

Learning from Multi-Agency Audits: Domestic Abuse



Background: The audit looked at the multi-agency response to 7 children for whom there were concerns about domestic abuse. This included 2 children who were in receipt of early help, 2 children who had Child in Need Plans and 3 children who had Child Protection Plans.

What did the audit find?

- A disconnect between the MARAC process and the child protection response
- Specialist assessments to screen for domestic abuse are not routinely being shared when referrals are made
- Limited evidence of attention to coercion and control on the family dynamics or on the behaviours of the perpetrator
- Variable practice in understanding the lived experience of children at risk of domestic abuse and seeing them as victims of domestic abuse in their own right
- The focus of interventions tends to be on the non-abusing parent which can lead to them feeling they are being held responsible for the abusers' behaviours
- The impact of other factors, such as mental health and substance misuse, are not always being considered in terms of cumulative risk and the likelihood of domestic abuse

What do we need to do to improve?

- Check whether the family is known to MARAC and the outcome of discussions
- Remember that children living with domestic abuse are victims in their own right
- Share specialist risk assessments when making a referral to MASH
- Remember that trauma will impact on the way family members respond
- Consider the extent to which controlling and coercive behaviours are impacting on the family dynamics
- Consider cumulative risks, e.g., substance misuse or mental health, which may increase the risk of DA
- Focus on the source of the harm and do not hold the non-abusing parent responsible for managing the behaviours of the abuser
- Think about the 4 practice principles: DA-informed, Trauma-informed, Intersectional and Whole Family

Resources:

[Joint Learning Resource Coercive Control](#)
[Solihull SCP - Domestic Abuse webpage](#)
[DVPN/DVPO Webinar](#)
[Solihull Domestic Homicide Review Learning](#)
[Reflective Supervision Guidance](#)
[SMARTER Planning Guidance](#)

[Trauma Informed Practice Training](#)
[NSPCC Intersectionality Learning Podcast](#)
[National Panel - Domestic Abuse Briefing Paper](#)
[Step-Up, Step-Down Guidance](#)
[Risk Assessments Learning Resource](#)



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