

calderdale domestic violence forum



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Registered Charity Number
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Introduction

Women and children are often in great danger in the place where they should be safest: within their families.

For many "home" is where they face a regime of terror and violence at the hands of somebody close to them-somebody they should be able to trust.

Those victimised suffer physically and psychologically.

They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or protect themselves and their children for fear of further repercussions. Their human rights are denied and their lives are stolen from them by the ever present threat of violence.

The past two years have seen domestic violence gain unprecedented attention from Government.

This focus has created an opportunity to make a difference to the lives of thousands of domestic violence victims -survivors and their children.

Calderdale Domestic Violence Forum brings together a range of partners including:

- West Yorkshire Police
- Probation Service
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Calderdale Women's Centre
- Calderdale Council
- Stonham and Pennine Housing Associations
- Barnardo's
- Health Trusts and others

Their agreed objective is to address the issue of domestic violence effectively.

The creation of this Forum is, in itself, progress, however, much more remains to be done.

We have, as a Forum, made a commitment to build upon and improve existing services within Calderdale and to ensure that the needs of the victims of domestic violence remain central to our work.

This 2004 report identifies the key areas and explains our approach.



Clare Hyde
Co-Chair
Calderdale Domestic Violence Forum

Important Contacts

Calderdale Women's Centre
Domestic Violence Support Team
01422 323339

Calderdale Women's Centre
Children's Domestic Violence Service
01422 386501

Calderdale Police
Domestic Violence Co-ordinators
01422 337041

Calderdale Women's Refuge (Stonham)
01422 351498

NSPCC
339500

Women's Aid National 24-Hour Helpline
0845 7023468

Probation Service
01422 340211

Calderdale Council
01422 357257

Calderdale Primary Care Trust
01422 397303

Calderdale Community Safety Partnership
01422 393125

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust
01422 357171

Housing Advice Centre
01422 392462

South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust
01484 343382

Calderdale Council
Schools and Children's Services
01422 392527

A pilot project found routine enquiries were well received by pregnant women and picked up cases of abuse.

"By including routine enquiries when women go for ante-natal appointments, health professionals may be able to establish whether women are at risk or have experienced any domestic violence during their pregnancy. This is an effective means of ensuring the appropriate support and advice is offered at an early stage and will ensure that help is given to women where and when it is needed."

A Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill is currently making its passage through parliament and, according to Mary Newburn of the National Childbirth Trust, finding out whether women are in a violent relationship is one thing; having the time, contacts and other resources to respond in a helpful way is something else.

"These resources allied to the new steps will improve co-ordination of services and enable midwives and other healthcare professionals to undertake any further necessary training required,"

Midwives are the first point of contact for mothers-to-be and the lead health professional for the first 28 days of a baby's life, making them ideally placed to ensure that victims will be identified and provided with support, advice and referral appropriate to their needs.

In Calderdale, the training and support needs of midwives and other health care professionals will be addressed through the development of a training strategy and implementation plan.

What do we mean by 'domestic violence'?

We use the term domestic violence to describe the pattern of abuse (such as threats, intimidation, social isolation, financial control, and/or physical, sexual, emotional and/or psychological violence) of one person (usually but not exclusively, a woman) by another (usually but not exclusively, a man) with whom they have or have had an intimate or family relationship.

Domestic violence can occur in same sex relationships and we recognise that in this society certain groups may face additional obstacles and/or discrimination when seeking help.

Whilst acknowledging the range of experiences of domestic violence, Calderdale Domestic Violence Forum has, as it's main focus, violence against women and their children.

The overall aims of the Forum are to co-ordinate and develop services to effectively meet the needs of women and children experiencing domestic violence.

This includes direct service provision, action intended to hold abusers accountable and work to reduce the tolerance of domestic violence amongst the wider community.

The forum has established a Steering Group who consist of the trustees of the charity and senior representatives of key agencies involved, including the local authority, police, probation, Crown Prosecution Service, health care, relevant district partnerships and women and children's services.

The Forum has also established Operational Sub Groups whose work may be ongoing or time limited.



The repeat victimisation rate in Calderdale is

43%



There are over

1800

referrals to Calderdale Women's Centre Domestic Violence Services

Membership of the Groups is specific to agencies within any operational field, for example Direct Services Group, Criminal Justice Group and representation is at a senior practitioner level.

The focus of the Steering Group and the Operational Groups has been to:

- Provide early, effective intervention for victims
- Increase the reporting of domestic violence
- Decrease repeat victimisation
- Hold perpetrators to account
- Provide safe accommodation choices

Support for victims

Calderdale has well established support services focusing on the victims of domestic violence. These include:

- Stonham Housing Association Women's Refuges
- Calderdale Women's Centre Domestic Violence Services including Children's and Young People's Services
- JACS - the service offered by the NSPCC to children affected by domestic violence

Where there are concerns that a child is, or may be at risk of significant harm, the needs of the child must come first.

In these circumstances the overriding objective must be to safeguard the child.

Pregnancy and Domestic Violence

On 21st October 2004, Public Health Minister Melanie Johnson, announced plans to help cut domestic abuse.

She said, "*The fact that domestic violence often starts or escalates during pregnancy and is associated with increases in rates of miscarriage, low birth weight, premature birth, foetal injury and foetal death makes for stark reading.*"

Government figures show that:

- 30% of domestic violence either starts or will intensify during pregnancy
- One in four women will be affected by domestic violence in their lifetime

A survey in 2004 by the Royal College of Midwives found that:

- One in five midwives knew at least one pregnant woman who was the victim of domestic violence
- One in 10 believed that pregnancy was the trigger

A Government initiative will look at possible ways for midwives and other health/social care professionals, through antenatal visits, to establish whether mothers-to-be are subject to, or fear the possibilities of, domestic violence and, if so, to be referred to support and counseling services.



The British Crime Survey indicated that **32%** of incidents of intimate partner violence were committed when the perpetrator was under the influence of **alcohol**



70% of women living in refuge said their children had been physically abused

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

In February 2003 Calderdale domestic violence partners held the first Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference with the specific aim of addressing the most serious and chronic domestic violence cases across the district.

The MARAC is a formal conference to facilitate the risk assessment process. The purpose is for agencies to share information with a view to identifying those at a 'very high' level of risk and thereafter jointly constructing a management plan to provide professional support to all those at risk.

Research and experience have shown repeatedly that keeping children and pregnant women safe from harm requires professionals to share information about:

- A child's health, development, and exposure to possible harm
- A parent who may need help to/or may not be able to care for a child adequately and safely
- Those who may pose a risk of harm to a child.

Often it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared and then put together that it becomes clear that a child is at risk of/or is suffering harm. "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2000" and lessons from Part 8 reviews supports this stance.

This agreement is designed to help staff from all agencies to work together by sharing information.

Those providing services to adults and children will be concerned about the need to balance their duties to protect children from harm and their general duty of care towards other members of the household.

- Calderdale MBC who provide a wide range of services to families including help for those made homeless through domestic violence
- The Police in Calderdale have dedicated Domestic Violence Officers ensuring an effective response to reported incidents

It is the Forum's aim to:

- Build upon and develop existing services using best practice
- Achieve high levels of satisfaction from the people using these services and to listen to what they have to say about their experiences

A Multi-Agency Approach

Evidence shows that women experiencing domestic violence often have to visit up to ten different agencies before they get the help they need.

This puts the lives of women and children at risk and is not acceptable.

The partner agencies of Calderdale Domestic Violence Forum have committed to improve their individual and collective responses to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Forum has developed a multi-agency response to domestic violence, bringing together key organisations involved in delivering domestic violence services and in dealing with perpetrators.



One in four women
will be affected by
domestic violence in
their lifetime



90%
of domestic violence cases
occur with children in the
same or the next room

This multi-agency development will ensure that women and children receive the help they need when they need it and that perpetrators are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Domestic Violence and Children

The impact of living with and witnessing domestic violence on children and young people is well researched. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways:

- A study of 250 case files of children sexually abused in care found that 39% of the children had lived with domestic violence.
- 1 in 3 child protection cases show a history of domestic violence to the mother *(Hester and Peterson 1998)*
- Of over 1000 women living in refuge 70% said their children had been physically abused *(Bowker 1988)*
- Common difficulties among children witnessing domestic violence include increased levels of anxiety, abdominal complaints, asthma, peptic ulcers, rheumatoid arthritis, stuttering, enuresis, sadness, withdrawal and fear. *(Jaffe et al 1990)*
- Witnessing the abuse of mothers is associated with teenage boys taking an aggressive and abusive role in dating relationships *(Moffitt 1993)*
- Partners who abuse partners frequently try to implicate children in the abuse by directly involving them. This can be by attacking, emotional abuse, degradation or witnessing assaults *(Hester and Radford 1996)*

- Girls in particular seek to protect younger siblings during violent episodes *(Jaffe et al 1990)*
- Children of all ages take some form of passive or active support to protect their mothers when witnessing domestic violence *(Hester and Radford 1996)*
- 75% of mothers in one study said that their children had witnessed domestic violence. 33% had seen their mother beaten. 62% overheard violent incidents. *(NCH 1994)*
- Children may believe that they trigger their parents violence *(Saunders 1995)*

Calderdale Women's Centre has developed services for children and young people since 2002, in partnership with the Children's Fund and Connexions. In September 2004, 42 young people participated in a consultation event. Of these, 34 (81%) completed a questionnaire*. We asked them:

Have you ever witnessed domestic violence?

64% males answered yes
50% females answered yes

Have you ever been hurt?

50% males answered yes
30% females answered yes

Have you ever been in a relationship yourself where domestic violence has occurred?

21% males answered yes
20% females answered yes

* Survey Details

14 males (41%), 20 females (59%)

Ages ranged from 12 to 19 with 50% aged between 14 and 15.

26 (76%) white British, 7 (20%) Pakistani Asian,

1 (3%) Black African/ Caribbean.

2 (6%) males disabled, 1 (3%) females disabled.



There were

14

domestic related murders in West Yorkshire during 2003



In Calderdale, there are over

3600

reported incidents of domestic violence each year