastoral team work with young people affected by domestic violence? What does their work involve?

**Q6** Do you offer children and young people affected by domestic violence any additional support with their education?  
If so, could you briefly describe what this entails?

**Q7** We are keen to identify examples of good practice in supporting the educational needs of children so that these might be replicated elsewhere. Could you outline any examples of good practice in relation to supporting the educational needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence in your school and/or are you aware of any other good practice either locally or nationally that may be worth replicating?

*Should be specific to young people missing out on education.*

*Also, answers should cover specific age group (secondary, primary, etc) but may be worth asking interviewee if they have any experience/ideas relevant to other age groups.*

*Also, ask about/make reference to young people with SEN (learning disabilities, physical disabilities, language barriers).*

**Q8** Could you briefly outline what you think the key issues/problems are in supporting the educational needs of children affected by domestic violence? Particularly, when children and young people reside within your LEA.

*Should be specific to young people missing out on education.*

*Also, answers should cover specific age group (secondary, primary, etc) but may be worth asking interviewee if they have any experience/ideas relevant to other age groups.*

*Also, ask about/make reference to young people with SEN (learning disabilities, physical disabilities, language barriers).*

**Q9** How does the school address the needs of young people affected by domestic violence?

*This question should have been answered through previous questions. If not, it's worth reiterating at this point.*

**Q10** The practical guide that we are developing is intended to assist refuge organisations, schools and LEAs to support the educational needs of children and to improve the relationships between refuge organisations, LEAs and educational establishments (eg schools). What do you believe would be helpful to include in this practical guide and what issues need to be addressed?

## Appendix 3: Young people's session plan

Timing	Activity
15 min	<p><b>Introduction and welcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Getting-to-know-you icebreaker</li> <li>– Talking through confidentiality and working contract</li> <li>– Describing the aim of the workshop and explaining that people can opt out</li> <li>– Making it clear that what we are focusing on is their <i>EDUCATIONAL</i> experience</li> </ul>
10 min	<p><b>Exploring young people's experience of education</b></p> <p>Using big sheets of paper, one with 'school' written on it and one with 'refuge' written on it. Pose the question of what has been their experience of how their education has been supported, or not, or generally what their experience of education has been since entering the refuge. Ask the group to write down using two different colour post-it notes what have been their experiences in relation to the school and refuge in relation to educational needs. Then have a brief discussion.</p>
15 min	<p><b>Exploring what their ideal would be</b></p> <p>Using some dreamy music, ask young people to close their eyes and go on a dream journey. They travel through to a dream world which is as they would like things to be. <i>Focusing on education</i>, take a few minutes to imagine the perfect situation – what support would there be in place at school and at the refuge? Who would be helping you out – would it be young people supporting each other or adults? If adults, which ones and where would they be based? What other services may be running to help you? Then ask young people to open their eyes and in small groups to write down on big sheets of paper all the ideas they have to support their dream becoming a reality. Then have brief discussion.</p>
15 min	<p><b>Fitting together the ideal with the reality</b></p> <p>Bringing young people back to the first exercise with the school and the refuge, ask them if they have experienced anything of their ideal either in the school or refuge which could form part of the dream – models of good practice. This again can be done with different colour post-its and large sheets that have 'school' and 'refuge' on them. Then have a brief discussion.</p>
5 min	<p><b>Closure and thanks</b></p>

# Appendix 4: Questionnaire to refuge organisations

We understand that children's services in refuge organisations continue to struggle with funding and complying with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care. We are aware that there is excellent practice occurring in refuge organisations and this project aims to build on this good work and to develop practical guidance that will further assist children's support workers to meet the educational needs of children. (Please refer to the cover letter for background information to this project.)

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Name of refuge organisation:

Contact tel no:

Contact email if available:

Contact person:

Name and position of person completing questionnaire:

**All the information will remain completely confidential and no refuge organisations will be identified unless we are instructed otherwise or prior consent is sought by Save the Children.**

**Q1** Could you say how many children and young people have resided within your refuge organisation over the previous four weeks? What is the age and gender split?

**Q2** Does your refuge organisation employ any children's support workers? If so, what are their main responsibilities?

**Q3** Does your refuge organisation employ any children's outreach workers? If so, what are their main responsibilities?

**Q4** Do you offer children additional support with their education outside of finding them a school placement (eg Saturday school club or homework club)? If so, could you briefly describe what this entails?

**Q5** We are keen to identify examples of good practice in supporting the educational needs of children so that these might be replicated elsewhere. Could you outline any examples of good practice in relation to supporting children's educational needs in

your refuge organisation and/or are you aware of any other good practice either locally or nationally that may be worth replicating?

- for children under five
- for children at primary school
- for young people at secondary school

(If you wish us to contact you directly to discuss this in more detail please state so here.)

**Q6** What, if any, mechanisms do you have in place to allow children to feed into decision-making processes regarding their educational needs and the support of these?

**Q7a** Could you briefly outline what you think the key issues/problems are in supporting the educational needs of children affected by domestic violence, particularly, when children and young people reside within your refuge?

- for children under five
- for children at primary school
- for young people at secondary school

(If you wish us to contact you directly to discuss this in more detail please state so here.)

**Q7b** What steps have you taken to address these needs?

**Q8** The practical guide that we are developing is intended to assist refuge organisations and LEAs to support the educational needs of children and to improve the relationships between refuge organisations, LEAs and educational establishments (eg schools). What do you believe would be helpful to include in this practical guide and what issues need to be addressed?

**Q9** Finally, do you have any further comments you would like to make, that have not already been addressed?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

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# Save the Children

## Safe Learning

**How to support the educational needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence**

*Safe Learning* provides practical guidance on how schools and other professionals can support children and young people affected by domestic violence. It looks at how domestic violence affects children and young people and describes the current policy context, explaining schools' statutory responsibilities.

Detailed guidance is included for schools on developing strategies to support these vulnerable children by:

- raising awareness and understanding of domestic violence amongst teachers and pupils
- identifying children and young people affected by domestic violence
- ensuring children's safety
- assisting the integration of children who arrive at short notice to escape abuse.

Examples of best practice are included, and a list of useful organisations and resources.

*Safe Learning* will be of interest to education professionals, particularly headteachers and child protection co-ordinators in schools and local authorities, and to staff in domestic violence organisations.

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