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 **Domestic Abuse : The Impact on Children and Young People**

Domestic abuse can impact on children in a number of ways, which may include:-

* Threat to an unborn child through direct blows or kicks directed at the abdomen risking injury to the mother and foetus.
* Children suffering physical blows during episodes of violence.
* Children being forced by the perpetrator to participate in physical assaults.
* Children witnessing the abuse of their mother by being present, or in the next room, whilst abuse is taking place.

Domestic abuse can seriously undermine the abused carers physical and psychological ability to meet the needs of children. Lack of money, fear of community disapproval, disruption of children’s lives, fear of losing children, fear of further violence and a lack of alternative safe accommodation are all issues which will inform a carers personal situation and decision making. Black and ethnic minority communities face further obstacles where information and services are not accessible to them and fear of rejection/shame within their immediate support networks may inhibit disclosure of domestic abuse.

There is a high correlation between physical and sexual abuse of children and domestic abuse by the same perpetrator. Where there is suspicion or evidence of domestic abuse the implications for any children in the same household should be considered.

Conversely, where it is believed that a child is being abused, those involved with the child and family should be alert to the possibility of domestic abuse.