

# PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE



## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Housing Options



## INTRODUCTION

This guide has been written to support workers providing services to individuals who have experienced violence against women (including domestic abuse and / or sexual violence). An understanding of housing and legal options will help you to recognise, support and respond effectively and sensitively. You are not expected to be an expert, but you can play a crucial part in responding to the immediate and longer term impact for those affected.

Fife Violence Against Women Partnership also has practitioner guides.

- **Rape & Sexual Assault**
- **Domestic Abuse**
- **Domestic Abuse and Protection of Children**
- **Female Genital Mutilation**

These are available on ***FISH*** and ***Fife Direct*** For more information contact **Housing Services (03451 550033)** or **Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (01592 583690)**

### In Fife in 2017/18 there were:

- 4,418 domestic abuse incidents recorded by the Police
- 854 women and 446 children supported by Fife Women's Aid
- 1119 crimes of indecency (ie a range of sexual offences including rape and sexual assault) recorded by the Police,
- 632 survivors were supported by third sector sexual abuse agencies
- 255 homeless applications were made due to dispute with in the household: violent or abusive
- 184 housing applications were made as result of domestic abuse

We know there is under reporting with not all individuals choosing to disclose and not all individual incidents reported. Nationally 11% of homeless applications identify a dispute within the household: violent or abusive. Domestic abuse is closely linked to repeat homelessness and has a significant impact on women and children's health and wellbeing

Community Research in Fife within the ***"Change, Justice, Fairness"*** WHIR report provided a unique insight into how services are perceived by women at risk of homelessness because of domestic or sexual abuse and what response / services they need from us.

*Fife Housing Partnership (FHP) recognises that having safe accommodation is fundamental for women (and their children's) safety and wellbeing. It believes that women (and their families) should not live in fear of violence, abuse or harassment due to any form of violence against women.*



*Fife adopts the Scottish Government's gendered analysis and definition of Violence Against Women:*

- *physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family (including children and young people), within the general community or in institutions, including domestic abuse, rape, and incest;*
- *sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation in any public or private space, including work;*
- *commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography and trafficking;*
- *child sexual abuse, including familial sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and online abuse;*
- *so called 'honour based' violence, including dowry related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages, and 'honour' crimes*

*A gendered analysis recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by particular forms of violence, it also recognises that men are entitled to support when they experience violence and abuse.*

**Feeling safe at home is a fundamental human right. Each individual will have their own personal experience of violence and abuse. Each situation is different for example:**

- relationship (including partner / ex-partner);
- nature of the abuse;
- perpetrator's patterns of behaviour;
- if there are children involved;
- support networks (family and friends);
- if they are currently living together;
- level of risk / repeat offending.

*Domestic abuse is characterised by repeat victimisation with incidents increasing in severity and frequency. We often see a pattern of women having to move multiple times in an attempt to be safe. Each move involves:*

- increasing feelings of isolation and displacement from friends & neighbours;
- cumulative losses, including belongings and financial debt;
- moving to an unfamiliar area

The impact of multiple moves is considerable for women and their children both emotionally and physically; women highlight how the stress of moving each time adds to the harmful impact of the abuse that in many cases they continue to experience, despite their attempts to move away from the abuser.

For women and their children to feel safe needs more than bolts on their doors and windows, they need to feel safe in the community and supported by friends, family, neighbours and agencies. Good housing advice at an early opportunity is vital, but it needs to part of a package of support considering both the adult victim and children in the household.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

**Partnership working is particularly important in the context of violence against women and the complex issues involved. MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conferencing) supports this for highest risk domestic abuse victims.**

**While domestic abuse is frequently highlighted as a reason for needing help with housing, Fife Housing Partnership recognises that other forms of abuse may leave victims unsafe in their homes such as sexual violence and “honour based” violence and require the support of housing services.**

**Fife Housing Partnership (FHP) is committed to ensuring that violence against women is treated in a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way. Women will be taken seriously and FHP will attempt to provide the information, assistance and support needed. The FHP believes that responsibility for violence against women lies with the perpetrator, as such will take action against perpetrators wherever possible.**

## JUST ASK

A significant proportion of women accessing services live with domestic abuse or are survivors of sexual abuse, if you have concerns – **ask** – it lets victims / survivors know that you and your service are open to talking about abuse and makes it easier for them to talk to you. Don't assume that the person you are asking will be offended or hostile to your questions. If they are angry, it doesn't mean you shouldn't have asked, they may come back later and want to discuss it when they are more able to do so.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND TRAUMA

The range of abuse defined as violence against women can result in trauma, with abuse often occurring on multiple occasions. For example, a victim of domestic abuse (parent or child) may experience repeated incidents which threaten life or bodily integrity and overwhelm the individual's ability to cope. They may anticipate what is going to happen, but be unable to do anything about it. At times of extreme stress they are unlikely to be able to reflect, think rationally nor make decisions calmly without feeling either overwhelmed or withdrawn. At times of extreme stress:

- the **flight or fight response** is triggered – hyper-aroused (anxiety, overwhelmed, anger, obsessive compulsive behaviour) - hyper vigilance  
OR
- freeze response – hypo-aroused – dissociation, auto-pilot, emotional numbness, emptiness

**A traumatised service user may find it difficult to clearly and calmly express what has happened to them and what help they need. It is our job to help them do so.**

**You may be the first person they have told about what is happening to them. They need to be treated with compassion, dignity and respect. Be reassured that they are not to blame for the abuse they experience. They need to be and feel believed. Privacy and confidentiality are paramount.**

**If you identify domestic abuse or other form of violence against women:**

- Listen to the woman's concerns / fears
- Risk Assess (appendix 1 SafeLives DASH)
- Safety Plan (appendix 2)
- Check living arrangements / is she and any children safe?
- Explore Housing Options
- Offer specialist emotional and practical support, consider a referral to Women's Aid

### RISK ASSESSMENT

A good risk assessment involves listening to the victim's perception of what is happening and how frightened they are of repercussion and repeat incidents. Sometimes victim's trauma / fear make it difficult for them to explain what help they need and the risks they face. Some women minimise what has happened to them, they may not feel it is safe to disclose, they may fear losing control, and they may not recognise the risk posed to them or their children.

The SafeLives DASH (**Appendix 1**) is a useful tool to assess risk in cases of domestic abuse, stalking and honour-based crimes. It gives key points to discuss to help you understand the risks such as:

Has there been a recent assault / injury?

- Is there escalation?
- Is the service user very frightened?
- Is the victim isolated from family and friends?
- Have they tried to separate (domestic abuse)?
- Is there conflict over child contact?
- Is perpetrator stalking the victim?
- Have weapons been used?
- Has the perpetrator tried to strangle / suffocate the victim

**A victim may not give enough information, or not want to talk about the detail of the abuse with you. That does not mean that they are not at high risk, and your professional judgement is as important as the score.**

Police complete a SafeLives DASH for all domestic abuse incidents they attend and this will be revisited for those at particular high risk and referred to MARAC. It is not appropriate for victims / survivors to be asked repeatedly to recount the abuse that they have experienced.

### SAFETY PLANNING

Safety planning is a really practical measure that can help a victim. It is about working **with** the victim, utilising **their** knowledge of the perpetrator's patterns of behaviour and **their** experience to determine what will and will not work to keep them and any children safe.

A good introduction to safety planning is:

***"I'm concerned about what is happening to you and how X's behaviour is impacting on your (and your children's) safety. Can we work together to make a plan for your future safety?"***

In cases of domestic abuse it is vital to safety plan when the victim resides with the perpetrator; when they consider leaving **and** after they have left. The risk increases at the point a victim is leaving, it is important to revisit risks regularly as the situation changes.

See (**Appendix 2**) for safety plans.



## EARLY HOUSING ADVICE

Good housing advice at an early stage can provide a range of options to ensure a woman and any children are safe. Having options can be very empowering. She may need time to think through her options, or it may be she needs immediate alternative accommodation. **It is important that women are presented with options wherever possible and supported to make decisions.**

Women often feel they need to move out. Feedback we get is that this has not always helped them to feel and be safe in the long term.

- The abuser may find out the new address, especially where there is child contact;
- Women may not feel safe outwith their home e.g. on the street, at the shops, taking children to school;
- Moving into temporary and then permanent accommodation comes at a substantial cost in terms of livelihood and wellbeing;
- Women can feel they lack control over the process and are not involved in key decisions about their lives;
- Women are concerned about the impact of multiple moves on their children (disruption to education, bullying, losing friends and support).

Women also comment on their sense of unfairness, that on the one hand they are told that the abuse is not their fault and on the other that they are treated as if they are the ones to blame and experience losing their home as an additional judgement on them.

**Many women resent the fact that they have had to move while a perpetrator of abuse continues to live in the family home with a sense of entitlement and no repercussions.**

## DO:

✓ Ask if you have concerns about domestic / sexual abuse or other form of violence against women

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✓ Treat with respect and dignity

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✓ Ask about the perpetrators patterns of behaviour

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✓ Provide a safe, quiet and confidential space

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✓ Ask non-threatening and open questions

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- ✓
- Recognise how stressful and difficult it is to disclose abuse
  - Ensure there are no access barriers, eg language, learning disability
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✓ Think about emotional support as well as practical measures

## DO NOT:

✗ Assume you know what is best

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✗ Dismiss someone because they have asked for similar help previously

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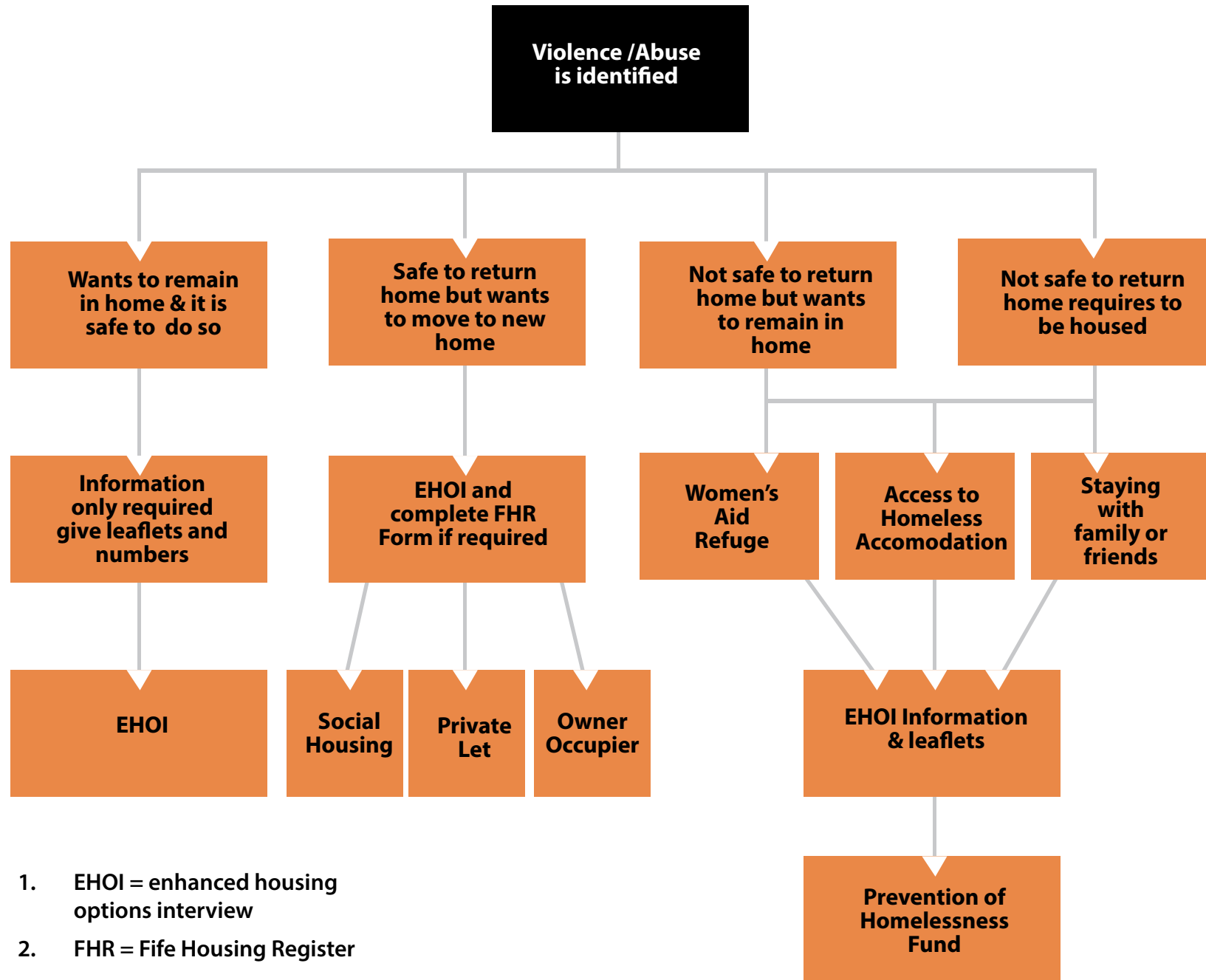
✗ Assume they will be safer if they were to leave

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✗ Liaise with any family members without the express permission of the victim

**If someone has presented as a victim / survivor previously and returned to the situation, don't dismiss them. They are likely to be at greater risk as a repeat victim.**





1. EHOI = enhanced housing options interview
2. FHR = Fife Housing Register

## Housing Advice can be accessed by:

phoning the Contact Centre on **03451 55 00 33** or visiting a Customer Service Centre / Local Office

A Housing Access Officer will make contact within 24hrs.

Information can be found on Fife Direct:

[www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options](http://www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options)

The following is not intended as an exhaustive list, but as an aide memoire to open a conversation. Agencies listed can provide more detailed information to help a woman experiencing abuse decide what she wants to do.

## HOUSING PATHWAY

Deciding to leave an abusive relationship is never easy. Whether to leave or stay needs to be the victim's choice, it is wrong to assume that leaving will necessarily make the victim and any children safer. It may be a woman needs some time (head space) to consider her options. Providing information about housing options and other supports can be very empowering and helps women to plan for their future.

Some women will want to return home, they may have been managing the abuse for many years. This can be challenging for a worker, but adults with capacity have the right to make decisions about how they live their lives. Your job is to be there to help reduce the risk and support the victim and any third parties including children. **If you have any public safety concerns then you need to follow your organisations policies and discuss with your manager.**

You may be approached for help repeatedly, repeat victimisation means that the service user is at more risk - not less. Those with experience of violence against women can find it difficult to make decisions, the abuse may have allowed them very little autonomy with decisions made for them. Trauma adds to the challenges facing victims, how they process information and make decisions.

Anyone living in a Fife Council or Housing Association house who needs to review their housing options as a result of violence against women should speak to their landlord.

## CUSTOMER SERVICES/CONTACT CENTRE

Fife Council Customer Services and Contact Centre are a first point of contact, they can provide a range of information.

- They will ask if it is safe to return home;
- If the customer is returning home, provide specialist contact details and advise them to contact police if situation becomes unsafe. Call 999 in an emergency.
- If it is not safe to return, emergency accommodation will be offered. The customer will then be asked to attend a face to face appointment. The Homeless Officer will discuss options including Fife Council Homeless Accommodation, Women's Aid Refuge or other temporary arrangements such as family and friends.
- An Enhanced Housing Options Interview is conducted by a homeless officer or access officer. It is an opportunity to discuss the housing situation in detail, complete housing applications, risk assess safety plan and complete an application for a homeless assessment as required.

## EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Homeless Accommodation / Women's Aid refuge can be provided immediately but:

- will be wherever there is availability on the day requested;
- it can be very expensive if the applicant is not eligible for housing benefit;
- there may not be a space in Women's Aid refuge on the day required;
- the family will have at least 2 moves.

Fife Women's Aid can arrange refuge accommodation outwith Fife through the wider Women's Aid network across Scotland

Specialist emotional and practical support will be offered along with signposting to local partner agencies.

## ENHANCED HOUSING OPTIONS INTERVIEW

Fife Council Housing Staff (Homeless Officer or Access Officer) will undertake an enhanced housing option interview (0-14 days of becoming homeless will be seen by homeless prevention officer, 15+ days will be seen by housing access officer) This may be undertaken by Landlords within Fife Housing Partnership.

Customers can get housing advice by:

- using the online Fife Direct Portal  
[www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options/](http://www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options/)
- calling Contact Centre 03451 55 00 33 or
- calling into a Customer Service Centre / Local Office

When a customer contacts Fife Council and says they are a victim of domestic abuse, sexual violence or other form of "violence against women" as defined on page 3- basic information is asked and passed to a Housing Access Officers who will contact the customer within 24 hours to arrange an Enhanced Housing Options Interview.

## STAYING IN THE FAMILY HOME

Staying in the Family Home with hindsight, some women of domestic abuse wish that they had stayed in the family home rather than leaving for refuge or homeless accommodation. This may not be safe if the perpetrator is determined to continue to harass, intimidate and abuse the woman / family. The victim is in the best place to judge if this is an option. However this can:

- save significant disruption to the family,
- maintain support networks with family, friends and professionals such as schools and health visitors.
- prevent the family from having to leave valued possessions, pets
- limit disruption to employment

There are a range of legal measures that can support a woman staying in the family home and preventing the perpetrator from accessing it (Housing Act 2001 under grounds 2 or 15 or Matrimonial Homes Act).

## FIFE LAW CENTRE

Fife Law Centre offers a wide range of legal advice and representation in areas of 'unmet legal need'. In particular, the Law Centre is funded to assist in mortgage and rent arrears cases but deal with many other legal matters. All referrals to the Law Centre are considered on a case by case basis. As a small charity, Fife Law Centre unfortunately cannot assist everyone but will strive to reach out to those who most require their services.

## SAFE, SECURE AND SUPPORTED @ HOME

Safe, Secure and Supported @ Home provides a range of practical and emotional support linking up with Fife Women's Aid Services and home security advice. **See Appendix 3** for useful support contacts

## TENANCY ASSISTANCE

Tenancy Assistance is available to Fife Council tenants for 12-16 weeks offering advice and assistance on issues such as:

- Understanding the tenancy agreement
- Household income
- Tenancy mail
- Home & Living standards
- Additional needs

The service is provided by Housing Management Officers who discuss individual need, answer tenants questions and decide appropriate options with the tenant.

## SHORT TERM HOUSING SUPPORT

Available to tenants of all tenures, referral is made to an appropriate local agency.

**For all Housing Options advice we would recommend looking at the following site:**

**[www.fifehousingregister.org.uk](http://www.fifehousingregister.org.uk) or [www.scotland.shelter.org.uk](http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk)**

## SOCIAL HOUSING

This includes Fife Council and Housing Association properties, applications can be made by:

- **Applying Online:** Customer will need to register with **[FifeDirect](#)** to access the online application. Once registered you can access the **“Online Application for Housing”** under the Housing section of your account home page.
- Phoning the Housing Advice Line on **03451 55 00 33**
- Writing to or visiting a **[Customer Service Office](#)**
- By making an appointment with **[Home4Good Centres](#)**

## PRIVATE LETS

These are properties owned and looked after by private landlords. A private landlord can be:

- A company that owns lots of properties.
- A person or family who owns one or more properties

## FIFE KEYFUND

**Fife Keyfund** may be available for people struggling to pay the deposit required by private landlords. The Deposit Guarantee Scheme helps people threatened with homelessness into the private rented sector. A written Guarantee, in lieu of deposit, is negotiated, with Fife Keyfund acting as intermediary between Landlord and Tenant. Fife Keyfund then encourages the tenant to save towards a deposit of their own. For more information please visit: **[www.trustinfife.org.uk](http://www.trustinfife.org.uk)**

Most privately rented homes in Fife are un-furnished. Help to furnish a tenancy can be provided by the Local Benefits Office or by contacting the Scottish Welfare Fund.

Other options may be:

- Private Residential Tenancy **[www.scotland.shelter.org.uk/newhouserules](http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk/newhouserules)**
- Mid Market Rents **[www.scotland.shelter.org.uk](http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk)**
- Home ownership **[www.fifehousingregister.org.uk](http://www.fifehousingregister.org.uk)**

## LEGAL OPTIONS

It is possible to get protection from civil and / or criminal law. This depends on the type of abuse experienced and the personal circumstances. It is essential for professional advice to be sought, to ensure the victim / survivor has the best possible options explained to them. But the following gives an idea of the sort of areas that could be explored

**Civil Law** is concerned with private relations rather than criminal matters. When accessing civil law, the client needs to pay for legal advice. It may be possible to get Legal Aid or access information from the Fife Law Centre.

**Criminal Law** is concerned with the punishment of offenders – this involves the police reporting criminal activity to the Crown Office.

## DOMESTIC ABUSE – CIVIL REMEDIES

**Matrimonial Interdicts / Domestic Abuse Interdicts** (includes Civil Partnership Act) can offer protection to married, civil and cohabiting partners. It can for example prohibit an abuser from approaching or attempting to approach a victim at her address or in the street. It can also prohibit an abuser from removing a child even where he has parental rights and responsibilities.

In order to have an interdict granted there needs to either be evidence of wrong doing or be reasonable concern that the perpetrator is likely to act illegally in future.

**It is possible to have powers of arrest attached to these interdicts which mean that the Police can act if they are broken. Their value is limited without the power of arrest.**

### An Exclusion order can:

- remove an abuser from a home currently shared with a victim
- prevent the return of an abuser who has left the home but still has rights to return,
- remove an abuser from a home that the victim has left so that the victim can return safely to the home.

In circumstances where protection is needed for the applicant or any child of the family including physical and mental health. This is a relatively short-term solution to provide safety while a resolution of the ownership / tenancy is resolved. Again **individual** circumstances need to be considered.

## DOMESTIC ABUSE – CRIMINAL LAW

**Not all victims of domestic abuse realise that a crime is being committed against them and/or may choose not to report to the police for a range of reasons.** However, the police take domestic abuse seriously, reporting incidents to them allows a picture of the perpetrators patterns of behaviour to be identified. Common charges include for example breach of the peace, assault, sexual offences

**Domestic abuse is an aggravating factor e.g. where a partner/ husband is verbally abusive, threatening, shouting or swearing at the victim and it will be seen as a more serious offence.**

## DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT

There is specific legislation around **stalking** and a victim should be encouraged to keep a record and report to the police. Over half of all stalkers are former intimate partners. These stalkers typically have a history of abuse and controlling behaviour.

The law has been strengthened to offer protection in terms of the **internet / social media** to include indecent, obscene or menacing messages. It recognises persistent messaging causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.

This aims to reflect and respond to the victim's experience of domestic abuse more closely, with a greater emphasis on coercive control and a course of behaviour. Coercive control and emotional abuse are understood as domestic abuse by Fife Housing Partnership.

The new law defines abusive behaviour as :

- 1)** behaviour that is violent, threatening or intimidating.
- 2)** Behaviour whose purpose is one of the following:
  - making a partner dependent or subordinate
  - isolating a partner from friends, relatives or other sources of support
  - controlling, regulating or monitoring a partner's day-to-day activities
  - depriving a partner of, or restricting, freedom of action
  - frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing a partner.

The offence is aggravated if any of the behaviour is directed at a child or witnessed by them.

The bill looks at effect the behaviour was intended to have or that a reasonable person would consider it is likely to have on the person being abused. This removes the need to exhaustively describe exact behaviours:

- making a partner /expartner dependent or subordinate
- isolating (friends / relatives or sources of support)
- controlling, regulating or monitoring
- restricting freedom of action
- frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing

## SAFE LIVES DASH

### Safe Lives DASH

Reproduced with permission by **SafeLives**, as an example.

Please use their website [www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk) to ensure the most up to date version of the documentation.

**SafeLives DASH Risk Identification Checklist** as amended and used by **ASSIST**<sup>1</sup> incorporating *Safe and Together* prompts to encourage practitioners to consider children. **The SafeLives DASH** is for use by IDAAs, Police and non-Police agencies for **MARAC** case identification when domestic abuse, 'honour'-based violence and/or stalking are disclosed.

**MARAC** - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference - is a meeting which discusses domestic abuse victims identified as being at 'high risk' of serious harm or homicide. The meeting is attended by representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies including; the Police, Social Work, Health, Housing and Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDAAs). A case requires to be discussed at MARAC if 14 or more indicators of risk are identified when completing the Risk Identification Checklist, if on professional judgement it is deemed necessary or if there has been an escalation in the abuse. The purpose of the meeting is to identify risk and create a plan that will increase the safety of the victim and children.

<sup>1</sup> This Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) has been adapted by **ASSIST** with permission from **SafeLives** to incorporate *Safe & Together*. These additional questions are to be used as prompts for gathering further information and are not intended to change the outcome of the **SafeLives DASH** when completed with the non-offending parent. This guidance also recognises that some professionals will use the RIC as a 'checklist' as opposed to an information gathering tool.



# RISK IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

| Risk Identification Checklist   |     |    |            |
|---|-----|----|------------|
| Date:   |     |    |            |
| Tick the box if the factor is present   | Yes | No | Don't know |
| Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.  |     |    |            |
| <p>1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? (Please state what and whether this is the first injury.)</p> <p><i>How have the children reacted to what happened?</i></p> <p><i>Have you noticed any changes in the children's behaviour /moods and emotions since the incident?</i></p> |     |    |            |
| <p>2. Are you very frightened?</p> <p>comment:</p>  |     |    |            |
| <p>3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence? Please give an indication of what you think [name of abuser] might do and to whom, including children).</p> <p>comment:</p>   |     |    |            |
| <p>4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends i.e. does [name of abuser] try to stop you from seeing friends/family/doctor or others?</p> <p>comment:</p> <p><i>Have [name of abuser's] actions isolated the children as well? How?</i></p>  |     |    |            |

| <b>Tick the box if the factor is present</b><br><b>Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.</b>   | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|-----|----|------------|
| <b>5.</b> Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?  |     |    |            |
| <b>6.</b> Have you separated or tried to separate from (name of abuser(s)) within the past year?  |     |    |            |
| <b>7.</b> Is there conflict over child contact?<br><i>Can you tell me a bit more about child contact?</i><br><i>Are there any legal contact orders?</i><br><i>How does [name of abuser] support or undermine your parenting?</i><br><i>Do you have any concerns about [name of abuser] behaviour towards the children when you aren't around?</i> |     |    |            |
| <b>8.</b> Does [name of abuser] constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you?<br>Expand to identify behaviour and whether client believes this is to intimidate.<br><br><i>Does the abuser trying to contact or harass you through your children?</i>  |     |    |            |
| <b>9.</b> Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)? Explain this is a time that abuse often escalates.<br><i>Has [name of abuser] supported you through your pregnancy?</i>   |     |    |            |
| <b>10.</b> Is the abuse happening more often?   |     |    |            |
| <b>11.</b> Is the abuse getting worse?  |     |    |            |

| <b>Tick the box if the factor is present</b><br><b>Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.</b>  | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|-----|----|------------|
| <p><b>12.</b> Is [name of abuser] controlling and/or are excessively jealous?<br/> E.g. who do you see? Are you 'policed at home'? Are you told what to wear? Consider 'honour'-based violence and specify.</p> <p><i>Has [name of abuser] ever used or threatened to use children in any way to hurt or control you?</i></p> <p><i>Who makes the decisions around issues relating to childcare?</i></p> |     |    |            |
| <p><b>13.</b> Has [name of abuser] ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?</p>   |     |    |            |
| <p><b>14.</b> Has [name of abuser] ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them? (If yes, tick who.) You<br/> Your children<br/> Other (please specify)</p> <p><i>Has [name of abuser] made these threats in front of the children or are they aware of the threats?</i></p>  |     |    |            |
| <p><b>15.</b> Has [name of abuser] ever attempted to strangle / choke / suffocate / drown you?</p>   |     |    |            |
| <p><b>16.</b> Does [name of abuser] do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else? (If someone else, specify who.)<br/> Have the children ever seen or heard [name of abuser] do this?</p>  |     |    |            |
| <p><b>17.</b> Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of? (If yes, please specify whom and why. Consider extended family if HBV.)</p>   |     |    |            |

| <b>Tick the box if the factor is present</b><br><b>Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.</b>  | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|-----|----|------------|
| <b>18.</b> Do you know if [name of abuser] has hurt anyone else?<br>Siblings?<br><br>Other family members?<br><br>Other (specify)  |     |    |            |
| <b>19.</b> Has [name of abuser] ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?   |     |    |            |
| <b>20.</b> Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on [name of abuser] for money or have they recently lost their job or any other financial issue?   |     |    |            |
| <b>21.</b> Has [name of abuser] had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or with mental health which have led to problems in leading a normal life?<br><br>Drugs?<br><br>Alcohol?<br><br>Mental Health? |     |    |            |
| <b>22.</b> Has [name of abuser] ever threatened or attempted suicide?  |     |    |            |
| <b>23.</b> Has [name of abuser] ever broken bail conditions or an interdict preventing them from contacting or approaching you? (or your child/ren<br>Specify:   |     |    |            |

| <b>Tick the box if the factor is present</b><br><b>Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.</b>  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Don't know</b> |
|--|------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <b>24.</b> Do you know if [name of abuser] has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history?<br>Domestic abuse?<br>Sexual violence?<br>Other violence?<br>Other? |            |           |                   |
|  |            |           |                   |
|  |            |           |                   |
|  |            |           |                   |
|  |            |           |                   |
| <b>Visible High Risk Total</b>   |            |           |                   |
| <b>Discussed Historical Unreported Incidents Date</b>  |            |           |                   |
| <b>Signed:</b><br><b>Date:</b><br><b>Name:</b>   |            |           |                   |

**For consideration by professional:** Is there any other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may increase risk levels? Consider victim's situation in relation to disability, substance misuse, mental health issues, cultural / language barriers, 'honour-based systems and minimisation. Are they willing to engage with your service. Describe:

Consider abuser's occupation/interests – could this give them unique access to weapons?

What are the victim's greatest priorities to address their safety?

Do you believe that there are reasonable grounds for referring this case to MARAC?      **Yes**      **No**

If yes, have you made a referral?      **Yes**      **No**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

Do you believe that there are risks facing the children in the family?      **Yes**      **No**

If yes, please confirm if you have made a referral to safeguard the children:      **Yes**      **No**

Date referral made:

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Name:**



## SAFETY PLANNING WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

When working with any victim of domestic abuse it is essential to have a robust safety plan in place. Templates are provided as follows:

**4a. When the victim is in a relationship with the perpetrator**  
**4b. When the victim has left the abusive situation.**

It is vital that safety planning is undertaken when the victim resides with the perpetrator, when they consider leaving and after they have left. When a victim ends, or expresses intent to end an abusive relationship, risks increase significantly; therefore, it is essential to complete a revised safety plan once the victim is away from the perpetrator of the abuse. The safety plan for children can be used in both circumstances.

Professionals should partner with the victim in order to build a collaborative safety plan utilising the victim's particular knowledge of the perpetrator's pattern of behaviour, and experience of that behaviour, to determine what will and will not work in terms of safety planning. The Safe & Together approach helps ensure that all aspects of safety have been considered.

A good introduction to safety planning is:

*"I'm concerned about your partner's (or ex-partner's) behaviour and how this is impacting on you and your children's safety. Can we work together to make a plan for your future safety?"*

## 4a Personal Domestic Abuse Safety Plan – Pre Separation

**Name:**

Date:

Review date(s):

**It is very important that your abusive partner does not find out about your safety plan.**

Is it safe to take this home with you? Y / N

### Where will you keep it?

This safety plan details the steps I can take to increase my safety and reduce the risk of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I can plan and think about how to respond to him and how to best keep myself and my children safe.

### Step 1: Safety during a violent incident.

I cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase my safety, I can use a variety of different strategies. I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- I can leave. My escape route would be (think about how to get out safely - what door, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes could you use?).  
**Practice this route.**
- I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them \_\_\_\_\_ in order to leave quickly.
- I can keep my phone charged and in credit to call 999 or someone who can help
- I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request that they call the police if they see or hear anything of concern coming from my home.
- If I have children, I can teach them how to use the telephone 999 to contact the police in case of an emergency.
- I will choose and use a code word with my children and/or my friends so they know to call for help if I use the word.
- If I have to leave my home, I will go \_\_\_\_\_ (even if you think there will not be a next time, decide where you would go if there was)
- If/when I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_ (somewhere there are no potential weapons and at least one exit).



## Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave.

People experiencing domestic abuse often decide to leave at some point. Risk increases for the survivor when the abuser believes that they are leaving so careful planning is needed.

I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- I will let a trusted person, friend or professional know my plans and see if they can help
- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_
- I will keep copies of important documents at \_\_\_\_\_
- To increase my financial independence, I will open a savings account by \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

### **Ask for no bank statements to be sent to your address or arrange for them to be sent to a friend of family member**

- In the event of an emergency I can call or go to \_\_\_\_\_
- I can leave clothes and some emergency money with \_\_\_\_\_
- I will regularly review my safety plan in order to plan the safest way to leave the house.

### **I can review my plan with:**

**Date:**

**When you leave, if you have children, take them with you if you can. If you try to get them later and your partner holds parental rights then the Police will not be able to remove them from their other parent unless you hold a court order.**

## 4b. Personal Domestic Abuse Safety Plan – post separation

### Important Phone Numbers:

- 
- 
- 

**Support from Friends and Neighbours.** I will let friends and neighbours know that the abuser no longer lives here and ask them to phone the police should they see him near the house or the children. The people I will tell are:

- 
- 
- 

**Child Contact.** I will tell the people who take care of my children who has permission to pick up my children and that my partner/ex-partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

- 
- 
- 

I can arrange for children to be handed over in a safe place or by a trusted person e.g.

- 
- 

### Passwords:

I can give family/close friends/support worker a password or phrase so that they know I'm in danger and to call the police.

Password:

**Phrase:**

My Phone:

- I can change my mobile / house phone number
- I can use 141 so my number can't be traced
- I'll make sure my number is ex-directory and number withheld

**Other Precautions:**

I can tell work about my situation and ask that my calls are screened

I can avoid shops and other places that I used when I was with him. E.g.

- 
- 
- 

**Legal Protection:**

I can get legal advice about interdicts, harassment order, child contact issues. People that can help me with this are:

- 
- 
- 

I can make sure I am aware of any special bail conditions which prohibit my partner from contacting or approaching me and report any breach of these to the police. I can also report any further abuse including harassment, stalking, threats, or violence to the police.

## Home Security / Safety

There are many things that I can do to increase safety at home. It may not be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

### I can consider:

- Having a **Home Security Review** to ensure my home is as safe as can be at this time. Speak to your social worker/advocate/police to arrange this) or call 01592 645310  
  
Fife Cares can advise on how secure your home is and whether additional security is needed.
- Arranging a Fire Safety Visit 0800 0731 999 or text FIRE to 80800

### Emotional Wellbeing:

If I'm feeling down/depressed and thinking about returning I can call these people for support: (names and numbers)

- 
- 

**I'll review this plan on: Date:**

**If I need support with it I'll ask:**



## USEFUL CONTACTS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Fife Women's Aid</b>                    | <b>0808 802 5555</b>   |
| <b>Shakti Women's Aid</b>                  | <b>01383 431243</b>  |
| <b>National Domestic Abuse Helpline</b>    | <b>0800 027 1234</b>   |
| <b>Family Protection Unit</b>              | <b>101</b>   |
| <b>Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre</b> | <b>01592 642336</b>  |
| <b>Kingdom Abuse Survivors Project</b>     | <b>01592 644217</b>  |
| <b>Safe Space</b>                          | <b>01383 739084</b>  |
| <b>Rape Crisis Helpline</b>                | <b>0808 801 0302</b>   |
| <b>Forced Marriage Unit</b>                | <b>0207 008 0151</b>   |
| <b>Fife Law Centre</b>                     | <b>01592 786710</b>  |
|  | <b><u><a href="mailto:info@fifelawcentre.co.uk">info@fifelawcentre.co.uk</a></u></b> |



## HOUSING SUPPORT NUMBERS

**Fife Council Housing Information & Advice Line 03451 55 00 33**

**[www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options](http://www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options)**

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Fife Housing Group</b>                   | <b>01383 606 162</b> |
| <b>Kingdom Housing Association Ltd</b>      | <b>01592 630 922</b> |
| <b>Glen Housing Association Ltd</b>         | <b>01592 621 188</b> |
| <b>Ore Valley Housing Association</b>       | <b>01592 721 917</b> |
| <b>Hillcrest Housing Association Ltd</b>    | <b>0300123 2640</b>  |
| <b>Homes for Good</b>                       | <b>01383 602 388</b> |
| <b>Shelter 24 hour helpline (Freephone)</b> | <b>0808 800 4444</b> |
| <b>Frontline Fife:</b>                      | <b>01592 800430</b>  |

**For other Community information look at:**

**[On Your Doorstep Fife](#)**



