



## 01. Case file audits

Between September and November 2021, the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships carried out a multi-agency case file audit on domestic violence and abuse and child safeguarding. The cases selected for Leicester and Leicestershire were for children on repeat child protection plans where domestic abuse was a factor.

A total of 10 cases were audited – 4 Leicester, 4 Leicestershire and 2 Rutland cases.

## 02. Reminder about domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or financial abuse. It includes coercive control, which is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

## 03. Domestic abuse and children

Children never just 'witness' domestic abuse; it always has an impact on them. They are defined in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) as victims. Exposure to domestic abuse or violence in childhood is child abuse and should be referred to Children's Social Care.

Children may experience domestic abuse directly, but they can also experience it indirectly by:

- hearing the abuse from another room
- seeing a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- finding disarray like broken furniture
- being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse
- experiencing a reduced quality in parenting as a result of the abuse.

## 07. Resources

[Domestic Abuse Services](#)

[Domestic Abuse procedure: LLR SCP Procedures via Tri.X](#)

[LLR SCP Thresholds Document](#)

[Domestic Abuse Toolkit \(Leicestershire\)](#)

[Was Not Heard video](#)



## 04. What worked well?

- Across the majority of cases there was good multi-agency working, information sharing and involvement in safeguarding processes from most organisations.
- The voice of the child was clearly sought and considered well by most agencies.
- Where domestic abuse was identified, referrals were made for support.
- The escalation process was used well where required. This allowed differences of opinion to be explored and outstanding safeguarding concerns to be taken forward.

## 06 Questions for practice reflection and case work

Practice reflection:

- How do you find identifying domestic abuse in different relationships?
- When have you been able to positively engage perpetrators of domestic abuse support? What helped?
- What resources and support services relating to domestic abuse are you aware of and how do you use them?
- When have families engaged well in domestic abuse support? What helped?

Questions in casework:

- Does this male have (other) children?
- Are there signs of coercion or control in any of the relationships?
- What are the children saying about their experience of domestic abuse?
- What expectations are we putting on the children or the adult being abused? How realistic are these?
- How can we help the family engage in support?

## 05. What are we worried about?

- Some organisations do not clearly share their understanding of the child's voice and experiences in multi-agency meetings. All agencies have a role to play in listening and reflecting the child's lived experience from their perspective.
- Some cases audited did not demonstrate that domestic abuse support services were routinely invited to multi-agency meetings, e.g., child protection conferences.
- In some cases there was little engagement with male perpetrators of abuse or consideration of referring them for perpetrator support services.
- Making a referral to support agencies does not always result in engagement by the survivor or family. Establishing engagement may need services to be offered creatively.
- In some cases processes can appear to put inadvertent pressure on survivors to manage the perpetrator's behaviour.
- In one case there were unrealistic expectations on the children to report on their parents' relationships.
- Lone male adults accessing services were not always asked if they had children.