

Guidance for professionals

Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence and Abuse in Southampton

This guidance covers the steps to take to respond to Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA).

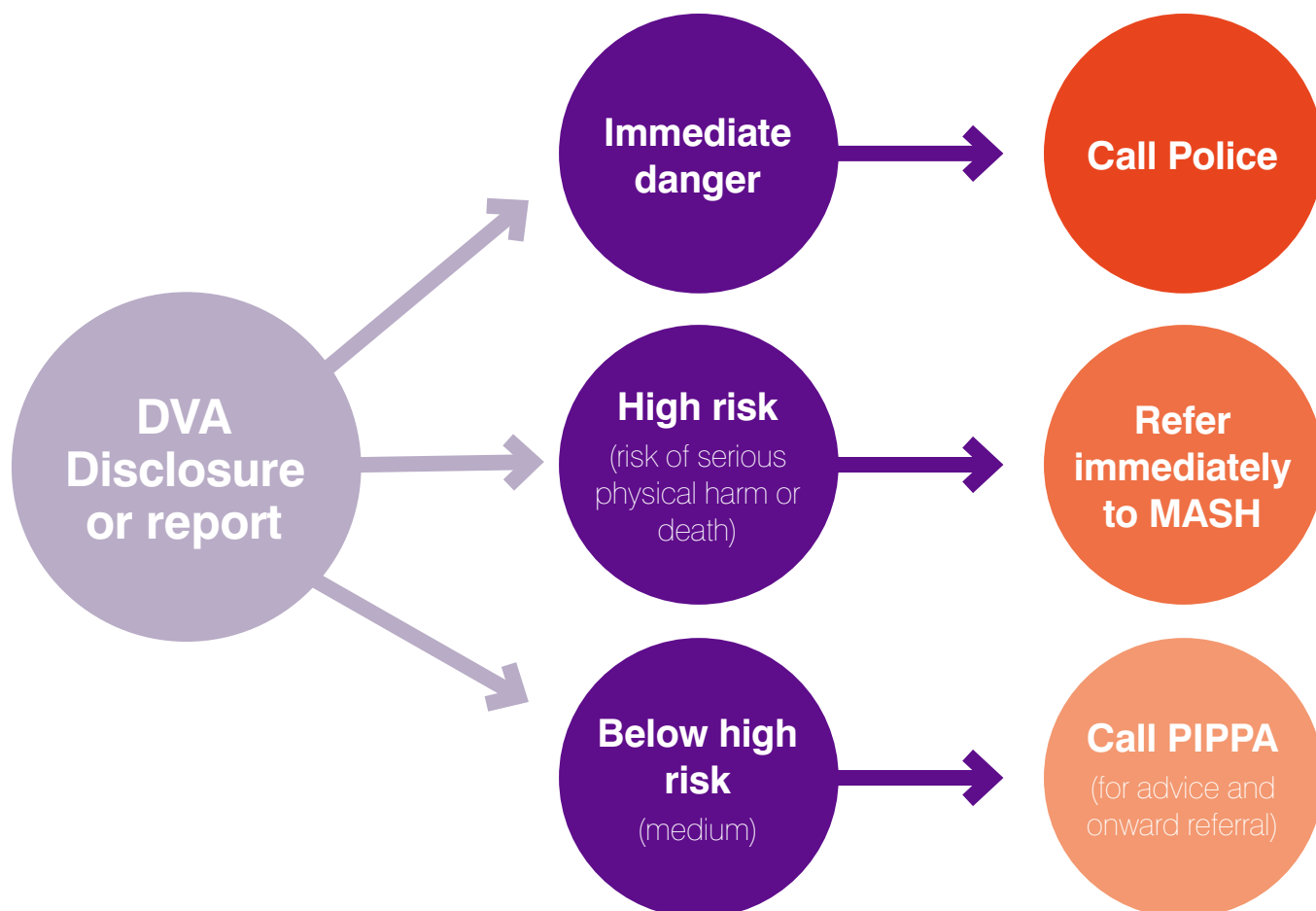
It explains the referral routes for DVA at all risk levels. This is for professionals in any service that has direct contact with the public.

What is DVA?

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).

DVA includes stalking, so-called Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage.

DVA referral routes: Overview



Steps to respond to DVA



Be alert to the signs of DVA. If you have concerns that it is a 'live' issue happening in a family you are working with, try to speak to the adult survivor (victim) on their own and sensitively ask questions that may help you to identify the issues and risks. Explain duty of care to safeguard families.



Disclosure of DVA is often a very difficult experience and it may follow a long period of abuse. Always listen with respect and sensitivity. It is not uncommon for a victim of DVA not to recognise their experience as abusive. Listen carefully to identify the signs and indicators of abuse.



Reassure your client that confidential and trusted help is available and explain the benefits of seeking help to reduce risks of harm. Wherever possible seek consent, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so. You should inform your client that a high risk assessment could lead to a referral to MASH to protect their safety and that of any children. This will mean sharing relevant information about risks. Consent from your client may be given verbally to PIPPA but will be carefully recorded to ensure legal compliance.



Complete a risk assessment using the Safelives (DASH) risk assessment tool. This will help to determine the level of risk to your client: high or below high. The next steps to referral differ according to the level of risk. See page 3 for help with risk assessing or call PIPPA. The DASH form is available on PIPPA and LSCB websites.



For High Risk DVA refer to MASH. This is a single referral for a multi-agency DVA risk assessment and response, as well as consideration of any concerns relating to children under 18 living in the same household (if applicable). A MASH referral will trigger a referral to IDVA for intensive independent DVA advocacy and support for the DVA victim.

Below High Risk DVA. Call PIPPA for DVA advice and onward referral to DVA expert support. You may also need to refer to MASH for Children's Safeguarding concerns or Adult Services if a 'vulnerable adult' is involved.



Safety plan with the adult survivor for the whole family, keep a record of all actions and discussions and ensure DVA consideration in wider family / individual work. Call PIPPA for DVA advice if you need it.



For **High Risk DVA** a small number of cases may also need to be referred to MARAC for further multi-agency risk assessment and response. (See DVA High Risk Guidance on this) MARAC referrals will usually apply to particularly complex cases.



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How to do a DVA Risk Assessment:

- If you need help or advice to assess DVA risks, call PIPPA on 023 8091 7917.
- PIPPA also provide training to professionals in this area (ask for details) or see the PIPPA website.

Completing a (DASH) DVA risk assessment form:

- The Safelives – DASH Risk Checklist is designed to help practitioners identify high risk cases of DVA, stalking and ‘honour’-based violence.
- The DASH Risk Assessment form is available with this guidance or on the PIPPA website www.pippasouthampton.org or LSCB site under MASH www.southamptonlscb.co.uk
- Complete the form or checklist with your client in a safe and confidential environment.



‘Professional Judgement’

If you have serious concerns about a client’s situation always seek help and advice, and refer to MASH. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of ‘honour’-based violence.

You should also recognise the ‘trigger’ factors that often increase risk: pregnancy, recent or imminent separation and child contact. And the aggravating factors that increase risk such as strangulation and use of weapons. Professional judgement is based on your experience and/or the victim’s perception of their risk even if they do not meet the DASH ‘ticks’ checklist criteria.

‘Potential Escalation’

The number of Police callouts to the victim as a result of DVA in the past 12 months and/or multiple lower level referrals/reports (relating to DVA) may be indicators of escalating abuse. Where there is a clear pattern of reports and/or incidents you should use professional judgement in determining risks.

Help and advice

- If you cannot complete a DASH risk assessment, for example you have not been trained to or your client is not willing to, seek advice from PIPPA.
- Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. It is good practice to review the checklist after a new incident, and at the beginning and end of a child or family intervention where DVA is a present factor.



How to make a referral

**Referral to
MASH for high
risk DVA and child
safeguarding
concerns**
(single referral)

High Risk DVA

Complete MASH high risk DVA referral form

Forms accessed by: LSCB (under MASH)

southamptonlscb.co.uk

PIPPA under 'Professionals' **pippasouthampton.org**

Telephone MASH: **023 8083 2300**

**Referral to
PIPPA
for DVA
concerns**

Below High Risk DVA

Call to make contact, provide consent and make a referral (by client in person) **023 8091 7917**

Or complete referral form. This is accessed on PIPPA under 'Professionals' **pippasouthampton.org**

**Referral to
MASH for child
safeguarding
concerns**

Concerns for a child

Call the professionals number **023 8083 2300**

Complete MASH referral form. This is accessed from LSCB (under MASH) **southamptonlscb.co.uk**

**Advice and
referral for adult
safeguarding
concerns**

Concerns for an adult

Call **023 8083 3003**

Fill in report abuse or concerns form. Accessed here **<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/contact-social-care/report-abuse-or-concerns-about-an-adult.aspx>**

If there is immediate danger or risk of serious harm call the Police 999



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