

# **RBBC Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

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# Health Warning

Some of what we will discuss in this the session could be triggering for you due to both professional or personal experience.

If you need to:

- Turn your camera off
- Take time out
- Contact ESDAS in confidence 01737 771350 or [support@esdas.org.uk](mailto:support@esdas.org.uk)
- If you are concerned about your own behaviour contact the Respect Helpline [0808 8024040](tel:08088024040)

# What is new?

- DA Act came into force
- Surrey DA Partnership DA & VAWG Strategies
- Launch of new services
- Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- Impact of Cost of Living Crisis
- Public outrage & Interest

# The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

**The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced important provisions for survivors**

- **statutory definition of domestic abuse**, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, **children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse**;
- create a **new offence of non-fatal strangulation**;
- extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover **post-separation abuse**;
- extend the ‘revenge porn’ offence to cover the **threat to disclose intimate images with the intention to cause distress**;
- clarify the law to **further deter claims of “rough sex gone wrong”** in cases involving death or serious injury;
- **create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures** in the criminal, civil and family courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link);
- **stop vexatious family proceedings** that can further traumatise victims by clarifying the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989;

# The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

## The Act strengthened measures to tackle perpetrators?

- **prohibits perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims** in person in family and civil courts in England and Wales;
- bring the case of R vs Brown into legislation, **invalidating any courtroom defence of consent where a victim suffers serious harm or is killed**;
- enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to **polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody**;
- **extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts** in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences;
- provide for a **new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order**, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour, e.g. seeking mental health support;
- **Introduce a statutory duty on the Secretary of State to publish a domestic abuse perpetrator strategy** (to be published as part of a holistic domestic abuse strategy).

# ESDAS Ethos

- working with survivors and children on a needs led, strengths based, trauma informed basis;
- believing in survivors and children and putting them at the centre of all the work;
- being non-judgemental;
- placing the responsibility for the abuse with the perpetrator;
- working with survivors to empower and inform them;
- providing services that are free of charge, impartial, independent and confidential;
- working with survivors and children to meet their needs, increase safety and freedom; and
- working in a multiagency environment to meet the needs of the survivors and children.



# ESDAS Services

## Outreach

- face-to-face, phone, email or text.
- Specialist advice, advocacy, information & support.
- Crisis intervention & long term work delivered on a needs-led basis.
- Empowerment & recovery crucial to prevent repeat victimisation & maximising safety & well-being.
- Benefits, Children & child contact, Debt, Divorce & separation, Housing, Injunctions, criminal law, referral to other agencies and much more!



- **Children's Services** – 1 to 1, Group Work, Play Therapy and Family Work
- **Young People's Worker** (16-24 year olds)
- **Stalking Advocate** (County wide)
- **Hospital IDVA** – East Surrey Hospital
- **Police Advocate** – Reigate Police Station
- **IRIS Advocate Educator** – RBBC & TDC
- **SDAC IDVA** – Guildford Magistrates Court
- **Counselling**
- **Volunteering Project** – admin support, fundraising, 1-1 emotional support, support at appointments, groups
- **Group Work** – Freedom Programme, Recovery Toolkit, Drop-in Support Group
- **Legal Advice Drop-in** – weekly legal advice clinics
- **Training, Consultancy and National Innovation**



# Learning from DHRs - Tackling Victim Blaming

*In 20 years I don't think I have ever met a survivor of domestic abuse who has not been victim blamed. What this tells us is that we are collectively failing survivors and even worse trampling on the memory of those who did not survive. If we remain unconscious too, engage in and collude with victim blaming we make dangerous perpetrators even more invisible. Victim blaming means that their actions come secondary to what the victim/survivor should have or shouldn't have done. We exonerate perpetrators of the responsibility for abuse and for death by placing it firmly in the hands of victims themselves – we ask them why didn't they disclose the abuse, why didn't they tell us sooner, why didn't they leave, why didn't they protect the children, why did they retaliate, why, why, why?*

*Those who hold power and by that I mean most professionals regardless of rank or position have a responsibility to not just acknowledge victim blaming but to call it out as the one of the most fatal flaws in our responses to perpetrators of domestic abuse. If we allow it to continue we give the green light to current and future perpetrators that there will be a ready made set of excuses sitting on the shelf for you to use when you commit abuse and even murder. We have a choice to decide who we want to be as a person and as a professional and I compel you to consider how you want to contribute to ending perpetrators power and raising victims status.*

RBBC  
2022-23

<b>Referrals</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of Referrals</b>	862
<b>Individual No of Referrals</b>	651

<b>Activity Levels</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Accompanied client to an appointment</b>	22
<b>Advocacy on client's behalf</b>	144
<b>Attempting contact / chasing up</b>	2605
<b>Case File Review</b>	192
<b>Email / mail / text contact with client</b>	7261
<b>Face to face with client</b>	544
<b>Group work</b>	642
<b>Liaison with other professionals</b>	10506
<b>Other</b>	423
<b>Paperwork</b>	310
<b>Phone contact with client</b>	6496
<b>Representation at MARAC</b>	410
<b>Video Call</b>	9

# What can you do ?

- If you are worried about someone you know or love speak to ESDAS
- Break the silence around domestic abuse
- Challenge victim blaming and perpetrator excusing
- Listen to survivors
- Elevate the voices of those who did not survive
- Create a working environment and community that does not tolerate domestic abuse – raise awareness, be brave and commit to ending abuse



*"It was mental torture but ESDAS never gave up on me and gave me emotional support offering genuine encouragement, reassurance and compassion"*

*"Thank you to everyone and your organisation. It's been a truly emotional journey that I'm finally coming through"*



*"What a desperate shame that ESDAS is needed but what an amazing thing that there are people working so hard to help others"*

*"I just wanted to tell you how grateful I am to have had you put in my path. I know this is your job. I do feel you go above and beyond for me. Whether you do that for everyone, you will always be an angel in my eyes. I'll never be able to express how much you help me and continue to do so"*



If we work together we can create  
change and save lives!

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# Further Reading



**Domestic Abuse Act 2020: factsheets**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets>

**In Control: Dangerous Relationships and How They End in Murder: Homicide Timeline Training**

<https://homicidetimeline.dreams-lms.com/>

**Come Together to End Domestic Abuse: a survey of UK attitudes to Domestic Abuse 2022**

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/evidence-hub-come-together-to-end-domestic-abuse-a-survey-of-uk-attitudes-to-domestic-abuse-2022/>