

Key Messages

Children and young people experiencing domestic abuse are at increased levels of risk as a result of lockdown measures. They are recognised in [Scottish Government guidance](#) as a vulnerable group who may need to attend school in person during lockdown.

At least one child in every class will have experience of domestic abuse.

One in 5 children in the UK will have experienced domestic abuse by the time they reach 18.

Definition

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour that instils fear and is used by abusers to maintain control. It includes any pattern of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour towards a partner or ex-partner.

It is disproportionately perpetrated by men and experienced by women. It is a form of gender-based violence which has its roots in the systemic gender inequality in society.

It can be present in LGBTIQ relationships.

Children and young people can experience domestic abuse directly from the abuser, indirectly via the abuse of their non-abusing parent, or in their own intimate relationships.

It can take place anywhere, including online.

Separation from abusers does not deliver safety; harm can continue and intensify through post-separation surveillance and manipulation of child contact orders.

Child Impact

Domestic abuse is one of the most common reasons for children being placed on the child protection register. There is an overlap with child physical and sexual abuse.

Abuse does not have to be, and often is not, physically violent: abusers commonly use isolation, emotional and psychological abuse, financial abuse, intimidation and the threat of physical violence to control children.

Domestic abuse violates children's rights.

It can negatively impact the development of emotional regulation and can lead to impaired social relationships.

It is linked to increased risk of internalising and externalising problems and post traumatic stress.

Key supportive adults, safe spaces and community support all play a significant role in reducing these risks.

Role of the adults in schools, early learning and childcare, and community learning and development settings

- Education settings are often the only place children and young people experiencing domestic abuse can feel safe.
- A listening, trusted adult can make it easier for a child to disclose abuse.
- Education practitioners can challenge gender-based violence by promoting an ethos and culture of equality throughout the curriculum and the whole school experience.
- Harmful norms and stereotypes need to be challenged and healthy, positive and supportive relationships need to be promoted.
- Awareness raising of domestic abuse with staff, families and learners is important.
- Everyone in the education setting needs to be able to identify gender-based violence when it happens and support those involved in collaboration with partners.

Resources are available [here](#).

Scotland's Domestic abuse and Forced Marriage 24 hour helpline 0800 027 1234