



Isle of Wight
**Safeguarding
Children
Partnership**

Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse – National child safeguarding practice review panel

September 2022

Background

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) reviews cases where children have died or been seriously harmed, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. In 2020, domestic abuse was a factor in over 40% of cases notified to the Panel, and its annual report highlighted this as a key area of work.

Subsequently, the Panel's national review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson demonstrated the prominence of domestic abuse as a factor in child harm. Learning from the analysis was integrated into that national review.

The Panel's aims and objectives for the commissioned analysis were to:

- understand the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in safeguarding children where domestic abuse has contributed to the serious incidents notified to the Panel.
- understand, from recent research and evidence, what works in response to protecting children from domestic abuse.
- understand how services and practice might be improved to support children as victims of domestic abuse.

Key findings - Multi-agency join-up in safeguarding children when there is domestic abuse



In this case sample of reviews received by the Panel, there was no evidence of a coordinated multi-agency response to domestic abuse.

Notably, very few specialist domestic abuse services, for adults or children, were referenced in the reviews, and none appeared as members of review panels. This makes it difficult to determine if they had been involved in the case.

Key features include;

- Lack of understanding of domestic abuse
- No 'whole system' response
- Distinguishing domestic abuse from 'parental conflict'

Key findings- Children as victims of domestic abuse



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out that children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right, when it is perpetrated against their parent or carer. The Panel sought to understand the implications of this for safeguarding practice.

The review analysis found that concerns for children were often categorised as ‘emotional harm’ or ‘neglect’ rather than direct abuse. Actions focused on the mother changing her parenting or protecting the children from the behaviour of the perpetrator, rather than identifying that the children were being directly harmed by the abuser and targeting attention on these concerns as a result.

Key features include;

- Impact of abusers’ behaviours on children and young people
- Children’s voices and their experiences of services
- The impact of COVID-19 lockdowns

Key findings - The needs of children, young people and families from diverse backgrounds



There was a significant lack of recording and therefore meaningful analysis of, demographic information about children, siblings, parents and carers in both the rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews analysed.

Some characteristics, such as religion, gender identity and sexual orientation, were missing completely. Others, such as ethnicity, physical or learning disabilities, were sparse and under-recorded.

Consider;

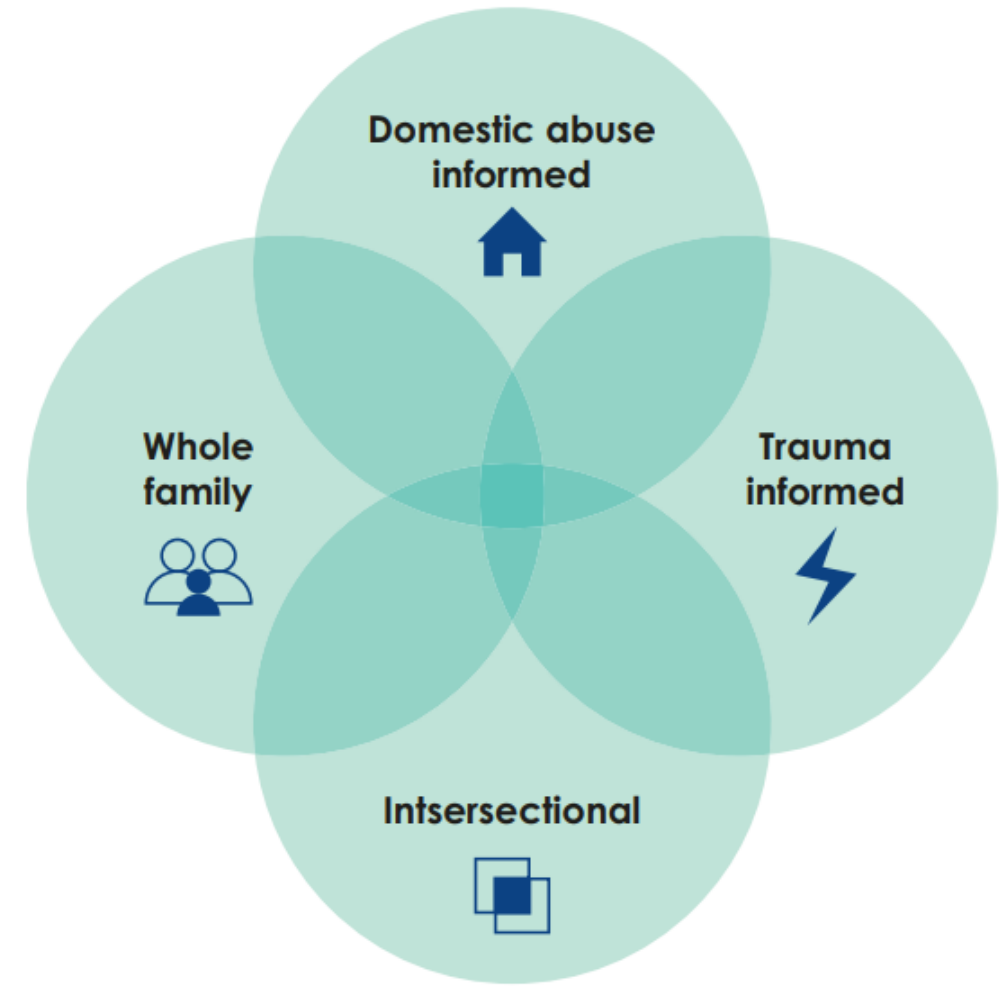
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Disability
- Immigration status

Four core practice principles

The analysis identified four core practice principles that should underpin practice approaches when working with children and young people, their parents, wider families and networks in relation to domestic abuse.

These principles are not prescriptive about how services or practitioners work but aim, instead, to provide a common approach.

They are not to be seen as separate, but interlinked and interdependent.



Full report

[Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse Full Report](#)