



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



7 Minute Briefing

May 2025

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Why does this practice guidance exist?

Domestic abuse affects the lives of many of the children and young people we speak to at Cafcass Cymru. In 2020, the Harm Panel's Report highlighted the need for improved responses to domestic abuse throughout the family justice system.

Our role is to promote the voice of the child in family court proceedings. We have a valuable part to play in advocating for their safety and wellbeing. In accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, we recognise children and young people as victim-survivors of domestic abuse too, where abuse is a factor in their caregivers' relationships or their immediate family.

It is therefore important for us to provide a consistent, strengths based, trauma and domestic abuse informed approach to our work as child practitioners to support the safest recommendations for children and young people, and by extension their wider family network.

Key Objectives

To guide and support Cafcass Cymru practitioners in their approach to children and their families, where domestic abuse is identified as a risk factor.

To support our understanding of domestic abuse in all its forms, to accurately assess risk of harm to children, young people and their families through their family court journey.

Who does this apply to?

We want everyone at Cafcass Cymru to work by the principles of this guidance.

For child practitioners, this guidance will support them in developing informed and measured reports, focusing on safety and wellbeing in their recommendations where domestic abuse is concerned.

This guidance is also valuable to other teams at Cafcass Cymru. Any interaction with families and stakeholders, regardless of whether this is in official court capacity, business and administration or wider projects provides us with an opportunity to apply a trauma and domestic abuse informed approach to our work.

Core principles

- Recognising and highlighting the impact of domestic abuse on the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors (child and adult).
- Listening to children and young people and highlighting their wants and needs in our reports.
- Holding parents who perpetrate abuse accountable by highlighting the impact of abuse in our reports, and in our recommendations.
- Applying a strengths-based approach to our discussion of victim-survivor parents in our reports.

How does it affect practice?

Cafcass Cymru practitioners are trained in the Safe & Together™ approach to child welfare. The Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance supports staff to apply their learning of this model to their practice.

The guidance provides theoretical and practical information, and further resources to support our understanding of domestic abuse in all its forms.

It features key practice points, reflective questions to support our investigative approach and links to further resources and toolkits. It highlights what response families experiencing domestic abuse can expect from Cafcass Cymru practitioners and staff.

Support and resources

The full guidance offers further resources, references and reading lists to support your professional development on this topic.

The Live Fear Free Helpline is the Welsh Government's national 24/7 support line for survivors and professionals, regardless of their identity, seeking advice and support relating to domestic abuse.

Live Fear Free: www.gov.wales/live-fear-free

Live Fear Free Helpline: 0808 8010 800

Call to Action

For Cafcass Cymru practitioners:

- Take time to read the guidance.
- Make a note of practice points you will take forward in your work.
- Apply the principles to your practice.

