

Domestic Abuse: Learning and Development Guide

Supporting Excellence in Domestic Abuse Practice Across Hampshire

1. Purpose of this Guide

This guide supports organisations within the **Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP)** to support high-quality, role-appropriate learning, training and professional development in relation to domestic abuse. It provides a shared framework to help agencies embed best practice, promote consistency, and strengthen multi-agency working.

This guide is designed to complement and sit alongside statutory learning and development frameworks, including:

- [The 4LSAB \(Four Local Safeguarding Adults Boards\) Learning and Development Guide](#)
- [HSCP \(Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership\) Learning and Development Policy](#)

Together, these resources support a whole-system approach to safeguarding and domestic abuse response across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton.

2. Core Principles

- **Shared Responsibility:** Each agency is responsible for ensuring its workforce is appropriately trained for their role and responsibilities.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** HDAP supports this by offering shared learning opportunities that promote consistency and partnership working.
- **Role-Relevant Learning:** Training should be proportionate to the level of contact staff have with those affected by domestic abuse, whilst recognising that anyone could be experiencing domestic abuse.
- **Continuous Development:** Learning should be ongoing, reflective, and responsive to emerging needs and evidence.
- **Trauma-Informed and Survivor-Centred:** All learning should promote safe, respectful, and empowering approaches to working with survivors.

3. Foundational Knowledge for All Professionals

All professionals—regardless of role—should have a **basic understanding of domestic abuse**, including:

- Definitions and types of abuse (physical, emotional, coercive control, economic, etc.)
- The dynamics and patterns of abuse
- The impact on victims/survivors, including children
- How to recognise signs and respond safely

- How to refer or signpost to appropriate support

This foundational knowledge enables safe and effective responses and provides a platform for further role-specific development.

Mandatory Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

To ensure that all staff members, including volunteers, are equipped to recognise and respond appropriately to domestic abuse, it is recommended that a basic level of domestic abuse awareness training be made mandatory for all employees. This foundational training should cover key indicators of abuse, available support pathways, and the importance of safeguarding practices. Making this training universal will help create a consistent understanding across the organisation and strengthen our collective ability to support those affected.

4. Role-Specific Training Expectations

Organisations should ensure that training is tailored to the level of engagement staff have with domestic abuse issues. The following tiers provide guidance:

Tier 1 – Universal Roles

Examples: Receptionists, administrative staff, volunteers, general public-facing roles

Training Focus:

- Basic awareness of domestic abuse
- Understanding signs and indicators
- Knowing how to respond appropriately and refer concerns
- Understanding confidentiality and safeguarding responsibilities

Tier 2 – Targeted Roles

Examples: Housing officers, social workers, police officers, health professionals, education staff

Training Focus:

- Risk identification and assessment
- Understanding coercive control and complex needs
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Referral pathways and multi-agency working
- Legal frameworks and safeguarding duties
- Routine enquiry and professional curiosity

Tier 3 – Specialist Roles

Examples: IDVAs, MARAC representatives, domestic abuse coordinators, safeguarding leads

Training Focus:

- Advanced risk assessment and safety planning
- Multi-agency coordination and case management
- Working with high-risk and high-harm cases
- Embedding survivor-led and culturally competent practice
- Contributing to strategic development and service improvement
- Leading reflective practice and supporting others' learning

4a. Manager Training and Workplace Policy

Managers play a critical role in supporting staff who may be affected by domestic abuse, whether as a victim or as someone using harmful behaviour. It is recommended that **all managers receive specific training to recognise signs of domestic abuse and respond appropriately**, including how to offer support and signpost to specialist services.

This training should be underpinned by a **clear workplace domestic abuse policy**, outlining procedures for confidentiality, risk management, and available support options. A robust policy ensures consistency and provides managers with the confidence and framework to act effectively.

5. Embedding Professional Curiosity, Routine Enquiry & Trauma-Informed Practice

These three elements are essential to effective domestic abuse practice and should be embedded in all training and professional development:

- **Professional Curiosity:** Encouraging staff to look beyond the surface, ask questions sensitively, and explore inconsistencies or concerns. This is especially important when working with families, children, or individuals who may be reluctant or unable to disclose abuse.
- **Routine Enquiry:** In appropriate settings (e.g. health, social care, housing), staff should be trained to ask about domestic abuse as part of standard practice. Importantly, routine enquiry is not just about asking the question—it is about how well that question is asked, ensuring it is done in a safe, empathetic, and trauma-informed way that encourages disclosure and trust.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice:** All professionals should understand how trauma affects behaviour, communication, and engagement. Training should promote empathy, safety, choice, and empowerment in all interactions with survivors.

All of the above should be considered alongside the **Hampshire Domestic Abuse Trauma-Informed Language Guide**, which provides practical guidance on using respectful, non-judgemental, and empowering language when working with those affected by domestic abuse.

6. The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP) Multi-Agency Learning Offer

Working in Partnership with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and the Hampshire Adult Safeguarding Board (HSAB), HDAP supports partner organisations by providing:

- [Multi-Agency Training Calendar](#): Regular sessions open to all partners, covering core and specialist topics.
- **Thematic Learning Events**: Deep dives into specific issues such as coercive control, child-to-parent abuse, learning from reviews (e.g. Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews – DARDRs), or working with marginalised communities.
- **HDAP Delivery Groups, Practitioner Network & Scrutiny Group**: Groups for reflective practice, peer learning, development of practice based on learning and case discussion.
- [Resource Hub on HDAP website](#): Access to news, toolkits, e-learning, recorded webinars, and guidance documents.

7. Embedding Learning from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs)

Learning from DARDRs is vital to improving practice and preventing future harm. Organisations should:

- Integrate DARDR findings into training and supervision.
- Use case studies from reviews to promote reflective practice.
- Review internal policies and procedures in light of DARDR recommendations.
- Encourage open discussion of learning in team meetings and professional forums.

HDAP will support this by incorporating DARDR learning into its training offer, sharing learning summaries and key insights across the partnership, and providing an annual DARDR learning event.

8. Identifying and Responding to Learning Needs

Organisations are encouraged to:

- Conduct regular training needs assessments
- To ask about DA training completed in end of year reviews
- Use supervision and appraisal processes to identify gaps
- Engage with HDAP to highlight emerging issues or training priorities
- Share feedback from staff to help shape future learning opportunities

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure that training leads to meaningful and sustained improvements in practice, HDAP encourages all partner organisations to take an active role in embedding and evaluating learning within their own workforce. Organisations are encouraged to:

- Evaluate learning outcomes using feedback, reflective questions and post-training surveys tailored to their service area.
- Use short knowledge checks or tests within training (e.g., quizzes, scenario-based questions, or case-study tasks) to demonstrate understanding of key concepts and responsibilities.
- Monitor how learning is applied in day-to-day practice, including decision-making, recording, risk assessment and referral processes.
- Incorporate reflective practice mechanisms, such as supervision discussions, reflective logs, or team debriefs, to reinforce application of training to real-world cases.
- Share examples of good practice, challenges and innovation with HDAP to support wider multi-agency learning.
- Use follow-up sessions or refresher opportunities to consolidate learning and support ongoing competence.
- Explore 360° or peer feedback, where appropriate, to understand the impact of training on professional behaviours and multi-agency working.

HDAP will continue to gather and share evaluation data from its multi-agency training and will support partners by promoting consistent standards and providing tools and guidance to aid organisations with their own monitoring and evaluation processes.

10. Governance and Oversight

The HDAP Early Action and Partnership Delivery Group oversees the implementation of this guide and ensures alignment with local safeguarding priorities and national best practice.