

# Guidance for professionals

## Identifying and Responding to Domestic Abuse in Southampton

This guidance covers the steps to take to respond to Domestic Abuse (DA).

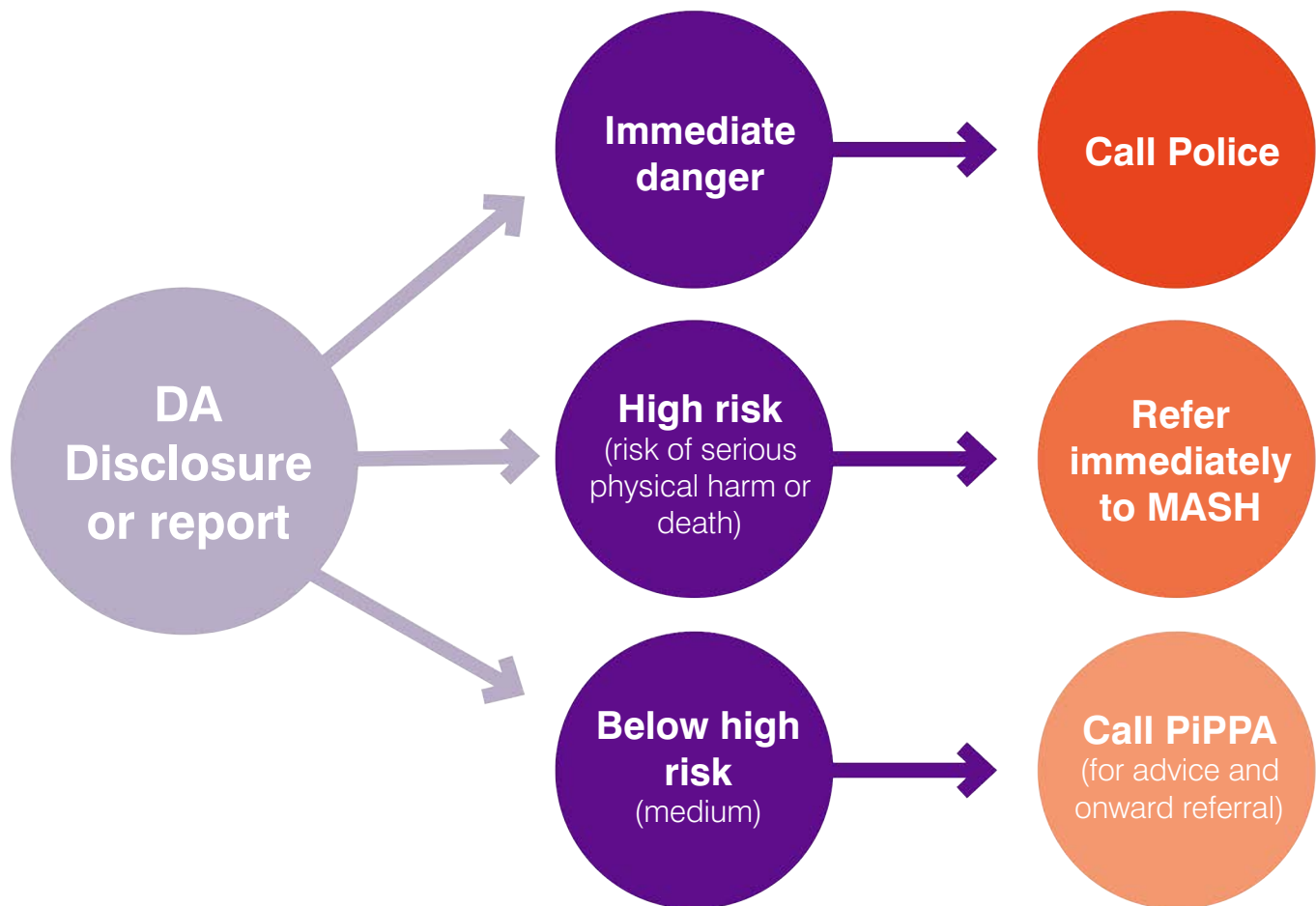
**It explains the referral routes for DA at all risk levels.** This is for professionals in any service that has direct contact with the public.

### What is DA?

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour including economic abuse, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality (Home Office 2020).

DA includes stalking, so-called Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage.

### DA referral routes: Overview



## Steps to respond to DA



Be alert to the signs of DA. If you have concerns that it is a 'live' issue happening in a family you are working with, try to speak to the adult survivor (victim) on their own and sensitively ask questions that may help you to identify the issues and risks. Explain duty of care to safeguard families.



Disclosure of DA is often a very difficult experience and it may follow a long period of abuse. Always listen with respect and sensitivity. It is not uncommon for a victim of DA not to recognise their experience as abusive. Listen carefully to identify the signs and indicators of abuse.



Reassure your client that confidential and trusted help is available and explain the benefits of seeking help to reduce risks of harm. Wherever possible seek consent, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so. You should inform your client that a high risk assessment could lead to a referral to MASH to protect their safety and that of any children. This will mean sharing relevant information about risks. Consent from your client may be given verbally to PiPPA but will be carefully recorded to ensure legal compliance.



Complete a risk assessment using the Safelives (DASH) risk assessment tool. This will help to determine the level of risk to your client: high or below high. The next steps to referral differ according to the level of risk. See page 3 for help with risk assessing or call/email PiPPA. The DASH form is available on these website [www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals/](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals/).



**For High Risk DA refer to MASH.** This is a single referral for a multi-agency DA risk assessment and response, as well as consideration of any concerns relating to children under 18 living in the same household (if applicable). A MASH referral may trigger a referral to IDVA for intensive independent DA advocacy and support for the DA victim.

**Below High Risk DA.** call/email PiPPA for DA advice and onward referral to DA expert support. You may also need to refer to MASH for Children's Safeguarding concerns or Adult Services if a 'vulnerable adult' is involved.



Safety plan with the adult survivor for the whole family, keep a record of all actions and discussions and ensure DA consideration in wider family / individual work. Call/email PiPPA for DA advice if you need it.



For **High Risk DA** a small number of cases may also need to be referred to MARAC for further multi-agency risk assessment and response. (See DA High Risk Guidance on this) MARAC referrals will usually apply to particularly complex and entrenched cases.



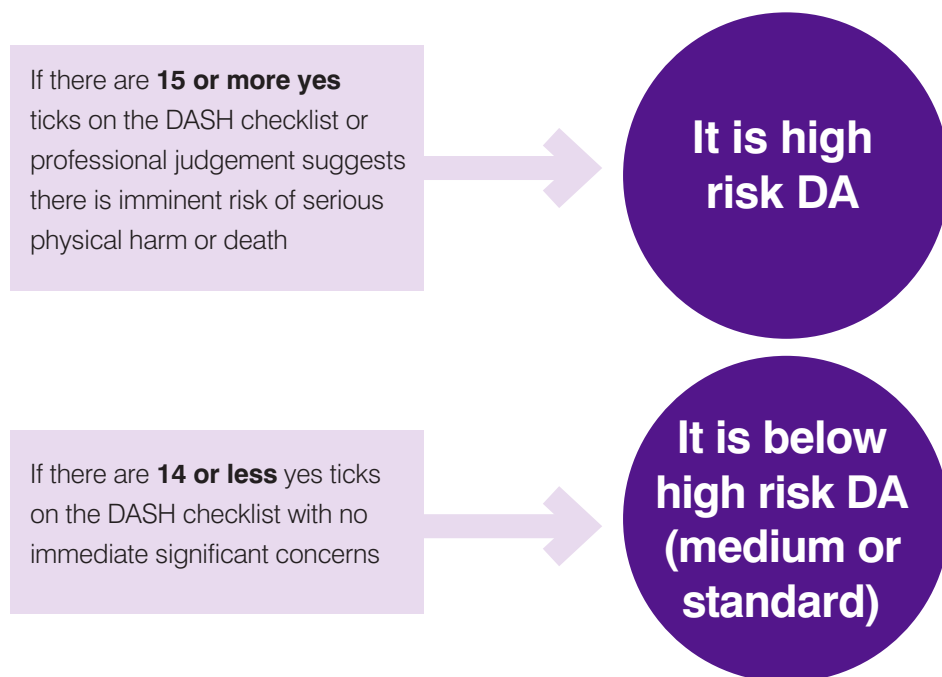
## How to do a DA Risk Assessment:

- If you need help or advice to assess DA risks, call PiPPA on 023 8091 7917 or email [pippa@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:pippa@southampton.gov.uk)

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## Completing a (DASH) DA risk assessment form:

- The Safelives – DASH Risk Checklist is designed to help practitioners identify high risk cases of DA, stalking and 'honour'- based violence.
- The DASH Risk Assessment form is available with this guidance on the following website [www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals/](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals/)



### 'Professional Judgement'

If you have serious concerns about a client's situation always seek help and advice, and refer to MASH. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence.

You should also recognise the 'trigger' factors that often increase risk: pregnancy, recent or imminent separation and child contact. And the aggravating factors that increase risk such as strangulation and use of weapons. Make yourself aware of coercive control and the impact this may have on victims. Professional judgement is based on your experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet the DASH 'ticks' checklist criteria.

### 'Potential Escalation'

The number of Police callouts to the victim as a result of DA in the past 12 months and/or multiple lower level referrals/reports (relating to DA) may be indicators of escalating abuse. Where there is a clear pattern of reports and/or incidents you should use professional judgement in determining risks.

### Help and advice

- If you cannot complete a DASH risk assessment, for example you have not been trained to or your client is not willing to, seek advice from PiPPA.
- Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. It is good practice to review the checklist after a new incident, and at the beginning and end of a child or family intervention where DA is a present factor.



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## How to make a referral

Referral to  
MASH for high  
risk DA and child  
safeguarding  
concerns  
(single referral)

### High Risk DA

Complete MASH high risk DA referral form

Forms accessed by:

[www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/  
domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals/](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals/)

Tel **MASH: 023 8083 2300**

Referral to  
PiPPA  
for DA  
concerns

### Below High Risk DA

You can either call PiPPA for advice or provide your client with PiPPA's details.

Tel: **023 8091 7917**

Email: [pippa@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:pippa@southampton.gov.uk)

Referral to  
MASH for child  
safeguarding  
concerns

### Concerns for a child

Call the professionals number **023 8083 2300**

Complete MASH referral form. This is accessed from  
[www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/  
children/child-social-care/child-protection.aspx](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children/child-social-care/child-protection.aspx)

Advice and  
referral for adult  
safeguarding  
concerns

### Concerns for an adult

Call **023 8083 3003**

Fill in report abuse or concerns form. Accessed here  
[www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/  
adults/help-for-vulnerable-adults/](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/adults/help-for-vulnerable-adults/)

**If there is immediate danger or risk of serious harm call the Police 999**



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