



**Diogelu Gwent
Gwent Safeguarding**

Multi-Agency Practice Guidance for
Dealing with Cases of Domestic Abuse
to Safeguard Adults with Care and
Support Needs



**Ratified by Board
September 2026**

**Protocols and Procedures
Group**

**Review Date:
September 2029**

Contents	PAGE
1 Introduction	3
2 Purpose	5
3 Objectives	5
4 Information Sharing	6
5 Effects of Domestic Abuse	7
6 Police Responsibilities	8
7 Local Authorities	10
8 Risk Assessment and Risk management	12
 Appendix 1:	
Definitions	15
 Appendix 2:	
General Data Protection Regulations/Information Sharing	17
 Appendix 3:	
Risk Assessment and Referral Routes	23

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides additional guidelines to assist Gwent Police, the Local Authorities and where appropriate Health services to work together to address the issues of Domestic Abuse where they affect adults with care and support needs. “Domestic abuse can occur between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected, including those in intimate partner relationships or familial relationships such as with children or grandchildren. It can be perpetrated by any individual, regardless of gender.” (As defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Part 1, Sections 1–2:legislation.gov.uk)

Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 safeguarding concerns should be referred to local authority’s social care departments as they have responsibility for agreeing that the Section 126 Duty to carry out enquiries are necessary. If Section 126 enquiries are required, the local authority can carry out the enquiries or require another more appropriate agency /service to carry out the enquiries on their behalf. e.g., if a crime has or appears to have been committed the Police will carry out a criminal investigation, other agencies/ services may contribute to the process to ensure that the Section 126 duties are met.

The principle of safe enquiry is core to working with those with needs for care and support who are victims of violence against women, domestic abuse sexual violence and coercive control. Local Authorities will need to consider the expressed views of the victim if it is qualified that they are making a capacitated decision and are not under duress. This may result in consent to share information with other agencies being withheld; in these circumstances there should be a consultation regarding the scenario only with the Police to inform the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) risk assessment if it is believed a crime has been committed at the point the concern is reported.

The Adult at risk: Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who: has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

[Working together to Safeguard People Guidance issued under the Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#):

Who may be considered for statutory and non-statutory enquiries?

This may include people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, older people, and people with a physical disability or impairment. It may also include adult victims of abusive care practices, (which may include care delivered by partners, family members, professionals, or others); neglect and self-neglect; domestic abuse; sexual violence; hate crime; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; modern slavery; trafficking and anti-social abuse behaviour. It may also include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer to the adult at risk in relation to any of the above.

An adult's need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness and it is important to note that vulnerability can fluctuate.

Legislation

This guidance should be read on conjunction with relevant legislation, including the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) and the [Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

Domestic abuse, as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, refers to behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") that is abusive, where both individuals are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other. Behaviour is considered abusive if it includes any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse (i.e., behaviour that substantially affects B's ability to acquire, use or maintain money, property, goods or services)
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

It is immaterial whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a pattern of conduct. The Act also recognises abuse directed at another person (e.g., a child) as abusive towards B. Additionally, post-separation abuse is recognised, and it is not necessary for the individuals to still be in a relationship or living together.

Please see Appendix One for a glossary of key terms and definitions, such as – 'coercive behaviour,' 'personally connected,' etc.

Stalking or harassment in domestic abuse incidents

Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviour that causes victims to feel distressed or scared. It can be perpetrated by men or women. It is a recurring theme in many domestic homicides, and it is a high risk of harm and homicide indicator.

Stalking often has a huge emotional impact on those it affects. It can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety and even post-traumatic stress disorder. It is a psychological as well as physical crime.

Stalking can be direct; by confrontation or by following the victim. It can also be conducted via phone, mail or on-line. It may be indirect; facilitated via third parties including family, associates and work contacts.

Domestic abuse investigations may include harassment-type offences and vice versa. Harassment can be a direct part of the domestic abuse or can occur due to the actions of people associated with the abuser.

Where stalking is apparent, it is vital that this is identified and appropriately dealt with. An enhanced safeguarding response allied to a prompt, robust and effective intervention with the perpetrator must take place.

In all cases of stalking, the OIC should consider a Stalking Protection order and oversight will be provided by the Civil Orders Officer. Consideration can be given as to whether a Stalking Protection Order is required, and Police may consider imposing stringent bail conditions, where bail is granted. If there is a query, advice can be sought through the Gwent Police Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Team. Police Investigators should ensure that the granting of a restraining order following conviction or acquittal at court is pursued by CPS prosecutors.

When victims of stalking or harassment in a domestic incident have been identified, appropriate risk assessment tools will be utilised (for example DASH, DARA). This is to support a fuller understanding of the victim's circumstances in order to safeguard and intervene appropriately. To ensure competence and consistency, practitioners completing such risk assessment tools should receive comprehensive training.

Advice and support for those who have been a victim of stalking or harassment, or engaged in such behaviours, can be found in the resources section.

2. PURPOSE

This practice guide aims to identify effective joint working practices for all agencies when violence against women, domestic abuse, sexual violence and coercive control affects an adult at risk.

The purpose of this practice guide is to set out a minimum standard of service when an adult at risk requires some support to protect them from violence against women, domestic abuse, sexual violence and coercive control and to identify appropriate support networks.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this practice guide are:

- a) To provide guidance to all agencies to increase awareness and understanding of how to respond to violence against women, domestic abuse, sexual violence and coercive control.
- b) To provide guidance that enables agencies to apply a consistent approach and response to these cases, which includes the sharing of information, ensuring cases of concern are referred to the appropriate service, and the consideration

of ongoing safeguards.

- c) To include the principles of Wellbeing as described in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, and to be consistent with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (see here [Safeguarding Wales](#))

4. INFORMATION SHARING

This practice guide should be read in conjunction with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). Please see here for further information [Data protection: The UK's data protection legislation - GOV.UK](#). Appendix 2 contains further information regarding these provisions.

It is consistently evidenced that information sharing is a vital element of successful partnership working and safeguarding. When working with adults with care and support needs, consent should be sought from the adult themselves prior to the sharing of information, providing they are deemed competent.

It is important that practitioners are as transparent as possible with individuals about what information will be shared, why and with whom. This has been proven to improve engagement with the safeguarding process and promote positive working relationships. Practitioners should seek consent to information sharing, unless it is considered unsafe to do so.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, consent is **not** necessary in order for information to be shared. A lack of consent should not be seen as a barrier to making a referral and the interests of individual must be the overriding consideration. If consent is not provided but the individual is deemed to be suffering or at risk of significant harm, information can be shared across agencies, but the individual should be informed that this will happen, unless doing so will increase the risk of harm. Consent does not need to be sought if seeking consent would:

- Increase the risk of putting the adult, or anybody else, at risk of harm,
- Compromise a criminal investigation, or
- Cause undue delay in taking action to protect the adult or any other individuals e.g. children/family members.

In addition, there have been recent reviews which place an emphasis on mental capacity and the use of it to sometimes justify inaction in certain situation. The current 'message' is very much that practitioners must consider the potential risks of not sharing information and ensure they record their rationale for not sharing; both strategically and at the front-line there is still much caution attached to doing so. It is vital that practitioners understand that the principles in Adult and Child Protection override the confidentiality. Further information regarding capacity is included in Appendix Two.

If information is shared, the necessity, relevance, accuracy, timeliness and security of the shared information will be recorded. If consent is not obtained, practitioners will record why the safety of the individual was deemed to be at risk or why it was inappropriate to seek consent.

For more detailed information on information sharing, please see Appendix Two.

5. EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS

It is important to recognise that adults with care and support needs may be the victims of domestic abuse, including sexual violence and coercive control, themselves or be affected by it occurring within their household. This is likely to have a serious effect on their physical and mental well-being.

Research [Spotlight #2: Disabled people and domestic abuse | Safelives](#) has mainly been carried out with women, and findings include that being disabled strongly affects the nature, extent and impact of abuse. That it is especially acute where the abusive partner is also the carer, the carer has considerable power and control, and the victim relies on them. Although it is recognised that carers are sometimes under pressure this should not be used as mitigation for violence or abuse where there is power, and control identified over the adult. More recent research and statistics that support this are also available here: [Disabled people nearly three times as likely to experience domestic abuse as non-disabled, study finds - Community Care](#)

Like younger adults, older people may be subjected to domestic abuse that is physical, sexual, emotional or economic. Perpetrators will use a range of behaviours to exert power and control and instil fear in victims. It is also important to note that there are some distinct age-related differences that specifically affect victim-survivors as they age. For example, older people are just as likely to experience abuse from an adult child and/or grandchild as they are a spouse or partner. This also means that men become at increased risk of being subjected to domestic abuse as they age. Many older people subjected to abuse may also have a health condition or disability, which may mean they are more vulnerable as they rely on their abuser for care and support.

Where adults at risk are victims of domestic abuse, including sexual violence as well as stalking and/or coercive controlling behaviour ; they may need extra support around safety planning and to plan their future. The abuse or threat of abuse may continue after a victim has separated from the abuser (which may include family members as well as intimate partners). It is important to ensure that all adults at risk in this situation have appropriate support to enable them to maintain their personal safety.

Where domestic abuse is identified consideration should also be given to whether the perpetrator has any needs for care and support, disability or capacity issue which may be contributing to the domestic violence or abuse episodes. This should assist practitioners to address the needs of the adult at risk within a domestic abuse or

violence situation.

Consultation and advice can be sought from safeguarding hubs and from the specialist sector. Please see resources section below.

6. POLICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Gwent Police will work with multi-agency partners to ensure the overriding priorities in dealing with all incidents of domestic abuse are:

- a) To protect the lives of adults and children who are at risk of domestic abuse.
- b) To ensure safeguarding and signposting to national and local support resources for victims of domestic abuse.
- c) To record all incidents of domestic abuse.
- d) To facilitate effective action against offenders so they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system.
- e) Domestic abuse is not a specific criminal offence. The term is used to describe a range of incidents occurring in particular circumstances where the victims can be of any gender and from any ethnic group as can the perpetrator. Gwent Police will respond to all victims of domestic abuse so they can receive the appropriate quality of service according to their individual needs. All allegations will be properly investigated, and the perpetrators held accountable through the criminal justice system.
- f) Consideration for a domestic violence protection notice/order if the criteria is met.

Following a report of a domestic abuse incident, it is the responsibility of Gwent Police to share their concerns with partner agencies. Where the victim is identified as having care and support needs, those adults deemed at risk will be immediately referred via the safeguarding hub.

A report (PPN) will be made to the Local Authorities (See 1.2) in all cases where:

- It is believed that an adult at risk and/or associated children are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm
- It is believed that an adult at risk and/or children are in need of more support services

If there is any uncertainty regarding the need for a report, a consultation can be sought through the relevant Local Authority Social Services

If consent is given, the PPN, including the DASH/DARA can also be shared with the specialist sector, and if identified as high risk, should be shared with the IDVA Service.

In cases where the individual is pregnant, the PPN should also be shared with the midwife involved, and if there is a child under the age of 5 linked to the individual, the PPN should be shared with health.

Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders (DVPN) (DVPO)

Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) are designed to provide short-term safety and breathing space for victims following a domestic incident involving violence or threats of violence. They can prevent a perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or contacting them for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to seek support, consider long-term options, and engage with agencies. This period is critical, as victims are often at the highest risk when they attempt to leave or seek help.

Preferred Approach in Gwent

The preferred option is to arrest the perpetrator and investigate any criminal allegations. However, where there is insufficient evidence to charge, a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) can be issued to impose immediate protective measures. This ensures victim safety through restrictions similar to bail conditions. The DVPN process can be pursued without the victim's active support, or even against their wishes, if this is considered necessary to protect them from violence or threat of violence. The victim also does not have to attend court. This can help by removing responsibility from the victim for taking action against their abuser.

Initially Police may serve a DVPN then an application to court for a DVPO must be made within 48 hours. If the court issues a DVPO it may be in force between a minimum of 14 days to a maximum of 28 days, beginning on the date that it is made by the magistrates' court.

Breaches of a DVPN should be reported to Police. Police officers may arrest a person who has been issued a DVPN without warrant if there are reasonable grounds for believing that the perpetrator is in breach of the DVPN. Consideration will be given to the commission of further offences which may result in the suspect being arrested and investigated for these further offences as well.

Breaches of a DVPO have a power of arrest attached. Therefore, any breaches should be reported to police who have the power to arrest and place the suspect before a magistrate's court. A breach of a DVPO is a civil breach of a court order. The penalty for a breach of a civil order is £50 for every day that the person is in default of the order, up to a maximum of £5000 or 2 months' imprisonment. Consideration will be given to the commission of further offences which may result in the suspect being arrested and investigated for these further offences as well.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) (Clare's Law).

The aim of this scheme is to give members of the public a formal mechanism to make

enquires about an individual who they are in a relationship with, or who is in a relationship with someone they know, and there is a concern that the individual may have a record of abuse.

All practitioners should be aware of the purpose of the DVDS (Clare's Law) and support individuals to make an application to the Police for disclosure, where appropriate.

If Police checks show that the individual has a record of abusive offending, or there is other information to indicate the person you know is at risk, the Police will consider sharing this information with the person(s) best placed to protect the potential victim. Any concerned third party, such as a parent, neighbour, friend or professional can make an application, not just the potential victim.

A third party making an application would not necessarily receive the information about the individual concerned. It may be more appropriate for someone else to receive the information such as the potential victim or another person who is best placed to protect the potential victim, if they are deemed to be an adult at risk. If an adult at risk is open to Social Services, then the normal Police checks process should be used.

Practitioners must note that the scheme is voluntary and therefore they should not advise individuals that they must seek a Clare's Law disclosure as part of other proceedings (for example, involvement with the Child Protection process). If information is required within this context, the practitioner themselves should make lateral checks with the Police. This information can then be shared with the individual by the practitioner if required for purposes of safeguarding.

7. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In all situations of Domestic Abuse, local authorities must work to support and assist adults at risk and consider sharing information with other agencies or services to support and protect adults at risk. The Local Authority must consider proportionate action to safeguard adults at risk to protect them from domestic abuse, especially where this may result in significant harm to themselves or other adults with care and support needs and children.

In accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, it is a responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) in the local authorities to make a decision about what course of action will be taken. This would be in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures following risk assessment of the seriousness of the abuse.

There are three outcomes to [enquiries](#). These are referred to in *Handling Individual Cases* as 'Determinations'. They are:

1. **Determination 1: Immediate Protection.** This occurs in circumstances when social services, the police, health or emergency services must act quickly to secure the [adult at risk](#) or other adults/children at risk immediate safety.
2. **Determination 2: The adult is not at risk but may have care and support**

needs. The individual should be advised as they would for any other [referral](#) recognising the person may be signposted to other agencies or services if appropriate or may require an assessment.

3. **Determination 3: Adult at risk and action to protect needed** (see relevant section).

At this stage a decision may also be taken that no further action is required: the adult is not at risk and no unmet care and support needs have been identified.

Further information can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures here:

[Safeguarding Wales](#)

<https://safeguarding.wales/en/adu-i/adu-i-a3pt1/a3pt1-p13/>

Determining whether an adult at risk has been abused and/or neglected is not straightforward. A judgement may be required as to whether an act of omission or commission has resulted in abuse or neglect. In some cases, it is the repetition of minor actions or omissions that collectively will amount to abuse or neglect. The Gwent Safeguarding Board have developed regional threshold guidance which can be used to support practitioners in using their professional judgement regarding the safeguarding needs of adults. This guidance can be found here [To report or not to report - Adult safeguarding guidance](#)

The social services agency must make or have cause to undertake whatever enquiries necessary to decide what needs to happen and by whom. This constitutes a formal Section 126 Enquiry, to assist in reaching this decision. It is crucial that such enquiries are made when the person is safe to disclose and in a situation which will not increase risk to them. This will need to be assessed by the lead practitioner.

The following enquiries will be undertaken: -

- a) The views, wishes, consent and capacity (where applicable), of the adult at risk once safe contact and enquiry has been made.
- b) Explain the limits of your confidentiality (as above).
- c) Consideration of an appropriate independent advocate such as an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate, Independent Mental Capacity Advocate, Age Cymru, if they have difficulty in understanding the process or are victims of domestic abuse.
- d) Information gathering from other organisations. *If the adult at risk does not want other agencies involved but there has been disclosure of a crime there should be consultation with the Police to discuss and consider how to ensure that the adult at risk is and remains protected from abuse or neglect.
- e) Consider any records of previous or current involvement with the adult at risk and any other family members by statutory agencies, which is proportionate to the enquiry or assessment.

- f) Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist should be completed by a trained member of staff or with consent, the support of local specialist agencies with the adult at risk unless it is not possible to do so. However, professional judgement must be applied, and report can be sent without consent.
- g) [Referral to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference \(MARAC\)](#) indicated by DASH/DARA or referral to other specialist services. Please see Appendix Three for details of risk assessments and referral routes.
- h) Planning discussions by telephone or meetings involving the adult at risk and/or report maker where applicable.
- i) All planning discussions and decisions must be appropriately documented.
- j) Targeted enquiry with the victim (i.e., Ask & Act).

Under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act, 2015, all local authorities and the health board have a statutory duty to provide training for their workforce in line with the VAWDASV National Training Framework (NTF). There are six groups listed within the NTF and the level of training required depends on the nature and frequency of an employee's role and interaction with the public. The NTF equips professionals to recognise, respond to and refer victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence and harmful practices, as well as support the identification and safeguarding of individuals who may be considered adults at risk under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, 2014. All local authority and health employees should undertake Group 1 training (e-learning) as part of their induction and then 3 yearly thereafter. All frontline social care and health staff should also be trained in Group 2. This should be completed after Group 1 with a refresher attended every 2 years. Staff equivalent to senior practitioners, team leaders or managers in social care and health (i.e., those with complex cases, supervisory or management responsibilities) should also complete Group 3 training, with this training refreshed every 2 years.

Further guidance regarding enquiries is available within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

Should there be any disagreement between professionals regarding the decision, or the progress of a case, the matter should be referred to the [Gwent Resolving Professional Differences Practice Guide](#)

8. RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Indicator

All practitioners having direct contact with adults at risk should be trained to complete

the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Indicator checklist where it is identified that an adult at risk is in a domestic abuse situation. The DASH tool is for all agencies working with victims of domestic abuse, stalking, and harassment and honour-based abuse and can be found in [Safe Lives/DASH Risk Assessment Checklist](#).

Practitioners should seek guidance from management, safeguarding hub or the regional VAWDASV team if they are unfamiliar with the process.

Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA)

Gwent Police will use the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) as their standard risk assessment tool. More information can be found here: [Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment \(DARA\): Rationale for development, structure and content](#)

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

All high-risk victims should be referred to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Risk in domestic abuse is dynamic and can change rapidly and as such, should be monitored frequently.

The role of MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effectively information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety.

Practitioners across all agencies, should have training to a level depending on their role and responsibilities, in completing the DASH/DARA risk assessment tools and to understand the criteria for a report to MARAC. Practitioners should make appropriate referrals based on the identification of risk supported by professional judgement and the completion of DASH/DARA. Guidance on MARAC and the completion of referrals can be found here:

Adult social services in each Local Authority must nominate a single point of contact to represent the MARAC process. All staff in their agency should know who the MARAC representatives are.

For further information including making a referral to MARAC is available below:

- [Gwent MARAC Protocol](#)
- [Gwent MARAC Referral Form](#)
- [Information sharing without consent form](#)
- [Gwent MARAC guidance and completion](#)

Independent Domestic Abuse Adviser (IDVA)

IDVA's work with victims at high risk of harm from a partner, ex-partner or family member/s. In Gwent there is a regional IDVA service which forms part of a multi - agency framework linked that is part of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process.

IDVA's act as the primary point of contact for the victim, usually working with them from the point of crisis, helping implement actions from MARAC, provide support for a range of issues, including accompanying clients to court.

Safety Planning

Specialist domestic abuse workers will support people to develop an individual safety plan. They assist victims to consider how they may take action in a safe way, looking at how vulnerable they may be and how they can increase their safety (and their children's).

Safety plans are tailored to a person's circumstances; they look more widely than just physical safety, and consider both short and long term safety.

- [Gwent MARAC Protocol](#)
- For information on DASH, MARAC and other training offered by the VAWDASV Regional Team in Gwent, please see here [Buy tickets – Gwent VAWDASV](#)
- For additional information on risk assessment, DASH, IDVA: www.safelives.org.uk

Appendix One: Definitions

Definitions below are in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a **pattern of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent** by:

- **Isolating** them from sources of support (e.g., family, friends, services).
- **Exploiting** their resources and capacities for personal gain.
- **Depriving** them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape.
- **Regulating** their everyday behaviour (e.g., monitoring movements, dictating daily activities).

This behaviour is recognised under the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** and is a criminal offence when committed in an intimate or family relationship. It often forms part of a wider pattern of abuse, including coercive behaviour, and can involve threats, humiliation, intimidation, and other abuse intended to harm or frighten the victim.

Coercive behaviour

Coercive behaviour is a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation, or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a victim. It is intended to exert power and control over another person within an intimate or family relationship.

Key points under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Serious Crime Act 2015:

- It is recognised as a form of domestic abuse and a criminal offence.
- The behaviour must be repeated or continuous, not a single isolated incident.
- It often includes tactics such as:
 - Threatening harm or violence.
 - Humiliating or degrading the victim.
 - Intimidating or frightening them into compliance.
- The perpetrator knows or ought to know that their behaviour will have a serious effect on the victim (e.g., causing fear of violence or substantially impacting day-to-day activities).
- Since April 2023, the offence applies even if the victim and perpetrator do not live together.

It is also important to remember that most research also suggests that domestic abuse occurs in all sections of society irrespective of race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, class or educational level.

The definition includes incidents where extended family members may condone or share in the pattern of abuse e.g., forced marriage, female genital mutilation and crimes rationalized as punishing women for bringing 'dishonour' to the family.

Personally Connected

Two individuals aged 16 or over are considered personally connected if any of the following applies:

- They are, or have been, married to each other.
- They are, or have been, civil partners of each other.
- They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).
- They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).
- They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.
- They each have, or have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child.
- They are relatives (as defined in the Act).

Economic Abuse

Economic abuse is defined as any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on another person's ability to:

- Acquire, use or maintain money or other property (such as a mobile phone, car, or home), or
- Obtain goods or services (such as food, clothing, utilities like heating, or transport).

This form of abuse is now legally recognised as a type of domestic abuse in England and Wales. It often occurs alongside other forms of abuse, such as coercive control, and can include:

- Controlling access to income, bank accounts, or benefits.
- Restricting spending or forcing the victim to justify all expenses.
- Preventing access to essentials like food, clothing, or medication.
- Coercing someone into debt or building debt in their name without consent.

While economic abuse is not a standalone criminal offence, it is considered under the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour and should be addressed in safeguarding and criminal justice responses.

Appendix Two: GDPR/Information Sharing/Mental Capacity

CONSENT AND DATA PROTECTION

[The General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) and Data Protection Act 2018](#) protects personal privacy and upholds individual's rights.

GDPR includes six lawful bases for information sharing. The lawful bases for processing are set out in Article 6 of the GDPR. Those relevant to this policy are:

- a) Consent: the individual has given clear consent for you to process their personal data for a specific purpose.
- b) Legal obligation: the processing is necessary for you to comply with the law.
- c) Vital interests: the processing is necessary to protect someone's life.
- d) Public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.

Consent should be sought in all cases where it is safe to do so. Where consent cannot be obtained sharing of information can take place without consent, under DPA 2018, where the individual is a child or an adult at risk; if the circumstances justify it, where it is in the substantial public interest, and sharing is necessary for the purpose of:

- i. protecting an individual from neglect or physical, mental or emotional harm; or
- ii. protecting the physical, mental or emotional well-being of an individual

Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, and that there shall be no interference by a Public Authority with this right except as in accordance with the law: -

- a) In the interests of national security

- b) Public safety
- c) Economic wellbeing of the country
- d) The prevention of disorder or crime
- e) The protection of health or morals
- f) The protection of the rights or freedoms of others.

Frontline workers and volunteers should always share safeguarding concerns in line with their organisation's policy, usually with their line manager or safeguarding lead in the first instance, except in emergency situations. As long as it does not increase the risk to the individual, the member of staff should explain their responsibility to share the concern with their manager.

Managers will need to make decisions about sharing information with external agencies, including the police and local authority. Individuals may not give their consent to the sharing of safeguarding information for a number of reasons. For example, they may be frightened of reprisals, they may fear losing control, they may not trust social services or other partners, or they may fear that their relationship with the abuser will be damaged. Reassurance and appropriate support along with gentle persuasion may help to change their view on whether it is best to share information.

If a person refuses intervention to support them with a safeguarding concern, or requests that information about them is not shared with other safeguarding partners, their wishes should be respected. However, there are a number of circumstances where the practitioner can reasonably override such a decision, including:

- the person lacks the mental capacity to make that decision – this must be properly explored and recorded in line with the Mental Capacity Act
- other people are, or may be, at risk, including children
- sharing the information could prevent a crime
- the alleged abuser has care and support needs and may also be at risk
- a serious crime has been committed
- staff are implicated
- the person has the mental capacity to make that decision, but they may be under duress or being coerced
- the risk is unreasonably high and meets the criteria for a multi-agency risk assessment conference referral, as determined by somebody trained in the DASH/DARA or based on professional judgement.,
- a court order or other legal authority has requested the information.

However, consent should not be sought where:

- a) It would hinder the prevention or detection of a crime or the apprehension of an offender.
- b) It would place the subject of the report or other adults at risk of harm.
- c) An urgent report is necessary, and it is not possible or appropriate to seek consent, i.e., cases where the alleged abusers are the only persons able to give consent.

Lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews reveal that failing to share vital information is a contributory factor in many cases. Such failures can lead to serious abuse, harm and in some cases death. The rules around safeguarding information sharing are not about whether you can actually share data but rather thinking twice about how you share it.

In addition, there have been recent reviews which place an emphasis on mental capacity and the use of it to sometimes justify inaction in certain situation. The current 'message' is very much that practitioners must consider the potential risks of not sharing information and ensure they record their rationale for not sharing; both strategically and at the front-line there is still much caution attached to doing so. It is vital that practitioners understand that the principles in Adult and Child Protection override the confidentiality

Statutory agencies have a responsibility to act to prevent a crime or abuse of children and adults at risk.

If a practitioner has concerns about the adult's welfare and believes they are suffering or likely to suffer abuse or neglect, then they must share the information with the Local Authority and, or the Police if they believe or suspect that a crime has been committed.

If the adult at risk withholds his/her agreement to a referral being made, and they have capacity (as per the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005) to understand the risk, following completion of a risk assessment during safe enquiry where you are satisfied they are not being intimidated or under duress, then wishes should be respected and decision recorded. If, however, there are other adults with care and support needs or children at risk, then a report to social services should be made in respect of those.

As set out within the [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#), it is the responsibility of the decision maker(s) that all principles under the act are adhered to. When considering applying MCA 2005, due regard should be given to the [Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice](#)

1. A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity.
2. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him do so have been taken without success.
3. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision.
4. An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in his or her best interest.

5. Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

Nevertheless, due care and diligence is required even where the person is deemed a capacitated person on such matters and safeguarding risks identified. Consideration is to be given as to whether the Court of Protection (CoP) within its responsibility of inherent jurisdiction should be called upon as the final arbiter in regard to complex cases involving domestic abuse.

Appendix Three: Contact Details

If police attention/presence or medical attention is required urgently, please call: 999

Police enquiries call: 101

To report Adult at Risk concerns to Social Services ([Duty to Report form](#)), please contact the relevant local authority:

Blaenau Gwent
Tel: 01495 315700
Email: DutyTeamAdults@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Caerphilly
Tel: 0808 100 2500
Email: IAAAdults@caerphilly.gov.uk

Torfaen
Tel: 01495 762200
Email: socialcarecalltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

Newport
Tel: 01633 656656
Email: firstcontact.adults@newport.gov.uk or pova.team@newport.gov.uk

Monmouthshire
Tel: 01873 735492
Email: MCCadultsafeguarding@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Gwent Specialist Services Contact Details

Live Fear Free Helpline – for victims and professionals 24/7, 365
Call: 0808 80 10 800
Text: 07860077333
Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales
[Contact Live Fear Free | GOV.WALES](#)

Find your local VAWDASV specialist service – [Welsh Women's Aid](#)

BAWSO 01633 213213
www.bawso.org.uk

Cyfannol Women's Aid 03300 564456
www.cyfannol.org.uk
info@cyfannol.org.uk

Gwent Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA)
gwentidavaservice@newport.gov.uk

Horizon Sexual Violence Support Services 03300 564456
www.horizonsvs.org.uk
horizon@cyfannol.org.uk

Hourglass 0808 808 8141

www.wearehourglass.org/

Llamau 02920 860255

www.llamau.org.uk

safercaerphilly@llamau.org.uk

Mankind 0808 800 1170

www.mankind.org.uk/

Melo Cymru

[Mhttps://www.melo.cymru/helplines-and-support/](https://www.melo.cymru/helplines-and-support/)

Men's Advice Line 0808 8010327

[Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK](#)

National Stalking Helpline 0808 802 0300

www.suzylamplugh.org/pages/category/national-stalking-helpline

New Pathways 01633 250205

www.newpathways.org.uk

Phoenix Domestic Abuse Service 01495 291202

www.phoenixdas.co.uk

Respect 0808 801 0327

www.mensadviceline.org.uk/

Stori Cymru 01276 225555

www.storicymru.org.uk

Victim Support 0300 303 5638

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Appendix 3 – Risk Assessment and Referral Routes

The recognised risk categories that are utilised by Gwent Police are standard, medium and high:

Standard	Current evidence and risk indicators do not indicate the likelihood of causing serious harm i.e., there is no escalation in seriousness or frequency.
Medium	There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, for example failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown and drug or alcohol misuse.
High	There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time, and the impact would be serious. Risk of serious harm is a risk that is life threatening and/or traumatic and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible. In addition, a significant escalation in severity or frequency of incidents should be considered as high risk. The professional judgement of the reviewing Police officer may also identify high risk cases.

All victims whether assessed as High, Medium or Standard must receive safety planning advice and safeguarding. This should be tailored to be bespoke to the individual needs of the victim and should include referral to local specialist VAWDASV services

The DARA risk ratings are as follows:

Standard	There appears to be no pattern of abusive behaviour, or control of one person by another. Current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm.
Medium	There appears to be a pattern of abuse/control of one person

	by another and/or frequent physical violence. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, such as the victim attempting to leave.
High	There is an extreme level of control of one person by another and/or very frequent and severe physical violence. There is a serious threat of harm posed to the victim by the perpetrator. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious.