

## 06 Further Reading & Resources

- [Safeguarding Partnership Resources](#)
- [West Mercia Women's Aid](#)
- [SafeLives](#)
- [Webinar – Asking About and Responding to Domestic Abuse](#)
- [NICE guidance on multi-agency working in domestic abuse](#)

## 05 Better Practice

- All staff working in health and social care should be curious about domestic abuse with their service users, and also with colleagues.
- While professionals can sometimes find it challenging and uncomfortable to routinely ask the question about domestic abuse, we know that it saves lives; silent victims can be just waiting to be asked.
- Create opportunities to see clients on their own, and offer future opportunities to ask the question.
- Remember that domestic abuse is about more than physical violence – it can be coercive control, financial abuse, and other forms of abuse.

## 01 Background

Learning from a Rapid Review (Working Together, 2018) and Domestic Homicide Reviews in Herefordshire have highlighted the importance of professionals completing **routine domestic abuse enquiries**. In these cases, it was found that opportunities were missed to ask about domestic abuse, which could have created opportunities for the victims to share their experiences and receive appropriate support to keep them safe.

## Routine Domestic Abuse Enquiries: Learning Briefing

## 04 How to ask the question

The enquiry should be made in private on a one-to-one basis, in an environment where the person feels safe, and in a kind, sensitive manner.

Victims may not answer the question on the first occasion - it is important to give future opportunities.

As a guide, some questions you may ask initially are:

- How are things at home?
- Do you feel safe?
- Are you getting the support you need at home?

Follow-up questions would then be needed, such as

- What has happened to you?

See the [MARAC Awareness Pack](#) for helpful questions.

Some agencies may have a specific questionnaire.

## 02 What are routine domestic abuse enquiries?

Trained professionals should routinely ask service users whether they have experienced domestic abuse, whether or not there are obvious concerns. A routine enquiry about domestic abuse may help to uncover the abuse and lead to a better approach to support and protect victims.

## 03 Missed Opportunities

In the case reviews, reasons for not asking about possible domestic abuse included that the victim's partner was always present at appointments, and that the victim did not match stereotypical images of domestic abuse victims. We know that there are other barriers to asking about domestic abuse, including that it can be an uncomfortable and challenging conversation.