



**Black Country  
Women's Aid**  
*we listen, we support, we care*

Information for  
primary schools



**Working with schools across the Black Country to  
support children and young people affected by  
domestic abuse at home**

**Helping schools implement Operation Encompass**



Support with  
safeguarding

One to one  
casework

Group  
programmes

Training for  
staff

Contact: [youngpeople@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:youngpeople@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)



# About Our Future



Our Future is a project delivered by Black Country Women's Aid (BCWA), funded by the Home Office until March 2020.

Our Future offers a range of support to nurseries, schools and colleges to help them respond effectively to children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Our Future is available for primary and secondary schools, nurseries, PRUs and colleges in **Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall** and **Wolverhampton**.

Our Future underpins **Operation Encompass**, a police and education partnership in which police provide notifications to schools when there has been a call-out to a child's home relating to domestic abuse.

Our Future can help your school to build a response to domestic abuse, with support including:

- **Advice** for staff on supporting children ;
- Direct one to one **casework** for children;
- Group support **programmes** delivered in school;
- **Training** for staff.

Our Future can help schools meet **OFSTED** requirements by:

- Demonstrating effective safeguarding arrangements to identify and support vulnerable children
- Demonstrating a proactive response to indicators that children are suffering/at risk of abuse, neglect or harm
- Creating a whole-school ethos to PSHE, empowering children to have a greater understanding of healthy relationships, managing emotions and staying safe.

Evidence suggests that children with greater emotional, social and behavioural wellbeing demonstrate higher levels of attainment and engagement.



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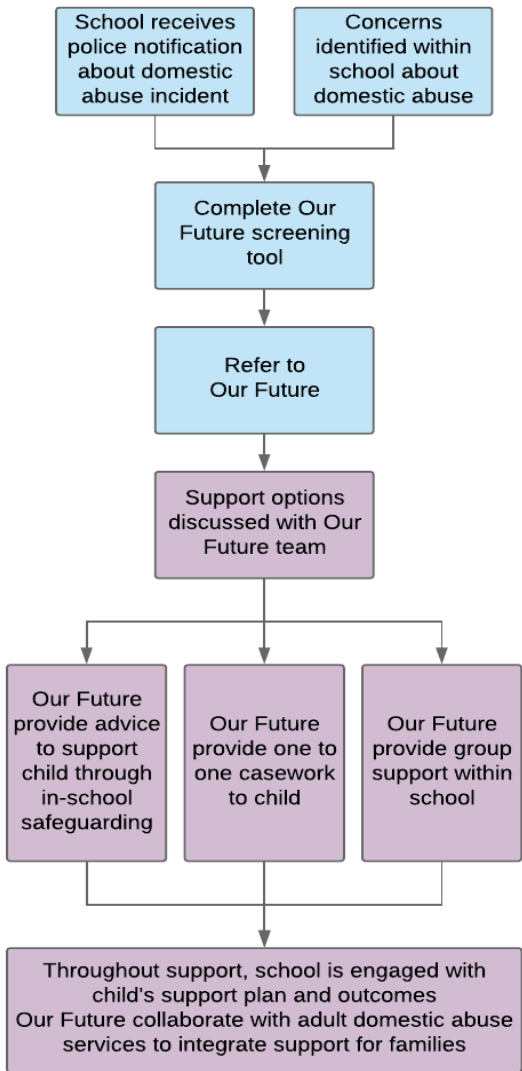
**Walsall Office:**  
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## REFERRING TO THE SERVICE



When you receive a police notification about domestic abuse, or if you have concerns about a child witnessing or living with domestic abuse, Our Future can help.

To refer into the service, we will ask you to complete a screening tool identifying what you know about the child's needs. Our team will then discuss an appropriate support package with you. The options may include:

1. Advice and guidance from our team on supporting the child through internal safeguarding;
2. One to one support and advocacy based on the child's needs;
3. Group support programmes where there are a number of children with identified needs within the school.

### Consent:

We need parental consent in order to provide one to one or group support, however if consent is unavailable our team can still advise and work with you to support children through internal safeguarding.

## CONTACT US

For more information and to request a copy of the screening tool/referral form:

**Email:** [youngpeople@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:youngpeople@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)

**Call:** 0121 553 0090

[info@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)  
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Registered Charity No. 1032298



*"They helped me to regain my confidence and rebuild my life"*

*"Lots of organisations sit around and talk about it; [they] are out there doing the work"*

Black Country Women's Aid (formerly Sandwell Women's Aid) is a leading regional charity which supports victims of violence across the West Midlands.

We offer sensitive and holistic **support** services which each year help thousands of **victims of abuse** to **escape from violence**, cope with trauma and rebuild their lives. We place victims' voices at the heart of our work and we constantly develop our services in response to needs in our communities.

Our services include support for both adult and child victims of domestic abuse, stalking, sexual violence, exploitation and international human trafficking, and women in the criminal justice system.

First established 30 years ago in Sandwell, we have grown from a small local refuge provider to a diverse organisation which works across Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

BCWA won the Black Country Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award 2015, and the One to Watch Award and Highly Commended overall at the Investors In People Awards 2014.

Our Future is BCWA's latest project, working across the Black Country to support children living with domestic abuse at home. Our range of other support services in the four boroughs include:

#### Services in Sandwell

- **Domestic abuse** community support services for victims 16 + and refuge accommodation
- **Stalking and harassment** support for women & girls 13+
- **Rape and sexual violence** support for adults and children 5+
- **Young People's services** for victims of domestic abuse, grooming and exploitation 11+
- **Modern slavery** services
- **Women's Justice** services for female offenders and those with complex needs
- **Training**

#### Services in Dudley

- **Domestic abuse** community support services for victims 16 +
- **Stalking and harassment** support for women & girls 13+
- **Rape and sexual violence** support for adults and children 5+
- **Young People's services** for victims of domestic abuse, grooming and exploitation 11+
- **Modern slavery** services
- **Women's Justice** services for female offenders and those with complex needs
- **Training**

#### Services in Walsall

- **Domestic abuse** community support services for victims 16 +
- **Stalking and harassment** support for women & girls 13+
- **Young People's services** for victims of domestic abuse, grooming and exploitation 11+
- **Modern slavery** services
- **Training**

#### Services in W'ton

- **Stalking and harassment** support for women & girls 13+
- **Rape and sexual violence** support for adults and children 5+
- **Young People's services** for victims of domestic abuse, grooming and exploitation 11+
- **Modern slavery** services
- **Training**

For more information about any of our services please contact our Head Office on 0121 553 0090 or email [info@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)

## Supporting your school

### 1. SUPPORTING IN-SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING

Our Future's team can help you support children through your internal safeguarding processes. This is an option particularly where parental consent is not forthcoming for us to work with children directly.

We can advise and support on a range of issues including:

- The impact of domestic abuse on children;
- Possible feelings and emotions they may display, this may include harmful coping strategies;

- Potential impact on behaviour in the classroom with advice on how to manage this;
- Building helpful coping strategies to manage stress, anxiety, anger, and other emotions;
- Creating a safe space in school, including helping children to identify safe adults and advising staff on handling disclosures;
- Tools and resources for young people including safety plans and support contacts.

### STAFF TRAINING

Black Country Women's Aid's Our Future team offer free training for Designated Safeguarding Leads, Key Adults and other school staff.

The training will provide participants with a solid foundational knowledge of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and the skills that they can utilise to support and safeguard families experiencing DVA.

To request training dates in your area or book training for your school, contact

[youngpeople@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](mailto:youngpeople@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)

#### Learning Outcomes:

- To gain an understanding of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and the dynamics of DVA;
- To gain the knowledge of the impact that DVA can have on children and young people;
- To understand the barriers that prevent disclosures and to gain skills in order to respond to disclosures;
- To understand roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding in the context of DVA;
- To share practical tools for supporting children in school.

### THE EFFECT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON CHILDREN

In 90% of cases of domestic abuse, children are in the same or the next room when an incident happens. Children directly witness 75% of abusive incidents. Even where children do not directly witness violence, living with coercive, controlling behaviour in the home can severely affect them. The impact of this early trauma can last a lifetime, and may include:

- Anxiety, fear and confusion: in younger children this may be expressed through tummy aches, biting nails, tantrums, and in older children and young people through panic attacks, depression and self-harm;
- Anger and disruptive behaviour towards authority figures;
- Harm to physical, emotional, cognitive and social development leading to behaviour problems, poor academic achievement, illness, and depression;
- Increased risk of being taken into care or of becoming a victim of child abuse, up to 40% of child abuse victims report domestic abuse in the home, and domestic abuse is a factor in 93% of serious case reviews concerned with child deaths;
- Disrupted family dynamics, with parenting and attachments destabilised by domestic abuse;
- Risk of becoming a victim of grooming, exploitation, or abuse in their own relationships;
- Risk of becoming abusive to others.



# Support for children

## 2. ONE TO ONE SUPPORT AND CASEWORK

Our Future’s Advocate-Educator team can offer child-centred one to one support which provides a safe space to work through how domestic abuse in the home may be affecting them. This includes:

- Emotional support, with space and time to talk about how they feel;
- Working on healthy ways to express emotions, and healthy coping strategies;
- Discussing safety, danger signs, identifying healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship, and identifying safe adults and support networks;
- Access to counselling services if needed;
- Working alongside school staff to help keep children engaged with education;
- Attend case reviews and multi-agency briefings;

- Helping to rebuild the relationship with the victim-parent, particularly exploring any feelings of anger and resentment, to help the family’s future resilience;
- Developing a whole-family approach through co-working with Black Country Women’s Aid’s adult community support team, or other domestic abuse support services in your area.

### What children say

*“Doing work around domestic abuse made me understand more about what my mum went through and why we had to leave”*

*“My confidence has improved and I have someone that I can talk to about anything. I am always smiling now. Every time I see my support worker at school she makes me smile.”*

## 3. GROUP SUPPORT

<b>Children under 5:</b> <b>Parenting support</b>	<b>You &amp; Me, Mum</b> Group size: up to 10 Women-only 10-sessions	Where children are too young for direct support, we can work to identify parenting support or offer You & Me, Mum. This is a course to help mothers understand how domestic violence affects their parenting, and build strategies to help them address the needs of their children.
<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Helping Hands</b> Age: 5-8 Group size: up to 10 Mixed or single-sex 6-sessions	A programme aiming to help children cope with and recover from their experience of domestic abuse. The themes include developing children’s self-esteem; gender, stereotypes and assumptions; feelings and emotions; the right to feel safe; warning signs; safe adults; others have the right to feel safe with us; secrets and surprises.
<b>Key Stage 2</b>	<b>Inside-Out</b> Age: 8-11 Group size: up to 10 Mixed or single-sex 6-sessions	A BCWA programme focussing more in-depth on understanding, dealing with and expressing emotions helping children to understand how they can control their actions. Themes covered also include self-esteem, gender stereotypes, understanding safety/warning signs, secrets and surprises.

100% of staff would recommend Inside-Out to other schools and felt the programme had helped students improve their emotional health and increase their confidence.

Helping Hands and Inside-Out meet the requirements of SMSC and Ofsted regarding behaviour and conduct including:

- management of feelings and behaviour, and how they relate to others;
- understanding of how to keep ourselves safe from risks.

The programmes also support schools who are working towards being a UNICEF Rights Respecting School.

# More about our group programmes

Helping Hands and Inside-Out are group programmes for children affected by domestic abuse. Each is aimed at a particular age-group, using appropriate tools and methods to convey the key messages that: **we all have the right to feel safe all the time; there is nothing so awful (or so small) that we cannot talk about it with someone; and others have the right to feel safe with us.**

### Benefits of the programmes for children:

- Therapeutic: enables them to explore and express their feelings safely, teaching them that feelings are okay;
- Preventative: explores how their choice of behaviour can affect the feeling of others, encouraging them to express strong feelings without violence, and identify ways to manage conflict;
- Building resilience: develops self-esteem and confidence;
- Increasing safety: informs them of their right to feel safe at all times, encourages them to ask for support when needed, and empowers them to identify their own personal support network.

## Key Stage 1: Helping Hands

Age: 5-8

Group size: up to 10 (minimum group 6), mixed or single-sex groups

Sessions: 6-one-hour sessions, delivered weekly

Helping Hands aims to increase children’s understanding of feeling safe and to explore and promote behaviours which will contribute to a safe environment.



### Week by week

1. Helping Hands
2. I Feel Safe When...
3. Developing Children’s Self Esteem
4. Feelings and Emotions
5. Honesty/Conflict Management
6. Gender Roles & Stereotypes

### What children say

*“You can find ways to calm your angry”*  
*“I have learnt who to talk to if I have a problem”*  
*“You can have many emotions and its ok not to be scared of them”*

## Key Stage 2: INSIDE-OUT

Age: 8-11 (Year 5 & 6)

Group size: up to 10 (minimum 6)

Sessions: six one-hour sessions, delivered weekly

The primary purpose of Inside-Out is to increase children’s understanding of their feelings and emotions and how to deal with these internally and externally. This allows them to gain a better understanding of themselves and how to keep safe. It can also help to reduce potential behavioural issues arising from witnessing domestic abuse.



### Week by week

1. Me and my feelings
2. Recognising and dealing with anger
3. Managing your fears
4. The right to feel safe and who helps us
5. Secrets and surprises
6. Coping strategies and celebrations

### What children say

96% of children said it helped them increase in confidence. 92% said it had improved their emotional health.  
*“I definitely feel more confident.”*  
*“I did not really understand some emotions but I do now.”*  
*“I enjoyed everything about Inside Out and want them to stay all of the time.”*