
Overview

This standard is about your ability to assess risks to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

It includes involving victims and survivors in risk assessments wherever possible, as well as agreeing consequent factors and needs of victims and survivors to be addressed.

The resultant risk assessment outcomes will subsequently inform the development and implementation of appropriate intervention plans for victims and survivors, with this activity being addressed in separate but related national occupational standards.

This standard is for practitioners who support those experiencing domestic abuse, which may include instances of sexual violence and abuse in a domestic violence context.

It is recognised that abuse can occur without physical violence, yet can be equally damaging to those affected. Throughout this standard, where the term 'abuse' is used it is taken to include instances also involving physical violence.

Domestic abuse is frequently perceived as a gendered crime perpetrated by men against women; however this standard is intended for practitioners who support those experiencing domestic violence within any intimate or family relationship, regardless of their social background, age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity.

In some organisations, the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' may be used individually or interchangeably.

There are three elements

- 1 Gather information regarding victims and survivors and their circumstances
- 2 Assess information, agree needs and identify risk
- 3 Agree victims and survivors needs from appropriate interventions

Performance criteria

Gather information regarding victims and survivors and their circumstances

- You must be able to:
- P1 explain to victims and survivors:
 - P1.1 your role and responsibilities
 - P1.2 what information is being sought from them
 - P1.3 the reasons for seeking information from them
 - P1.4 with whom their information may be shared
 - P2 make contact with victims and survivors in appropriate and safe environments which take account of their circumstances and;
 - P2.1 any risks to their welfare and safety
 - P2.2 risks to health, safety and welfare when meeting face to face
 - P2.3 any risks to your own safety and welfare
 - P3 confirm your organisation's confidentiality policy with victims and survivors, including:
 - P3.1 which parties may require particular information
 - P3.2 circumstances where information may be divulged
 - P4 confirm with victims and survivors that it is acceptable to proceed with:
 - P4.1 gathering information
 - P4.2 an assessment of their circumstances, needs and risk
 - P5 identify victims' and survivors' circumstances including:
 - P5.1 their relationship to their abuser
 - P5.2 their living arrangements and environment
 - P5.3 family and personal situation
 - P5.4 education and employment situation
 - P5.5 financial situation
 - P5.6 physical and mental health
 - P5.7 problems caused by abuse
 - P5.8 their attitudes, beliefs and needs
 - P6 explore with victims and survivors:
 - P6.1 their situation and circumstances
 - P6.2 problems which the abuse is causing
 - P6.3 aspects with which they would welcome help
 - P7 corroborate information gathered, where required and possible

- P8 arrange for accurate records of any injuries that victims and survivors have sustained due to abuse in line with organisational guidelines and procedures
- P9 obtain consent from victims and survivors for recording any injuries in line with organisational requirements
- P10 communicate with victims and survivors in a manner and at a pace which meets their needs and abilities, and:
 - P10.1 encourages question
 - P10.2 confirms their understanding
 - P10.3 promotes victims and survivors informed decision making
 - P10.4 uses active listening techniques
- P11 maintain accurate and up to date records in line with organisational procedures, including details of victims and survivors circumstances

Assess information, agree needs and identify risk

- You must be able to:**
- P12 determine potential risk factors to victims and survivors using risk assessment processes, including:
 - P12.1 evidence for the basis of your decision on risk factors
 - P12.2 the strength and nature of links between risk factors
 - P12.3 likelihood of further harm to victims, survivors and their children and dependants where relevant
 - P13 assess relevant risk factors affecting victims and survivors using risk assessment processes, including:
 - P13.1 the relationship with an abuser
 - P13.2 living arrangements and environment
 - P13.3 family and personal situation
 - P13.4 financial situation
 - P13.5 physical and mental health
 - P13.6 their attitudes, beliefs, confidence and needs
 - P14 assess the significance of victims' and survivors' overall situation to determine the level of risk including:
 - P14.1 assess the significance of particular aspects of their situation
 - P14.2 identify priority areas for interventions and support
 - P15 determine likely outcomes of risks identified including:

- P15.1 whether victims and survivors are vulnerable to harm
- P15.2 risk of harm to others including their children and dependants where relevant
- P16 determine circumstances which are likely contributors to causes of victims' and survivors' distress
- P17 determine influences which may help to reduce and prevent distress of victims and survivors
- P18 identify circumstances which impact on the vulnerability of victims, survivors, and their children and dependants where relevant
- P19 explore with victims and survivors their needs in addressing abuse and violence in line with organisational requirements
- P20 make arrangements for any required additional assessments of victims' and survivors' needs and circumstances where you have identified this is required
- P21 maintain accurate and up to date records in line with organisational policies and procedures, including the reasons for additional assessments
- P22 complete risk assessments based on the context of victims and survivors circumstances in line with organisational risk assessment processes
- P23 complete assessments in ways which maintain accurate and up to date records and which include:
 - P23.1 the risks and protective factors identified
 - P23.2 the likelihood of the abuse recurring
 - P23.3 the likely imminence and severity of such abuse

Agree victims and survivors needs from appropriate interventions

- You must be able to:**
- P24 involve victims and survivors in risk assessments in line with organisational requirements
 - P25 work with victims and survivors to complete risk assessments in line with your role and responsibilities and organisational guidance, and:
 - P25.1 explain your organisation's risk assessment processes
 - P25.2 give rationale for risk assessment outcomes to victims and survivors
 - P25.3 explain the impact of risks and protective factors identified
 - P25.4 explain options available to the victims and survivors,
 - P25.5 recognition and respect for victims and survivors wishes

- P25.6 seek agreement from victims and survivors about preferred options and associated actions
- P26 assist the victims and survivors to develop coping mechanisms which address their distress, including:
 - P26.1 determine any existing coping mechanisms
- P27 use agreed procedures and protocols when liaising with other agencies and partners, including instances of multi-agency liaison
- P28 agree with victims and survivors the way forward to progress criminal proceedings in line with organisational requirements
- P29 refer potential criminal cases to other agencies required and with the victims and survivors consent
- P30 inform authorities where potential crimes have been committed within organisational timescales, and:
 - P30.1 obtain victims' and survivors' consent where possible
- P31 identify the frequency of ongoing support to victims and survivors based on the level of risk identified
- P32 apply relevant organisational procedures to provide ongoing support to victims and survivors
- P33 alert relevant others promptly when you identify real and particular concerns about the risk of harm to victims, survivors, and their children where relevant
- P34 complete risk assessment analysis based on victims and survivors circumstances, is defensible and which includes:
 - P34.1 clear rationale for your conclusions
 - P34.2 associated recommendations
 - P34.3 subsequent plans
- P35 provide reports and all relevant information to relevant others in line with organisational policies and procedures

Knowledge and understanding

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

You need to know and understand:

- K1 legal and organisational requirements for risk assessments of victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 relevant legislation applicable to your area of work
- K3 relevant others you may need to work with including:
 - K3.1 agencies and partner organisations
 - K3.2 colleagues
 - K3.3 community representatives
 - K3.4 service users
 - K3.5 stakeholders
 - K3.6 victims and survivors
- K4 your organisation's role, objectives, remit and services for addressing domestic and sexual abuse, including the provision of support to victims
- K5 the limits of your authority and responsibility and actions to take if exceeded

Key, general requirements for addressing domestic violence and abuse

You need to know and understand:

- K6 what constitutes domestic violence and abuse, and its prevalence in your local community
- K7 signs of abuse and the methods used by abusers to gain power and control
- K8 the impact of abuse upon all of those affected by it, including victims, survivors and children
- K9 how children may be used by abusers as part of their abuse
- K10 types of information and support sought by those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- K11 sources of information and support available to those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- K12 the role of other agencies and organisations who provide support, services and interventions to address domestic and sexual violence and abuse in your area
- K13 multi-agency arrangements for providing support and interventions for victims and survivors in your area

K14 how cultural, social and gender related aspects impact upon domestic abuse

Requirements particular to assessing needs and risks

You need to know
and understand:

K15 risk assessment tools, processes and procedures including those used by your organisation

K16 information required to assess needs and risks of victims and survivors

K17 information appropriate to addressing risks to victims and survivors from their abusers

K18 methods of corroborating the information required

K19 methods and techniques for distinguishing between and identifying:

K19.1 directly observed evidence

K19.2 evidence from reliable sources

K19.3 hearsay

K20 factors affecting the vulnerability of victims and survivors of domestic abuse

K21 what additional assessments are available

K22 circumstances that require additional assessments

K23 how to arrange additional assessments

K24 circumstances where victims and survivors are considered to be at a very high risk

K25 circumstances where victims and survivors need particular support and an associated risk management plans

K26 how to progress risk management plans

Requirements relating to communicating with victims and survivors

You need to know
and understand:

K27 the importance of and methods for building trust and empathy with victims

K28 appropriate styles and forms of communication including body language

K29 how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways

K30 barriers to communication including:

K30.1 their causes

K30.2 feelings and reactions victims may have

K30.3 ways to overcome them

K31 the importance of being aware of your own values and beliefs

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- K32 the impact your own values and beliefs may have when working with victims
 - K33 how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour and the importance of doing so
 - K34 circumstances where it is necessary to go against victims and survivors expressed wishes
 - K35 the importance of ensuring that victims and survivors understand why their expressed wishes are not being met and why
 - K36 limits of confidentiality applying to your job role

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