

Domestic Abuse - Children & Young People

A Problem on a Huge Scale

Report by The Wish Centre

Why we're calling for a properly funded approach to supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

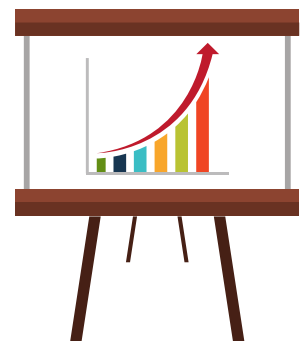
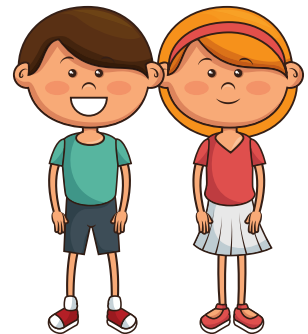
THE FACTS

- Domestic Abuse is the biggest threat to child protection in the UK.*
- 831,000 children in England are living in households that report domestic abuse.**
- Demand for domestic abuse support services rose by 83% in the decade to 2017 - funding fell by 50% during the same time.
- 692 Social Worker Assessments per day in England feature domestic abuse as an issue faced by the child concerned.***

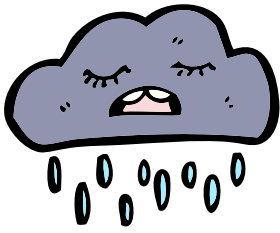
* Local Government Association Report 2019

** Action for Children research

*** Action for Children study 2019



The Impact of This?



Due to the stress & trauma of living in an abusive household, a child's brain becomes "locked" into a higher state of alertness. This means that their "fight or flight" mechanism is activated for most of the time. This constant wear & tear on the brain increases the risk of physical disease, psychological problems such as anxiety and often leads to adoption of damaging behaviours such as smoking, substance misuse and early sexual activity.



Dr Nadine Burke Harris* describes this best. Fight or flight is an extremely useful response if you're in a forest and see a bear - you need the adrenaline & cortisol to flood your system to help you turn & run. The problem is when that bear is coming to your home, day after day. Adrenaline & cortisol floods your system daily and alters the way your mind works.

*See Dr Burke Harris's TED Talk [here](#)

How does The Wish Centre support children & young people?

The Wish Centre takes a whole family approach to the support they offer. Supporting the parent with care benefits the children however, children & young people impacted by abuse need specific, targeted support in their own right. Sadly funding for this is patchy at best as many funders believe that supporting the parents is all that is needed to improve future chances for the children. Specialist one to one intervention is needed for high levels trauma.

"I wasn't offered any help at the time but I've had nightmares about what I saw and heard. I think because mum and dad weren't together anymore and mum was getting help, they thought I didn't need any" Adam, age 15

Helping Hands

For children under 11 focuses on protective behaviours and is useful for children who have witnessed abuse

Young Peoples Recovery Toolkit

helps young people aged 10-16 come to terms with their experiences and develop positive coping strategies

Expect Respect

is aimed at young people between 11-18 and supports to empower, build self-esteem & self-confidence, identify unhealthy relationships & to stay safe

Parachute Programme

is aimed at young people who need help to manage conflict in their relationships. In particular it supports those who may have a history of resorting to violence to solve conflict.



"Specialist support services for children reduce the impact of domestic abuse and improve children's safety and health outcomes"*

"Children who took part in a study of domestic abuse services spoke about the importance of receiving support to move on, make new friends, settle in at school and enjoy a childhood free from fear"**

*SafeLives, In Plain Sight

** Refuge, NSPCC & City Bridge Trust, Meeting the Needs of Children

In their own words.....

- "Helping Hands is incredible" A Aged 7
- "Thank you for helping me get through my beastly problems" M Aged 10
- "I wish I could keep coming back to Helping Hands forever" K Aged 7
- "I learnt that one fight could screw up your life" G Aged 12
- "I learnt to accept myself" L Aged 12
- "It was useful to learn how to cope with feeling angry" J aged 14



[READ OUR FULL REPORT BY CLICKING HERE](#)

