

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Let's Make a Difference

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR
OF PUBLIC HEALTH FOR WIRRAL 2015/16



Contents



Drawings kindly supplied by
Leapfrog Project, Involve Northwest

Introduction	3
What is domestic abuse and who is affected?	5
Everyone's responsibility	11
- Breaking the cycle	12
- Raising awareness	17
- What organisations and individuals can do	21
Recommendations	24
Sources of further help and information	25

Introduction

The Wirral Plan has committed to a pledge of zero tolerance to domestic abuse. Wirral has higher than the national average rates of police recorded incidents of domestic abuse, and Merseyside has the second highest rate of police recorded incidents of domestic abuse in England. It is important we act locally and work collaboratively with our neighbours to tackle this significant problem within our society.

There remains a strong perception that domestic abuse is mainly physical male on female violence. As this report will outline, this is only part of the picture. Domestic abuse manifests in many different ways, it is not just physical violence. It can also be for example, controlling behaviour and or emotional abuse. It affects any age, any race, any class and any gender, and can occur in all types of relationships. It is also important to remind ourselves that it can happen in any area. While police recorded incidents are higher in our more deprived areas, looking at domestic abuse as a proportion of all crime shows some of our more affluent areas have a greater prevalence of domestic abuse crime than might be expected for localities with fewer social problems.

The impact of domestic abuse is far reaching as it affects individuals, families and society as a whole. The impact on children is particularly worrying with 90% of domestic abuse being witnessed by children. Consequences include children becoming withdrawn, depressed and finding it difficult to communicate, others may act out the aggression they have witnessed or blame themselves for the abuse. In adulthood children affected by domestic abuse have increased risk of poor mental health, substance misuse and behavioural problems. This strengthens the argument to ensure we do all we can to intervene early and support families to deal with domestic abuse.

There is a strong economic case to tackling domestic abuse. In addition to the significant suffering to victims it is estimated to cost the UK public services such as the criminal justice system, health, social care, housing, civil and legal services £3.1 billion per year with a £2.7 billion loss to the economy.

Work to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the stories of some of the people who have been supported are described in this report. I also urge you to watch a short film on www.wirral.gov.uk/domesticabuse that has been produced with the help of Tomorrow's Women Wirral and Involve Northwest. This film provides first-hand accounts of domestic abuse and how, with the right support, safe solutions can be found.

In Wirral, we are fortunate to have many excellent services and strong multi-agency working to both prevent domestic abuse and support victims to build a better future. This includes the police, probation service, community and voluntary sector, advocacy, counselling, schools, family support and legal advice. Wirral's Domestic Abuse Alliance is leading the work to tackle domestic abuse with implementation of the cross agency domestic abuse strategy.

However, we know many people do not fully recognise the full extent of domestic abuse, which results in many cases left unreported. I hope this report helps to further your understanding of domestic abuse and illustrate the importance of achieving our zero tolerance pledge. We need to do more to both prevent domestic abuse and, where it is happening, enable people to access support that is right for them. I believe we all have a role, be it as individuals or organisations, to tackle this important issue and I encourage you to play your part.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Johnstone".

Fiona Johnstone
Director of Public Health
Wirral Council

What is domestic abuse and who is affected?

Sad



Domestic abuse has been defined as *‘any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality’* (Home Office, 2013).

This definition reflects the many forms of domestic abuse. It also recognises that domestic abuse is not just something that happens between partners or after a relationship has ended, it can be elder abuse, child on parent abuse and harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation. Although this definition is for those aged 16 or over, it should be noted that domestic abuse can also happen in relationships between young people.

Domestic abuse can take different forms, it includes:

Physical abuse: Hitting, pushing, kicking, choking and using weapons or objects to hit or threaten someone.

Sexual abuse: Unwanted sexual attention including making or putting pressure on someone to have sex, watch pornography, unwanted touching or groping someone.

Financial abuse: Taking money, controlling finances, not letting someone work.

Emotional/psychological abuse: Making someone feel bad or scared, playing mind games, stalking, blackmailing, constantly checking up on someone, reading emails, text messages or letters.

Harmful Practice: Honour based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation.

Who is affected?

EVERYONE

Historically there has been a perception that domestic abuse mainly affects women in heterosexual relationships. However, it is important to remember that **anyone** can be a victim of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse affects:

- Men
- Women
- Heterosexuals, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)
- Families
- Children
- Young people
- People with ill health/disability
- Older people
- Ethnic minorities

Key Risk Factors

- Being female
- Having a long term illness or disability (this almost doubles the risk)
- Being younger
- Being unemployed
- Living in poverty
- Having a low education
- Having a mental health disorder
- History of abuse, this could be either personal experience or witnessing abuse of a parent
- Being separated or divorced
- Being pregnant, this can increase the risk of either the first episode of domestic abuse or an escalation of abuse
- Personal, community or cultural acceptance of domestic abuse

We often think of domestic abuse as something that happens between partners, however, it is important to remember it can also take other forms, such as child on parent or elder abuse. Below, Helen describes her experience of the difficulties she had with her daughter.

Helen's story

I am 67. My husband died 8 years ago. I lived with my 38 year old daughter, Susan. I have bad arthritis and need help around the house and someone to do my shopping. Susan was my carer but she used to drink and has suffered from depression. It felt like it was me who was caring for her most of the time. She stopped being nice to me when I wouldn't give her money for her drink. She would shout and push me and then just take the money anyway. I felt guilty as I knew she was not well. She would drink from breakfast to bedtime and used to pass out sometimes in the kitchen, I used to worry she would set the house on fire as she smoked when she was drunk. I was ashamed.

One day Susan pushed me too hard. I fell over and really hurt my knee. My GP came out and I just broke down and told him everything. He asked me if I would speak to the police. I said I didn't want to get Susan into trouble but I knew I couldn't carry on much longer.

He arranged for me to meet someone from the Family Safety Unit. They met me at the surgery and gave me lots of advice about what I could do to get help. I think I always knew deep down that she was not going to stop drinking and hurting me just

because I wanted her to. I knew I had to be tough and ask her to leave and look for somewhere else to stay.

They encouraged me to tell other members of the family what was going on and not to be ashamed. They also gave me ideas on how to stay safe in the house and arranged for the Fire Brigade to come to the house and check it for safety. My family were shocked but they made it clear to Susan that it had to stop and she had to sort her drinking out. I felt more confident and able to ring the police when she was really bad. I hated doing it, I felt sorry for her and I blamed myself as I was her mum so I must have done something wrong for her to be like this. Eventually her drinking got so bad she got taken into hospital. I decided then it had to stop. I got the locks changed and told her she could not come back.

She was offered support for her drinking and went to stay with her cousin. That did not work out and she is now living in the town centre in a hostel. Susan has been off the drink for a while. She does not need to live with me and I feel much better living on my own. I could not have done this without the help from everyone. No one should be scared of their own flesh and blood.

The impact and scale of domestic abuse

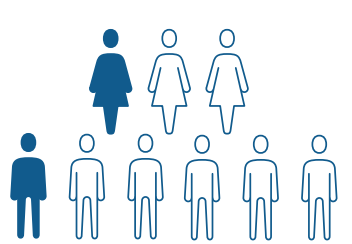
The impact of domestic abuse is far reaching. It affects individual victims, their families and the wider society.

Domestic abuse can result in:

- Physical harm e.g. bruises, cuts, broken bones, death
- Worsening of existing chronic conditions e.g. asthma, migraines, and hypertension
- Increased maternal risks of having a low weight baby, premature birth or miscarriage
- Increased minor illnesses
- Neurological symptoms, e.g. fainting, fits
- Increased risk of mental health problems e.g. depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Substance misuse, especially alcohol which can be both a cause and consequence of domestic abuse
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide
- Homelessness
- Difficulty finding and/or maintaining work
- Family breakdown
- Children living in fear and anxiety, risk of behavioural problems and long term adverse outcomes

The national scale of domestic abuse

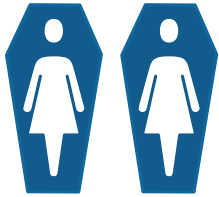
NATIONAL STATISTICS



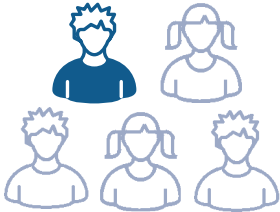
1 in 3 women and **1 in 6 men** will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives.

EVERY YEAR
100,000
PEOPLE IN THE UK
ARE AT HIGH RISK

of being murdered or seriously injured as a result of domestic abuse.



2 domestic homicides a week by a current or former partner.



1 in 5 teenagers have been physically abused by their boyfriends or girlfriends.

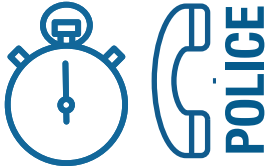
Government research shows

1 in 4 GIRLS **1 in 5** BOYS

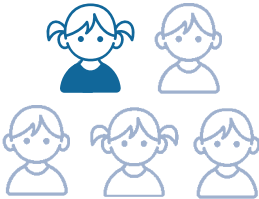
have been physically abused.

3 in 4 GIRLS **1 in 2** BOYS

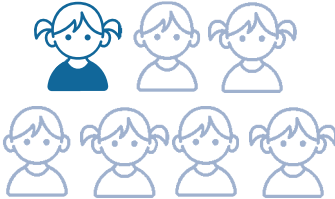
suffered emotional abuse.



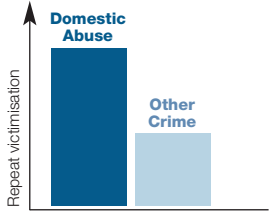
Every minute the police in the UK receive a domestic assistance phone call.



Around **1 in 5 children** have been exposed to domestic abuse.



Around **1 in 7 children** have lived with severe domestic abuse at some stage in their childhood.



Domestic abuse has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other crime.

Tip of the iceberg

Determining the true scale of domestic abuse is challenging. It is estimated that just 35% of cases are reported to the police with victims likely to have experienced 30 incidents of abuse before reporting it.

Barriers to reporting can include lack of services or someone to safely disclose to, fear of not being taken seriously, prejudice, stigma or reprisals. Where children are involved fear of social services involvement can be a barrier to disclosure.

Domestic abuse in Wirral

WIRRAL STATISTICS

5,984
INCIDENTS



POLICE

Domestic abuse incidents reported over 2015/16 to the police

A&E

ON AVERAGE
216
PRESENTATIONS
IN A YEAR

at Arrowe Park A&E are related to domestic violence.



x5
IN 5 YEARS


5 domestic homicides of women in the last 5 years.

MARAC
SUPPORTED
693
HIGH RISK CASES

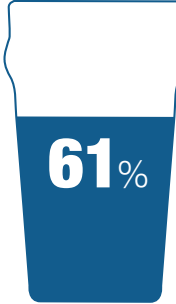
In 2014 as part of the Wirral Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

1,206
CHILDREN
WERE INVOLVED IN
THESE CASES

56
WOMEN
with
FGM



Estimated **56 women** with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) equates to 0.3 per 1000 population.

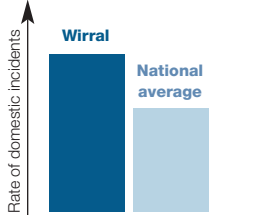


61%

Of the domestic abuse related presentations to Arrowe Park A&E from 2011/12 to 2014/15 61% had alcohol as an underlying factor.



Alcohol was a related factor in **2 domestic homicides** of women in the past 5 years.



Rate of domestic incidents

Wirral **National average**

Wirral has a higher rate than national average of domestic abuse incidents.

Everyone's responsibility

- Breaking the cycle
- Raising awareness
- What organisations and individuals can do

Angry



Breaking the cycle

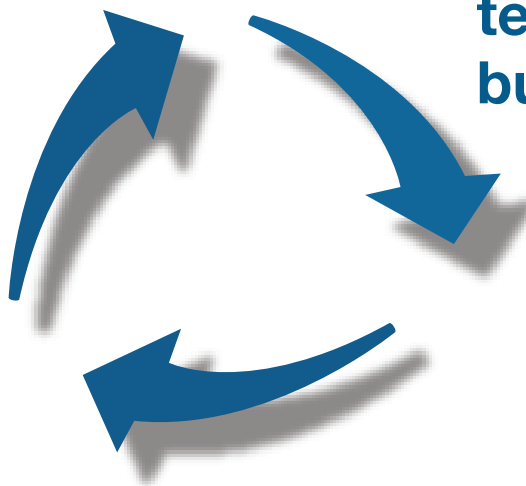
Domestic abuse is often about power and control and it rarely happens as a one-off. There is usually a pattern, or cycle whereby the victim is mistreated, then made to feel loved until the abuse begins again.

The cycle may not necessarily follow the pattern of one stage to the next, it may jump between stages. For someone suffering domestic abuse, their mental health and self-esteem is likely to be

affected making it difficult to talk about and get help. Its traumatising effects can last for years, but people can and do escape domestic abuse and move forward to enjoy healthy relationships.

CYCLE OF ABUSE

**apologies
excuses
amends**



**tension
builds**

abuse takes place

A practitioner's perspective

Patrice Watson is a Project Coordinator for Involve Northwest. This is a third sector organisation that has delivered frontline services to the Wirral community for over 20 years. The organisation supports people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives and assists them to make sustainable changes. This includes support with domestic abuse.

Patrice describes here her experiences of helping people to deal with domestic abuse and find solutions that are right for them.

I support women who experience domestic abuse at various stages. For some, it is a very clear victim/perpetrator situation where the woman has tried everything to make it work but now knows it's never going to happen and wants to end the relationship. There may be fear of how to do this so my role is to offer advice on how to move forward.

Safety is paramount for both woman and any children. A safety plan is put in place, which may involve a referral to the Family Safety Unit (FSU) and/or possibly a solicitor if legal assistance is required.

We also look at emotional support through our Leapfrog programme, a group based programme that supports women and their children to work through their experiences and helps them to rebuild relationships and trust. We use arts and crafts to help children explore and understand their feelings in a safe way.

For other women it's far more complex. They may not realise they are in an abusive relationship and think the behaviour is normal. They may still be in love with their partner/husband and believe he will change. Our role here is around education and support, while at the same time allowing the women to have control over the decisions made. If there





are child protection concerns we inform the women of our decision, unless this puts the child at greater risk.

Sometimes relationships can be dysfunctional in the sense that one or both parties don't know what a healthy relationship looks like, what tools you need to maintain it or use when things go wrong, and so the relationship often ends up being abusive. People may not have had role models, they may have witnessed domestic abuse from their parents and think it's normal, they may have come together through consequences rather than choice, such as living in the same hostel. This can often present itself as a co-dependent relationship.

The important thing is that situations can have really good outcomes if the correct help and support is in place for both women and children.

I have recently become involved with the delivery of the HELP programme, which is a healthy relationships programme for men with identified relationship difficulties.

The programme aims to help them make sense of their own world and find ways to develop and maintain positive, functional relationships with those around them.

Key to the programme's success is establishing a shared identity within the group. This takes away the men's feeling of isolation and encourages them to share and access support within the group.

Through the sessions I have witnessed the men challenging their thoughts and beliefs. They have reflected on and acknowledged past behaviours and showed an understanding for the need to change. Within the programme we look at empathy and this has proven to be a huge step for the men. It was evident that they were going away and putting this into practice.

I found myself rooting for these men in the same way I have done for years with the women. These men were really looking for answers, advice and tools.

The Leapfrog programme run by Involve Northwest, provides a safe place for women and their children to work through what has happened and re-build relationships and trust. In the story below, Paula shares how Leapfrog has helped her and her family.

Paula's story

My story began when I was 21 years old. I was in an abusive relationship until I was 47 years old. It took me 7 years to break away. I was thrown out of my home with nothing, no possessions and no clothes. Despite being a professional, I still struggled to find my way out of an abusive relationship, this added to my feelings of guilt and shame. I was supported by my parents, the Family Safety Unit and the police.

I self-referred to the Leapfrog programme because one of my sons was displaying high signs of anxiety and needed to share and make sense of the abuse his father had inflicted on us. He needed a safe and professional environment to help him with some scary emotions.

Even though I had been separated from my ex-partner for a number of years I was terrified of attending the Leapfrog programme. I was not judged or made to feel any shame. The programme has been a lifeline to me. After the first session my son said 'mum, this happened to other kids not just me!'

The sessions for mothers explored and discussed what constitutes domestic abuse. The facilitator showed us the cycle of abuse and how it destroyed my confidence and self-worth. The cycle keeps you in a constant feeling of shame, fear, anxiety and hope for change. The impact on our children was particularly painful to discuss and this was sensitively approached by the facilitator.

Moving forward and letting go of those helpless feelings which keep us stuck in the cycle, despite being free of the abuser, really helped me. I want my sons to be happy, well balanced, caring and to have healthy relationships. If I had continued in that abusive relationship my sons would have put themselves in a protective role and without doubt they would have been damaged further.

I was given ideas and tools to use to build on my support networks and to find time for myself in order to focus more positively on my children.

The HELP programme, run by Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company, is a healthy relationships programme for men with identified relationship difficulties. Below, John explains how the programme has helped him build better connections with others.



John's Story

I felt very isolated, like everyone was out to get me. I didn't feel like I had anyone I could confide in about my emotions. I was drinking heavily and finding it hard to communicate with those close to me. I felt anxious in social situations and was aggressive towards others.

I felt bad about myself because of how others were with me - strangers and those close to me. The programme helped me to see the vicious circle I was in, that in a way it was me doing it to myself. I was hurting the people closest to me which was making me feel worse. Having space to talk it through helped. I could look in at the situation and it made more sense. At first I wasn't sure it was for me because my problem was with my family. I have not had those problems with a girlfriend for ages. I've not been in a relationship. But now I look at it, it's still me with other people. It's made a difference with mum and dad, even in work. I'm less sensitive, easier to be with.

I've got a job - and kept it! I'm not drinking, the mood is great at home. I look forward to getting up. I know I've got to keep it going but I can see things differently now and that helps. Before, I thought people were getting at me, now I know they're saying things because they care. I think the ice is still thin because I've hurt people before, let them down, but that's a motivation to keep it going. Build the ice up underneath.

I feel like I've developed a real rapport with probation, it's the right time for me so that helps massively - I'm ready but just the way people have been with me, the group, the mentor, I like the way they speak to me, they respect me, but make me think. My mates tell me what I want to hear, they (probation) say things that are different to what I'm used to but things that make sense, fit with me and my situation.

I feel more confident, I communicate better, trust people more ...family, professionals, work even. I am now making new friends at work - I'm not rushing into getting offended easily, I'm more comfortable.

Raising awareness

'Be a Lover, Not a Fighter'

If we are to tackle domestic abuse it is important that people fully understand what it is, who it affects and how they can engage to create a culture of healthy relationships.

The Champs Public Health Collaborative 'Be a Lover, Not a Fighter' campaign facilitated a community call to action to raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse. This campaign engaged with over 60,000 people with the use of social media, celebrity endorsements and community roadshows, including events in the Pyramids Shopping Centre, Birkenhead and the Cherry Tree Centre, Wallasey.



Feedback from the campaign overwhelmingly found that people believed domestic abuse is a serious issue which should be talked about more. Key areas that needed to be discussed were sources of advocacy and help.

Community comments from the campaign included:

"The actual details of it; people may not realise they are actually suffering it or actually doing it."

"If you don't talk about it, it just gets accepted."

"It's about realising it's not your fault, you are the victim."

"I know people that go through it and they are scared to talk about it...they think it's normal."

"That you as a victim, you're not in the wrong, it's men as well who are victims, it's not just violence, there are other forms of abuse."

'If you loved me you would'

Abusive relationships can and do happen between young people. We need to find ways to effectively help young people understand domestic abuse as well as encouraging those who have been affected by it to seek support.

A great example of this has been the work by Creative Youth Development (CYD) who have used theatre to engage with young people via the play 'If you loved me you would'. This follows the moving story of Lisa and Chris and their group of friends. As the tale unfolds, the play explores the issue of what is healthy and unhealthy in a relationship.

During 2014 and 2015 the play was delivered to over 2,700 young people in secondary schools, youth units and outreach venues from across Wirral. The before and after feedback showed a substantial improvement in the knowledge of abuse. Key to this intervention was the provision of leaflets providing advice and education, counselling support and follow up workshops recognising the impact of new understandings and insights on individuals.

Currently CYD are engaging with young people using drama to generate awareness and discussion about child sexual exploitation issues.

Quotes from **'If you loved me you would'** play

*'My friends said
possessive ...*

... I said he's caring.

*They said
paranoid ...*

... I said insecure

*They said
controlling ...*

*... I said looking
after me.*

*They said
abuse ...*

...I said love.



The Leapfrog programme, run by Involve Northwest, provides a safe place for children and young people affected by family domestic abuse, to make sense of what has happened. Below, Julie shares her experience and explains how Leapfrog helped her learn about what is a healthy relationship.



Julie's story

I came on the youth programme because my dad hit my mum. I never saw it happen, but I would hear them argue a lot. When they split up I was happy and sad. It was nice to see my mum smile and not look so unhappy. She also had more time for me and my sister. We could go and see our dad at the weekends and go for tea in the week which was good.

I went on the Leapfrog programme. I was scared at first and did not know what to expect but Abbie and Matt were really nice. We learnt about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

I had been with my boyfriend for 3 months and thought it was good, but when we started doing the work I realised that he was controlling me.

I didn't want to talk to my mum and was embarrassed to share it with my friends. I told Abbie some of the things he would say like "you look like a tart if you wear makeup" and "there is no point in you joining dance class, it's not like you will ever get a job doing it". He would also go through my Facebook and make me delete people and told me to only put pictures on of me and him.

Abbie did not tell me what to do or tell me I was wrong but she helped me see the difference and how I should be treated as a girlfriend. I ended it with my boyfriend. I now wear makeup like my friends and I go to dance every week. I did not think I would learn the things I did but I'm so glad I went.

What organisations and individuals can do

As this report has attempted to highlight, domestic abuse is more than physical violence, it is complex and its impact is far reaching.

The staggering fact that one in three women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives and that 90% of domestic abuse is witnessed by children tells us we need to do more.

If we are to create an environment where domestic abuse is not tolerated and appropriate help is provided at the earliest opportunity then all parts of the Borough, individuals and organisations, need to play their role.

What organisations can do

Some of us may be in a position to influence public spending and the way in which organisations and services operate. Suggested actions organisations can do include:

- Adopt a zero tolerance to domestic abuse pledge.
- Develop organisational policies on domestic abuse which includes a commitment to zero tolerance and steps to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how employees and customers who are affected by domestic abuse will be supported.
- Develop referral pathways to support services as appropriate.
- Train frontline workers to understand, assess and respond appropriately to disclosed or suspected domestic abuse.
- Recruit and train organisational domestic abuse champions.

What individuals can do

As individuals we can play our part by being more aware of what domestic abuse is, its impact and knowing that local services and support networks locally and nationally are available to help people.

If you know or suspect a family member, friend or work colleague is experiencing domestic abuse, it may be difficult to

know what to do and it can be very upsetting. Your first instinct may be to protect them, but intervening could be dangerous for both you and them. This does not mean you should ignore it, rather approach the situation carefully.

It is helpful to remember domestic abuse is very common. It is a crime and is unacceptable and everyone has the right to live without the fear of abuse.

What you can do to support someone

- Talk to them and help them to open up. This may take several attempts before they will confide in you.
- Try to be direct and start by saying something like, “I’m worried about you because ...” or “I’m concerned about your safety...”
- Do not judge, rather listen and believe what you are told.
- Provide reassurance that the abuse is not their fault and you are there for them, focus on providing support and building their self-confidence.
- Help them to develop or to keep up outside contacts. This can help to boost self-esteem and combat isolation.
- Don’t tell them to leave or criticise them for staying. People need to make this decision in their own time. It is important to remember research shows victims are most at risk at the point of separation and immediately after leaving an abusive partner.
- Leaving takes a great deal of strength and courage. There can be many obstacles such as nowhere to go or no money.
- If they have not spoken to anyone else, encourage them to seek the help of a local domestic abuse agency. Please see the contacts at the end of this report.
- Be patient. It can take time for someone to recognise they are being abused and even longer to be able to take safe and permanent decisions about what to do. Recognising the problem is an important first step.

Adapted from the national domestic violence helpline <http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/support-a-friend-or-family-member-experiencing-domestic-violence.aspx>

REX



Happy

mum and dad
fighting

Sad



Angry



Scared



Recommendations

In Wirral we have committed to zero tolerance to domestic abuse. If we are to make a difference we need to take actions to prevent it from happening and, where it has happened help people to access support that is right for them.

1. Increase awareness and understanding of what domestic abuse is and its impact. This should be alongside a clear message that it is not acceptable and where it is present there is safe, friendly and effective support available.
2. All frontline health and social care workers should, as part of their daily work, be aware of domestic abuse and be able to provide appropriate support and referral to services. For groups who are at high risk of domestic abuse, such as young female offenders or pregnant women, screening should be part of routine questions. Such requirements need to be included in service specifications and staff appropriately trained.
3. Children affected by domestic abuse should be provided with appropriate support at an early stage to help them cope with the affects and reduce the long term impact.
4. Borough wide organisational commitment to the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and the work of the Domestic Abuse Alliance.

Some sources of further help and information

Local Services

Tomorrow's Women Wirral

Provides a supportive women only environment to help women make positive changes at a pace that is right for them. This includes courses, counselling, mentoring and legal support for women who have experienced domestic abuse.

www.tomorrowswomen.org.uk

0151 647 7907

Involve Northwest

Runs the Leapfrog programme which supports small groups of 4 to 6 families. Provides help for young people with behavioural problems including situations of child-on-parent violence and parents who have been victims of domestic abuse. The service supports the delivery of the HELP programme a healthy relationship programme for men with identified relationship difficulties.

www.involvenorthwest.org.uk

0151 644 1100

Family Safety Unit

Support provided by qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) for men and women aged 16 or over, and their children who are at high risk of harm from domestic abuse. IDVA's are independent of the police. The unit normally works with people at the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss options, including housing and develop plans that address their immediate safety, as well as longer term solutions.

www.wirral.gov.uk

0151 604 3567

Wirral Women and Children's Aid

Provides a bright, friendly refuge for women and their children who need a place of safety, with support to find permanent accommodation, training and employment. Groups are run for women to build self-confidence, self-esteem and self-belief and understand the impact that domestic abuse has had on them and their children. There is an onsite playroom. Play workers provide one to one family support, run after school sessions and child care so mums can attend appointments or groups. The service has a weekly youth club for older children.

www.wirralwomensrefuge.co.uk

0151 643 9766

WEB Merseyside

WEB has been based in Birkenhead for the past 21 years, providing a safe, welcoming and non-judgmental space for women, men and children. WEB provides one to one listening support, confidence building and personal development workshops, holistic therapies, counselling sessions, therapeutic art classes and group activities.

www.webmerseyside.org

0151 653 3771

Wirral Children's Centres

There are children's centres across the Borough which provide activities and support for children under 5 years old and their parents/carers. This includes the 12 week 'Freedom Programme' which supports women who have been in an abusive relationship.

www.wirral.gov.uk

0151 666 4819

Teen Wirral

Provides confidential information, advice and guidance to young people aged 13 to 19 years old across Wirral. This includes domestic abuse and a range of subjects such as drug and alcohol misuse, benefits and housing issues.

www.teenwirral.com

0151 691 8089

Offender Management

Offenders receive probation support to help reduce the risk of reoffending. For some this is delivered as part of an integrated offender management (IOM) joint agency approach, which involves probation, police and other partners. As appropriate, support may include access to relationship programmes such as the HELP and Building Better Relationships (BBR).

www.merseysidecrc.co.uk

National Services

National Domestic Violence Helpline www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org

This 24 hour helpline is run by Women's Aid and Refuge. 0808 200 0247
It is answered by fully trained female helpline support workers and volunteers who will answer your call in confidence. All calls to the helpline are free from mobiles and landlines.

Men's Advice Line

Advice and support for men experiencing domestic abuse and for frontline workers working with men.

www.mensadvice.org.uk

0808 801 0327

National Sexual Violence Helpline

Run by Rape Crisis South London. This free helpline is for women who have survived any form of sexual violence, no matter how long ago. Also for friends and family of survivors and professionals to help them understand how to best support female survivors of sexual violence.

www.rasasc.org.uk

0808 802 9999

National Centre for Domestic Violence

Provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation.

www.ncdv.org.uk

0800 970 2070

Refuge

National charity which provides a range of support to women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Services include refuges, independent advocacy and community outreach.

www.refuge.org.uk

Women's Aid

National charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. A federation of over 220 organisations, the charity provides more than 300 local lifesaving services to women and children across the country.

www.womensaid.org.uk

Samaritans

Provides 24 hour support and advice for all ages.

www.samaritans.org

116 123

Broken Rainbow

**(for lesbian, gay, bisexual,
transgender and intersex people)**

Provides support to all members of the LGBTI communities, their family, friends and agencies supporting them. Help is available via a helpline, email or online chat.

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

0800 999 5428

Karma Nirvana

Support network for both women and men who are experiencing forced marriage or Honour Based Violence. Helpline is for both victims and professionals.

www.karmanirvana.org.uk

0800 599 9247

The National Society Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

provides a free 24 hour helpline for parents, professionals and families to get advice or share their concerns about a child, anonymously if they wish.

www.nspcc.org.uk/

0808 800 5000

ChildLine

Free, confidential advice and support for under 18 year olds whatever the worry. Support can be provided via phone, email, message board or online chat.

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111

Public Health Directorate
Old Market House, Birkenhead
Wirral, CH41 5AL