



Nacro Domestic Abuse Policy

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1.0 Policy Statement

Nacro recognises that domestic abuse has a serious effect on people's lives, both emotionally and physically.

Nacro is committed to taking all reasonable steps possible to combat the impact of domestic abuse, for the individuals being abused, children and other family members affected by domestic abuse; as well as challenging the behaviour of perpetrators.

We recognise that any form of domestic abuse is not acceptable and do not expect our employees to tolerate or condone such behaviour whilst delivering our services.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to help staff, service users and other stakeholders to understand our approach to dealing with domestic abuse and to ensure we deal with any incidents in a consistent and fair way.

Nacro has a 'survivor-centred' approach to domestic abuse. Survivor's views and experiences will inform prioritisation and delivery of services.

	We will listen to and believe survivors with a non-judgemental approach.
	We aim to empower survivors by advising them of their options and giving guidance so they can make their own decisions.
	Survivor's safety and stability will be prioritised, including the presumption that any service user who perpetrates domestic abuse to other service users within the same service, will be transferred out of the service, rather than the survivor. This will be subject to assessment of safety concerns – it is important to note that the survivor may choose to move to a property unknown to the perpetrator – the safety of the survivor is paramount.
	We will only involve other agencies or divulge information with the consent of the service user, unless required to do so by law or unless information sharing is necessary for the protection of survivors.

We are mindful that many service users will have experienced abuse in their childhood or past. Nacro will take a trauma-informed approach to working with service users, providing choice and control wherever possible. We will support service users who are the survivors of non-recent domestic abuse to access appropriate support from specialist agencies.

In some cases, our service user may be perpetrators of domestic abuse. To reduce the incidence and impact of abuse, Nacro will challenge the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse and will signpost and refer perpetrators to appropriate interventions to address their behaviour.

Where we are working with service users who have a history of perpetrating domestic abuse, we will collaborate with criminal justice agencies and/or seek support from external agencies to help house, accommodate and manage service

users who are perpetrators of domestic abuse. We will maintain robust risk assessments to effectively manage the risks that the service poses to victims and or the community.

The Nacro Domestic Abuse Procedure supports this policy and the two documents should be read alongside each other.

1.1. The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people

Many Nacro service users and learners are children or parents.

Nacro will work to prevent exposure to domestic abuse by identification and management of safety concerns. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children who have witnessed or shared an abusive household, as victims of domestic abuse.

Further to this, young people can also experience domestic abuse in their own relationships. Domestic abuse in teenage relationships is just as severe and life threatening as adult abuse. Nacro is committed to:

- Providing age-appropriate interventions and engaging with specialist external agencies where we believe a child or young person is at risk of domestic abuse within their relationship.
- Working to prevent exposure to domestic abuse by identifying concerns, alerting statutory safeguarding agencies effectively and working closely with other agencies in the management of safety concerns.
- All staff will proactively identify and act against domestic abuse in our services and refer to relevant legislation, protocol and practice guidance, around safeguarding adults and children from abuse.

1.2. Multi-agency working

The identification and response to domestic abuse requires a multi-agency approach. It is important that Nacro staff understand the nature of the multi-agency approach in ensuring expert support is available to both the individuals being abused and the abuser.

Our teams will work in effective partnerships with the survivor and other relevant agencies. We will consult them when safety planning and participate in the MARAC process, and local and regional domestic abuse forums. More detail about the MARAC process can be found [here](#).

We acknowledge that people experiencing abuse will not all fit into one 'support model'. We will utilise the power and control wheel, healthy relationship toolkits, and guided conversations in starting up discussions with service users and learners. Ensuring that they are aware that we are available and there to support if and when they feel ready.

Nacro staff will record any concerns or any signs of abuse. If there is a concern of serious harm, or risk of death we can override consent and make a MARAC and safeguarding referral without the service user's consent.

Our staff will be non-judgmental if a victim decides to return to an abusive partner, and they will be aware that leaving can be a very hard and dangerous. We will continue to support the service user how and when they wish, focusing on maintaining their safety.

1.0 Scope

This policy includes our approach to working with service users and learners who are survivors or perpetrators of domestic abuse, as well as their family and other visitors to our services.

The purpose of this policy is to help staff, service users and other stakeholders to understand our approach to dealing with domestic abuse and to ensure we deal with any incidents in a consistent and fair way.

Our response to abuse outside of intimate partners or family members is covered by our Safeguarding Adults and Children policy and procedures.

2.0 Diversity Implications

Nacro recognises that domestic abuse occurs across society, regardless of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, and religion. Research shows that most abuse is perpetrated by men against women. Women are more likely to suffer repeat incidents, serious physical or mental injury and death.

Children are also affected directly and indirectly and there is a strong correlation between domestic abuse, child abuse and child homicide.

Groups, such as Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities, anyone within the LGBTQIA+ community; male domestic abuse survivors; and those with vulnerable immigration status, may face further barriers to disclosure and reporting e.g., increased stigma and isolation, language skills, lack of familiarity with the legal system, inability to obtain religious divorce, previous experience of discrimination in disclosing their experiences and accessing services.

Perpetrators of abuse may use these characteristics to further abuse victims e.g., threatening to 'out' someone of their gender identity or sexual orientation, threatening to 'deport' a victim with vulnerable immigration status.

Disabled people face particularly high risk of domestic abuse. In some cases, the primary perpetrator of domestic abuse may be a carer.

Understanding that the intersectionality of abuse may leave the aforementioned groups more vulnerable or affect how or the kind of support they require.

Nacro is committed to fostering an inclusive response to ensure that the right support is given to individuals. We will also consider the appropriateness of our response and support services from the perspective of sex, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and language. If Nacro cannot provide this ourselves, we may look to external services for support.

Links to services, toolkits and additional resources have been listed in the accompanying procedure.

3.0 Definition

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse (any behaviour that has an adverse effect on the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services)
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a regular pattern of behaviour. Behaviour directed at the victim's children is also included in this definition.

This definition applies if those involved are partners or ex-partners, family members, or both have had parental responsibility for a child now or in the past.

The table below provides some behaviours of domestic abuse:

Economic abuse	When someone interferes (through control, exploitation, or sabotage) with their partner's ability to acquire, use and/ or maintain economic resources. Economic resources include money, housing, transportation and utilities such as heating or items such as food or clothing.
Controlling behaviour	A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
Coercive behaviour	An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
Harassment and stalking	Stalking is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes an individual feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed. Some examples of stalking are: •Regularly giving unwanted gifts •Making unwanted communication •Damaging property •Repeatedly following them or spying on them •Threats

Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse is an attack on an individual's personality rather than a physical attack; it can be just as harmful as physical abuse. Examples include name calling, putting them down, making them feel like they're going mad and blaming them for the abuse, or controlling every move through threats and intimidation.
Significant harm	A child witnessing (including hearing or being aware of domestic abuse) is regarded as experiencing 'significant harm' in law.
Sexual Abuse	This includes rape, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation. It is commonly used by perpetrators to control and abuse their partners. Sexual abuse is any form of sexual activity (involving physical contact, words, or photographs) that takes place without the other person's full and informed consent. Sexual abuse also includes an abuser withholding a partner's access to contraception or forcing them into sexual practices they find degrading.

This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

4.0 Staff responsibilities

Follow responsibilities for implementation in Nacro's Domestic Abuse policy and procedures:

Designated Safeguarding Leads

- Ensure sufficient training and support is available for all staff members who may be exposed to domestic abuse.
- Review serious cases and share best practice and learning.
- Ensure robust and effective policies and procedures are in place to respond to issues of domestic abuse.

Designated Safeguarding Officers and all managers:

- Highlight and discuss this procedure with all new members of staff as part of their induction.
- In conjunction with Learning and Development, ensure staff complete domestic abuse training. Appropriate training on domestic-abuse issues must be included in any staff training/development plan and records must be maintained of training provided and attended.
- Support staff who are working with service users experiencing domestic abuse through supervision and at team meetings.

All operational staff and managers:

Staff and managers should consider whether all service users can make a disclosure of domestic abuse without further risk to themselves, e.g.

- Do service users have the opportunity to speak to staff without their partner or family present?
- Is there a space within or outside a service that the service user feels comfortable to talk without risk of being overheard?
- Do service users know that anything they share in support sessions will not be passed on to other service users?

- Is support available for service users who may face particular barriers, to disclosure, e.g., mobility issues, language barrier, communication difficulties?

Staff working in service users' homes:

Staff who conduct home visits, including maintenance staff, should also be aware of property damage and repair issues which may indicate domestic abuse, including:

- Damage to doors & walls by hand/fist.
- Locks damaged, possibly repeatedly, especially on bathroom doors.
- Additional locks that have been added to doors or cupboards.
- Asking for repairs, but then not being able to gain access to make repairs.

6.0. Procedures linked to this policy

- Domestic Abuse Procedure
- Safeguarding Adults Procedures
- Safeguarding Children Procedures

7.0. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the National Safeguarding Board.

8.0. Document Revision History

Version	Date	Editor	Summary of Changes