

**BWRDD LLEOL DIOGELU PLANT
CEREDIGION
LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
BOARD**

**Protocol for Safeguarding and Promoting the
Welfare of Children living with Domestic
Abuse.**

Title:Ceredigion LSCB: Domestic
Abuse Protocol

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1. Introduction

- a. Ceredigion Local Safeguarding Children Board is committed to working in the best interests of children living with domestic abuse in order to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- b. This protocol describes the arrangements for the joint working between the Dyfed Powys Police Ceredigion Public Protection Unit; Ceredigion Social Services Department; and, Hywel Dda NHS Trust in Ceredigion when dealing with domestic abuse cases in which children are involved.
- c. These arrangements have been approved by Ceredigion Social Services Department, Dyfed Powys Police, and, Hywel Dda NHS Trust and will be managed and monitored by them on behalf of the Ceredigion Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- d. The purpose of the protocol is to enable and encourage police officers, social workers and health care professionals and practitioners to adopt a consistent and effective inter agency response to children who may be in need of safeguarding or support services as a result of domestic abuse.
- e. In addition the protocol provides information on training and resources for staff and service users.
- f. The protocol acknowledges that the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2005-8 includes the reduction of repeat domestic violence as an objective within the violent and alcohol related crime activity area.

2. Information Sharing

- a. The effective implementation of this protocol depends upon the establishment of confidence amongst partner agencies to share information. When there are child protection concerns, this is underpinned by the Welsh Assembly Government guidance, *“Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004” (chapter 14)* and the *All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008*.
- b. Where the purpose of the information sharing is in order to properly assess risk, and to enable agencies to work together to prevent the commission of crime in the form of further incidents of domestic or

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child abuse, then authority for such information sharing is provided by the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, section 115

- c. When managing information about domestic abuse, practitioners must be clear as to why the information is being shared with partner agencies. Where issues relate to child protection or prevention of crime, including the likelihood of future domestic abuse, there is legal authority in place, which accommodates this information sharing. These provisions are explained in *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006)* Chapter 14, and, in *Safety and Justice: Sharing Personal Information in the Context of Domestic Violence, Home Office, 2005*.
- d. Ceredigion Social Services Department, Dyfed Powys Police and Ceredigion and Hywel Dda NHS Trust and other agencies and voluntary organisations are restricted on disclosure and management of personal information by the requirements of:
 - Data Protection Act 1998;
 - Human Rights Act 1998;
 - Common law duty of confidence and agency information sharing policies;
 - The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 115
 - This means that all parties are bound by their duties to: -
 - Protect the confidentiality of shared material and not disclose to third parties, except with the consent of the relevant parties, or if the matter is subject to legal proceedings with the leave of the court, any material obtained directly or indirectly as a result of having access to material.
 - Use shared material only for the purposes for which it is disclosed and not for secondary reasons.
- e. Where practitioners seek to share information for other purposes, consent from the parties involved should be sought and secured before information sharing occurs.

3. Definition

- a. Domestic abuse involves the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one partner over another within the context of a personal relationship. The dominant pattern of domestic abuse is of violence and abuse of women by men, although there are a significant group of male victims.

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- b. For the purpose of this protocol: -

A domestic abuse incident 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.

4. Impact of domestic abuse on children's development

- a. The definition of harm in the Children Act 1989 has been extended in the Adoption Act 2002 to include "the impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another" in recognition of the level of fear, distress and physical harm suffered by children exposed to domestic abuse.
- b. Research about children living with domestic abuse shows that each child will have an individual response to their circumstances, and not all children who are exposed to domestic abuse will be in need of safeguarding and/or require support services. However, the prolonged and /or regular exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious impact on the long-term health, development, emotional well being and behaviour of children and young people. Generally, children witnessing domestic abuse have significantly more behavioural and emotional problems than children who are not in these abusive environments.
- c. There is also an increased risk of physical abuse and neglect of children who live in households where domestic abuse occurs.
- d. Domestic abuse can pose particular risks to an unborn child.
- e. Domestic abuse can severely impair parenting capacity and can be further exacerbated when combined with drug or alcohol misuse.
- f. Domestic abuse can continue after separation within the context of contact arrangements with children.

5. Police responsibilities.

In responding to reported incidents of domestic abuse, a police officer will:

- a) Investigate to identify any criminal offending;
- b) Act to protect any children who are perceived to be at risk;
- c) Support and advise victims to reduce risk of further abuse;

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d) Share appropriate information with social services and health services in order to promote safe outcomes for all parties involved in incidents of domestic abuse.

6. Domestic Abuse Coordinator.

- a. The Domestic Abuse Coordinator is based in the Ceredigion Public Protection Unit and is responsible for the development of strategic multiagency preventative and support initiatives on behalf of the Ceredigion Domestic Abuse Forum.
- b. The Domestic Abuse Coordinator also provides advice and support for professionals and practitioners working with children and families affected by domestic abuse.
- c. The Domestic Abuse Coordinator will ensure that if she/he becomes aware of any child who may be in need of safeguarding or the provision of services a referral will be made Ceredigion Social Services Department.
- d. The Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership support and fund the post.

7. Social services

- a. Ceredigion Social Services Department is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. Children who are experiencing domestic abuse may benefit from a range of support services and some may require safeguarding through the child in need and/or child protection process. Social services will address the needs of children affected by domestic abuse and provide support and protection services for children and their families, as appropriate. This will include planning and liaison with other agencies to ensure that an effective package of support and protection is provided for children and their families.
- b. It is the responsibility of the Children and Families Assessment Team Manager to make a decision about what course of action will be taken within 24 hours of a referral being made in accordance with the response priorities in the *Ceredigion Interagency Protocol and Procedures for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*. This will include taking one or more of the following decisions: -
 - No action, log as information;

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- To carry out an initial assessment of need;
 - To hold a child protection strategy discussion/meeting with initial referrer and other agencies, as necessary;
 - To conduct child protection section 47 enquiries;
 - To take immediate emergency action to protect the child;
 - To provide information and advice or referral to a more appropriate service, but with no further action by social services;
 - To take no further action.
- c. The following steps will be will be undertaken to inform this decision: -
- Check to the Child Protection Register;
 - Consideration of any records of previous or current involvement with the child and other family members;
 - Checks with the health visitor/ school nurse, as appropriate;
 - Checks with school/nursery that the child attends, as appropriate;
 - Any other necessary information checks.
- d. The initial referrer will be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for it.
- e. In the event of a difference of professional opinion about the decision the matter should be resolved in accordance with the Dyfed Powys Safeguarding Children Forum's *Protocol for the Resolution of Professional Differences*.
- f. A repeat domestic abuse incident within a 12 month period will be considered as an indication of increased risk of harm to the child(ren) in the household. A third reported domestic abuse incident should lead to an initial assessment being undertaken, which in accordance with the *All Wales Child Protection Procedures* may result in child protection strategy discussion/meeting. If it is decided not to undertake an initial assessment at this stage the reasons for the decision should be clearly recorded.
- g. The level of seriousness of a single incident of domestic abuse is an important indicator of risk to a child(ren) in the household. Therefore consideration must be given to undertaking an initial assessment based on the criteria of seriousness following the first report of domestic abuse.
- h. The social work professionals with case management responsibilities will make decisions regarding assessment, intervention and service provision based on available information and professional judgment on an individual case basis.

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- i. The team manager/senior practitioner must ensure that a copy of the domestic abuse referral will be passed to the named nurse responsible for child protection.

8. Hywel Dda NHS Trust

- a. Hywel Dda NHS Trust is in the process of developing a policy for individual staff members who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- b. Hywel Dda NHS Trust have adopted the All Wales Ante Natal Domestic Abuse Clinical Pathway launched in 2005, which aims to increase incidents of disclosure of domestic abuse by ensuring midwives and health visitors routinely ask women whether they are experiencing domestic abuse; and to ensure disclosures are appropriately recorded and support systems are implemented.
- c. Where health care professionals and staff become aware of domestic abuse incidents, which give cause for concern about the safety of a child(ren), or the safety of their client, a referral should be made to appropriate partner agencies, that is police and/or social services.

9. Training and public awareness

- a. Ceredigion Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and Ceredigion Domestic Abuse Forum are responsible for the provisions of multi agency training on domestic abuse awareness for professionals and individual employees.
- b. Cymdeithas Tai Hafan arranges for domestic abuse awareness sessions to be undertaken for all secondary school pupils in Ceredigion. The Ceredigion Domestic Abuse Forum Coordinator supports Tai Hafan’s Schools Liaison Officer and the DAF provide resources for pupils.
- c. The Ceredigion Domestic Abuse Coordinator is available to undertake domestic abuse awareness sessions with community groups.
- d. The Ceredigion Domestic Abuse Forum will regularly review the local training and public awareness strategies about domestic abuse and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children living in households where domestic abuse happens.
- e. The Ceredigion Domestic Abuse Forum Coordinator reports quarterly to the Ceredigion LSCB.

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10. Resources available for Ceredigion to address domestic abuse concerns.

10.1 National Probation Service: Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP).

- IDAP is a Probation Service programme for adult male offenders convicted of domestic violence offences, whose victims are women;
- IDAP is a nationally accredited, community based group work programme and is offered as a sentence within the a Community Order;
- The programme involves an extensive group work and individual sessions with offenders;
- The IDAP aims to reduce the risk of violent crime and abusive behaviour towards women in relationships by helping perpetrators to change their attitude and behaviour; to increase the offender's ability to respond non-abusively, to change abusive beliefs and empathise with victims; to give offenders a greater sense of personal responsibility for their violence; to help offenders accept that they exercise choice in the way they behave; and, to increase the offenders ability to identify high risk situations and manage these effectively.

Further information about the IDAP programme is available from the National Probation Service, Ceredigion Office tel 01970 636460.

10.2 The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- The MARAC is a multi agency group that shares information, develops and reviews risk management plans in respect of domestic abuse victims who are categorized as very high risk;
- The MARAC meets on a monthly basis.

Further information about the MARAC is available from the Ceredigion Dyfed Powys Police PPU on 0845 330 2000.

10.3 Women's Aid.

- Aberystwyth and Cardigan Women's Aid provides services for women who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Womens Aid provide 24 hour help; Refuge accommodation; an Information Centre; outreach support; and, support for children.

Further information is available from:

- Aberystwyth Womens Aid tel. no01970 625585;

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- Cardigan Womens Aid 01239 615385.

10.4 Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline.

- Free 24 hour, bilingual service;
- Access to information about refuge space in Wales;
- Access to Language Line.

10.5 Dyfed Powys Domestic Abuse website for children and young people.

- www.notyourfault.org

10.6 Freedom Programme

- The Freedom Programme is a 12 week programme open to any woman who wants to learn more about domestic abuse;
- The programme helps women to understand the beliefs held by abusive men and shared by abused women; assists women to recognize men who abuse; help women gain self esteem and confidence; help women gain understanding about the impact of domestic abuse on children.

Further information about the Freedom Programme can be obtained from Aberystwyth Womens Aid, tel. no. 01970 612225 and Cardigan Womens Aid, tel. no. 01239 615700.

10.7 Supporting People, Ceredigion.

- Supporting People provide floating support for women and children subject to domestic abuse, who continue to live in the family home;
- This service is available in North Ceredigion.

For further information contact Supporting People, tel. no. 01545 574221

10.8 Ceredigion Home-Start

- Home-Start volunteers support families, who have at least one child under the age of 5 years, through the provision of a home visiting service and family support groups;
- Home-Start will support families both when an abusive partner is living in the household, and, when the person experiencing abuse has left the family home.

Further information available from Ceredigion Home-Start 01545 571317
E-mail: homestartaber@aol.com

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10.9 Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Elm Tree House, Carmarthen.

- A centre where victims of sex crimes can access medical care and counselling;
- Run by the Welsh based charity New Pathways in partnership with the police, health and social services working together;
- Elm Tree House is designed to cater for the needs of children as well as men and women who are victims of rape and sexual abuse;
- Elm Tree House accepts self referrals and there is no requirement to report offences to the police.

For further information tel. no. 01267 235464

10.10 Cymdeithas Tai Hafan

- Tai Hafan is a Housing Association operating over the whole of Wales that provides housing and support services for vulnerable women with/without children;
- Tai Hafan supports women and their families in their own homes or waiting to be re housed;
- Tai Hafan has a structured support package that enables women and their children to develop skills and confidence needed to maintain them in an independent home within the community;
- Website: www.tai-hafan.co.uk

For further information/application tel no. 01267 225555/email: enquiries@tai-hafan.co.uk

10.11 Montgomery Family Crisis Centre (MFCC).

- Perpetrator programme addressing the control of abusive behaviour;
- Refuge accommodation;
- Programme for men experiencing domestic abuse.

For further information tel. No. 01686 610391

10.12 Perpetrator Programme: Move to Change –Abusive Behaviour Programme for Men.

- A free 12 week programme;
- The aim is to minimize the men pose to their partner and family;
- The programme will raise awareness of domestic abuse, including the risks and impacts it has on a family;

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- A team of 3 workers will deliver the programme to the men and work with the women on safety measures;
- **The programme can be accessed by agency or self referral.**

For further information contact Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Forum tel. no. 01269 598120.

10.13 Dyn Cymru Helpline.

- For men experiencing domestic abuse in Wales;
- A confidential listening service;
- Provision of information and advice;
- Website: www.dynproject.org

For further information telephone number 0808 801 0321 and

11 Conclusion.

Domestic abuse is a significant and serious social problem, which has a destructive impact on the lives of adults and children. The Ceredigion protocol seeks to provide a coordinated multi-agency operational approach; sharing of information between agencies; a robust police response to reported incidents of domestic abuse; protection and support for people who are experiencing and have experienced domestic abuse; and, programmes for abusive partners in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in households where domestic abuse occurs.

Ceredigion LSCB together with the Community Safety Partnership, and the Child and Young People Partnership will continue to work towards the effective strategic arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who live with domestic abuse.

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