**Domestic Abuse Safety Planning**

Throughout the guidance we refer to the survivor as female, although it is acknowledged that men can also be survivors of abusive relationships, statistics reflect females are far more likely to experience abuse in comparison to males.

**Age/Developmental Stage**

* Safety planning for children and young people is key to all interventions to safeguard children in domestic violence situations. It is not advisable to conduct safety planning with children under 7 years of age or with additional needs. This is because research indicates that these children do not have an innate ability to self-protect. In these circumstances it will be for the non-abusing parent to keep the child safe.
* The lead professional will need to assess developmental needs and may need to adapt information accordingly e.g more discussion based with older children and more pictorial based with the younger age. In conclusion the facilitator should make a professional judgement when delivering this work with children of a younger age.

**Session Structure**

* The sessions have been designed as an aid to help children to identify domestic abuse and to begin to put a safety plan in place thus reducing the risk of harm from domestic abuse. It is foreseen that on completion of an Early Help Assessment that if domestic abuse is identified and therefor impacting on the child/Young person a DARIM risk assessment tool will be completed.
* On completion of the DARIM a referral may then be made to Listening Ear for the child/young person to receive more targeted, therapeutic support. These sessions are not designed to replace the specialist work of Listening Ear, rather to give the child a Safety Plan in the immediacy.

**Session one: Talking it through**

* Safety planning needs to begin with an understanding of the victims views of the risks to herself and her children and the strategies she has in place to address them, this will be supported through the information gathered in the completion of an Early Help Assessment.
* In the first session the worker will utilise the Safety in the home’ resource booklet with the child/young person to identify:

What is abuse?

Feelings and emotions

What help there is?

Introduce the safety planning

The ‘Talking it Trough‘ worksheet will promote a child-centred discussion between the worker and young person in order to capture their ‘voice’.

**Session Two : Completion of Safety Plan**

* This session will begin by completing one of two worksheets (dependent on age appropriateness).
* Thought Wall- This will be used with young people and encourages them to be honest and open with workers by using prompt words to promote discussions in order for the young person to gain insight and awareness of ‘trigger’ points of abuse.
* My 3 islands – This will be used with younger children and promotes discussions into what their worries are by being able to voice and describe who and what makes them happy, worried and their wishes for the future.
* Next the worker will support the young person/child to design their personal safety plan. It must be down to each individual professional judgement to assess the appropriateness of the child/young person taking a physical safety plan away, if this will place the child /young person at additional risk then it will be retained within their records.

**Session Three: Review**

* This session will be a review of the previous sessions and will revisit the child/young persons learning around the issue of domestic abuse, their safety plan and any questions that they may have.
* The plan will need to be reviewed from time to time to see if anything has changed and if new safety plans need to be put into place.
* Risk is dynamic and this means safety planning is also, because of this the safety planning need to be reviewed and updated periodically.

**Domestic Abuse Safety Planning Pathway for Children**

Lead professional to identify the most relevant and appropriate person to carry out 3 safety planning sessions with the child/young person.

Referral to Listening Ear for Impact of Domestic Abuse Direct Work

LEVEL 3

Family First

Early Help Assessment

Completion of DARIM

Assessment Tool

LEVEL 4

Children’s Social Care

Single Assessment

Domestic Abuse Identified

LEVEL 2

Early Help Assessment

Need for Safety Planning with Children Identified via the Whole Family Assessment