Domestic violence

Children living with violence in the home respond to their circumstances in many different ways. They may feel frightened, insecure and confused. Often, they learn to keep their feelings and fears to themselves – they may feel like the violence in their home life must be kept secret.

With support, children can begin to cope with and make sense of what has happened in their families. They can overcome the trauma or witnessing or experiencing violence and go on to live safe, happy lives.

We believe that no child should have to live with fear or abuse. We can signpost you onto the support you need to help rebuild your lives.

**Effects of domestic violence on children**

Many children do cope with and survive abuse, displaying extraordinary resilience. However, the physical, psychological and emotional effects of domestic violence on children can also be severe and long-lasting. Some children may become withdrawn and find it difficult to communicate. Others may blame themselves for the abuse. All children living with abuse are under stress. That stress may lead to any of the following:

* Withdrawal
* Aggression or bullying
* Tantrums
* Vandalism
* Problems in school, truancy, speech problems, difficulties with learning
* Attention seeking
* Nightmares or insomnia
* Bed-wetting
* Anxiety, depression, fear of abandonment
* Feelings of inferiority
* Drug or alcohol abuse
* Eating disorders
* Constant colds, headaches, mouth ulcers, asthma, eczema

Many people think that a child who has experienced domestic violence will inevitably become a perpetrator or a victim of abuse later in life. This can happen, however there are a greater number of children who don’t perpetrate abuse than there is who do.

Growing up in a violent home is a risk factor and some children who experience abuse can go on to be abusive in future relationships. Most are repelled by the violence they received as they know only too well what damage it causes; therefore they are more prone to being passive rather than aggressive.