

*“I crept downstairs because I heard arguing. Dad was standing over mum kicking her. I made sure that my sister didn't see, but we still heard. When mum came upstairs, her nose was bleeding and we all cried. We stayed there until dad went out.”*

Domestic abuse is a crime and a major social problem affecting many families. In 90% of reported domestic abuse cases, children have either been present in the same, or a nearby, room.



Children who see, get involved with or hear violence are affected in many ways. What is certain is that children do hear, they do see and they are aware of domestic abuse in a family.

Children will learn how to act from what their parents do. Domestic Abuse teaches children bad things about relationships and how to deal with people. For instance:

- It can teach them that violence is the way to sort out arguments.
- They learn how to keep secrets
- They do not trust those close to them and think they are to blame for violence, especially if violence happens after an argument about the children.

Many people find it difficult to understand why people stay in, or return to, violent situations. Fear, love, the risk of homelessness and financial issues can make it very difficult for partners with children to leave, and some may just not want to.

### **Short-term effects:**

Children are affected in many ways by violence, even after a short time. These effects include:

- \* Feeling frightened;
- \* Bedwetting;
- \* Violence;
- \* Problems at school;
- \* Becoming quiet or shy;
- \* Running away;
- \* Behaving badly;
- \* Poor concentration and emotional upset.

### **Long-term effects:**

The longer children are around violence, the worse the effects on them are. These can include:

- \* A lack of respect for non-violent parent;
- \* Loss of self-confidence, which will affect how they form relationships in the future;
- \* Being over-protective of parent ;
- \* Loss of childhood;
- \* Problems at school;
- \* Running away

If you are worried about domestic abuse , discuss it with someone else such as your health visitor or the domestic violence helpline. If you are violent and have children, you can seek help to stop what is happening.

If you are a victim you can apply, without the need for a solicitor, for a Non-Molestation Order in the Family Proceedings Court. Contact the Duty Clerk at your local magistrates court.

If you would like details of solicitors in your area who deal with family law, contact the Law Society on 020 7320 5650 or via [Find a Solicitor](#)

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### Warning Signs:

Any domestic abuse between parents will affect children badly.

Get support and help as soon as possible. The longer it lasts, the more damaging the abuse is.



### Action:

Report your concerns about yourself or someone else to the Police. If you are worried that your child might be affected, talk to them about what is happening. Spend time together talking through any worries they may have.



### What to say:

Children need time to talk about the feelings they have about abuse.

Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way it should be.



### Prevention:

A violent partner must seek help to stop their actions.

Make sure that you offer a good role model for children so that they learn better ways of acting.

### Contacts:

**Buckinghamshire County Council First Response Team:** 0845 4600001

**Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Team:** 0800 999 7677

**NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**National Domestic Violence Helpline:** 0808 2000 247

**In an emergency: DIAL 999**