

Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

Domestic Abuse includes any incident or pattern of incidents in an intimate or family relationship which are violent, threatening, persistent, coercive or controlling causing a person to live in fear.

Such behaviours may include:

- emotional or verbal psychological abuse
- economic abuse which will deny a person access to money
- harassment through social media and other forms of communication
- denial of connections with family, friends, faith or culture
- physical assault or abuse
- sexual assault or coercion
- female genital mutilation
- coercive and controlling behaviour within relationships

(Government's statutory guidance Serious Crime Act 2015 section 76)

Birmingham Salvation Army Child Contact Centre believes that everyone has the right to live safely and without the fear of violence and cruelty. We recognize that domestic abuse is unacceptable and that it occurs throughout society, irrespective of class, culture, gender, income, race, religion or sexuality.

The effects of Domestic Abuse are far-reaching and can impact on others, notably the children. We recognize that children have the right to grow and develop in an environment free from domestic abuse, whether directly as victims or witnesses of violence or abusive behaviour in their own home or community.

The Child Contact Centre accepts that some families using its Centre will have experienced varying levels of domestic abuse and we will ensure that they will receive sensitive and appropriate services. We also accept that the Centre needs to be organized and run in a way which allows these families, other Centre users and volunteers to be safe. In order to meet these requirements we will ensure that:

1. The Centre's referral form will ask questions about domestic abuse.
2. No family will be accepted until a referral form has been completed in full and received by the Coordinator.
3. Any information concerning domestic abuse or the misuse of drugs or alcohol will be treated seriously.
4. ~~Use of the Centre will be denied~~ to individuals or families where the Coordinator feels their presence is likely to present a threat to the well-being of other Centre users and volunteers
5. Once the parents have been interviewed separately and accepted, the Coordinator will consider their needs and follow these procedures:
 - Parents are given clear instructions about arrival and departure times.
 - Where appropriate resident parents being asked to explore the possibility of someone other than themselves bringing the children to the Centre.
 - Asking the visiting parent to wait at the end of contact until the other has left the Centre and the area immediately around it
 - Ensure sensitive information remains confidential e.g. parental address, mobile number
- 6 Any distress to children or adults brought about by bullying or pressure to disclose

information will be dealt with promptly and firmly.

- 7 If an individual or family's behaviour is threatening, causes distress or is disruptive they will be asked to leave.
- 8 If an individual or family refuses to leave the police will be called. (telephone numbers are on the Safeguarding poster in reception)

Essential requirements for volunteers There will be a minimum of four volunteers.

- Volunteers will be made aware of the particular needs and risk assessment of each family attending the Centre during the briefing.
- There will be a minimum of four volunteers at each session
- All volunteers will receive training in the areas of domestic violence, child protection and conflict management .
- Volunteers will have immediate access to a telephone when the Centre is open.
- The Centre will have an agreed procedure to follow in the event of an incident or emergency. All volunteers will be made aware of this.
- The Centre will have a recognized and easily accessible system for offering support to volunteers who have been involved in stressful or violent incidents.

Additional requirements

- Referrers and families using the Centre will be made aware of its policy in relation to domestic abuse.
- Any individual or agency wishing to challenge how the Centre is implementing its policy in relation to domestic abuse should be referred to the Centre's complaints procedure.
- The Centre's policy in relation to domestic abuse will be reviewed and updated regularly

Graham Andrews (Coordinator) 2018