

### The UK headlines!

- A woman is killed every 3 days in this country
- 1 in 4 women will suffer from domestic abuse within their lifetime
- 75% of domestic violence incidents result in physical injury or mental health consequences
- 30% of domestic abuse starts during pregnancy
- 54% of rapes in the UK are committed by current or former partners

### What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. Domestic abuse:

- can happen inside and outside the home
- can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites
- can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended
- both men and women can be abused or abusers.

- Source: NSPCC

### Definition of domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but it is not limited to: physiological, physical, sexual, financial emotional.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their every day behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

- Home Office 2013



This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

*\*A legal definition for domestic abuse will soon be established as part of the Domestic Abuse Bill, yet to be finalised and made law in Parliament by the UK Government.*

### The affects of domestic violence upon young children

Domestic abuse is one of the main contributing factors that leads to a child being either known to social care or being placed on a child protection plan / register. It is one of the most significant themes identified through social care assessment and the number of children who are exposed to domestic violence is continually rising.

### Some statistics

According to the crime survey for England and Wales year ending March 2018, an estimated 7.9% of women (1.3 million) and 4.2% of men (695,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year.

*- Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018 - Office for national statistics (2018)*

In 2017 figures obtained by the Office of the Children's Commissioner recognised that in England there were around 770,000 children living with an adult who experienced domestic violence and abuse which included 300,000 children aged 5 or under.

*- Vulnerability Report Overview 2018 – Children's Commissioner (2018)*

It is estimated that in a class of 30 school children, around 6 of those will have lived, or be living with domestic abuse.

*- Domestic abuse: Keeping the conversation going – Gov.UK (2020)*

### Outcomes for children

Children who see violence between their parents or other family members are;

- 4 x as likely as their peers to carry a knife
- 4 x as likely to be arrested for physically hurting someone
- 3 x as likely to be involved in a range of antisocial behaviour such as bullying, stealing or vandalism
- 2 x as likely to be excluded from school.

- Source NSPCC

### Signs that a young child is experiencing domestic abuse

Children are at risk of abuse if they hear or witness domestic abuse occurring in their family lives at home. Abuse may present as being emotional and physical. Children can display the following signs if they are experiencing domestic abuse.

- Anxiety and worry about parents when they are absent from them whilst at nursery or school
- Extreme tiredness during the day (Children who live in homes where domestic abuse occurs find it hard to fall asleep and stay asleep)
- Displays of aggressive behaviour or bullying
- Aggressive play, particularly role play in younger children
- Children become withdrawn
- They seek attention from others
- Some children have problems controlling their bladders and experience soiling (bed wetting etc)
- They develop eating disorders
- A child discloses experiences of domestic abuse to another person

If you are concerned about a child's well-being because of the risks of domestic abuse, immediately take your concern to your designated safeguarding lead who will report their concerns to statutory services in accordance with appropriate safeguarding procedures in your setting.