LEVELS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE – FRAMEWORK

**Level 1**

**Considering Factors**
- No Children’s Service involvement
- Verbal Argument of minor matter; no children present/no alcohol or drugs.

**Agencies to consider**
- Identifying abusive behaviours/assess the risk
- Severity of abuse (verbal/physical)
- Impact of the domestic abuse on the children (were they present?/witness/hear abuse/use as a form of control towards victim/threats used towards pets)
- Number of referrals made in relation to domestic abuse is detailed on the police referral? If not have checks been undertaken with PPIU to gain this information?
- Has the agency considered which other agencies the domestic abuse referral has been sent to (this is usually detailed at the top of the referral)

**Action**
- Agency to liaise with other organisations about their involvement with the family and gain background information
- Agency to always contact Children’s Services if child is mentioned to check they have received referral/gain background knowledge
- If no other concerns raised, sole agency could respond to domestic abuse
- Advise Early Help Assessment
- Agencies to refer to Domestic Abuse Handbook

**Children’s Services**
- Check history of involvement. Check Chronology. If still considered to be low level, Children’s Services to make a Contact record on the system detailing how other agency will address concerns
- Social Worker to add this action to the ‘Chronology tab’ on Liquid Logic/child’s record
- Joint screening with Police and social work staff – ensure this is recorded in contact record
- Send out support leaflet and domestic abuse letter

**Level 2**

**Considering Factors**
- Verbal altercation
- Low level assault
- Do parents reside together?
- Are there displays of control within the relationship?
- No combination indicators (drugs / alcohol / mental health)
- Ages of children?
- Children present?

**Action by Social Worker**
- Check Chronology
- Liaise with other agencies
- Speak to manager/deputy manager for agreement of action
- Advise Early Help Assessment
- Refer to Domestic Abuse Handbook.
- Joint screening by Police and Social Worker – ensure this is recorded in contact record.
- Send domestic abuse letter and leaflet of support

**Decision**
- Contact record / Referral record
- Outcome agreed by Deputy Manager

**Level 3**

**Considering Factors**
- Re-occurring domestic abuse
- (verbal, physical, financial or emotional)
- One or more serious domestic abuse incident
- Child present/involved
- Child making 999 call
- Combination factors (drugs / alcohol / mental health)
- History (chronology of domestic abuse)
- Victim previously fled but resumed relationship/retracted statement
- Pregnancy of victim or perpetrator
- Perpetrator Cohesive control

**Action by Social Worker**
- Check Chronology
- Liaise with other agencies
- Speak to child alone
- Speak to parents individually
- Speak to perpetrator and include in assessment
- Joint screening by Police and Social Worker. Police to undertake risk assessment.

**Decision**
- Complete Child and Family Assessment
- Refer to Domestic Abuse Handbook and use to assist assessment/decision making
- Consider strategy discussion with police and joint visit where required
- Consider Child Action Meeting and identify Lead Professional
- Provide Fortalice information/safety plan/refuge information
- Consider harassment/stalking behaviours
- Facilitate Child in Need Plan and refer to appropriate support services
- Plan to be SMART
- Consider use of safety plans
- Service User Risk Assessment to be completed
- Consider MARAC referral/Safe Haven

**Level 4**

**Considering Factors**
- One significant incident
- Re-occurring domestic abuse
- Chaotic lifestyle of family
- Combination indicators (drugs/alcohol/mental health)
- Physical injuries of child or victim
- Child at risk of significant harm
- Social isolation/cultural pressures
- Pregnancy of victim or perpetrator
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Cohesive control

**Action**
- Check Chronology
- Liaise with other agencies
- Request Early Help Assessment
- Joint screening and decision making between Police and Social Worker. Police to undertake risk assessment
- Strategy discussion / consider Section 47 enquiry
- Refer to Domestic Abuse Handbook
- Speak to child alone
- Speak to parents individually
- Speak to perpetrator and include in assessment.

**Decision**
- Strategy meeting
- Consider Section 47 Enquiry
- Child and Family Assessment
- Child in Need meeting and multi-agency plan
- Consider Initial Child Protection Conference – seek Case Management meeting with Head of Service
- Consider harassment/stalking behaviours
- SMART plan/safety plans and targeted support
- Consider MARAC referral

**UPDATE CHRONOLOGY**
When making assessments consider if there has been a sudden increase in violence or aggression = higher risk
Did the victim and perpetrator identify the risk? Ensure direct focus on perpetrator and future risk of repeated behaviour, assist victim in recognising cycles of behaviour and empower.

*Remember: If there has been previous involvement (especially long term) with issues in relation to domestic abuse and another referral is received, this should **not** be considered as a new referral and should be considered after careful deliberation of the chronology and previous involvement from Children’s Services.*