



## **Impact of Domestic Violence on Children**



240,00 children have been exposed to domestic violence in their home. (Unicef 2006)

Childbirth can be a trigger for parental conflict, with around 30% of domestic violence cases starting during pregnancy. (Department of Health 2005),



**1 - 4 children have serious social and behavioural problems and are 2.5 times more likely to have problems.**

*(Wolfe, D. Zak, L. Wilson, S. and Jaffe, P. 1986)*

**Witnessing domestic violence as a child can lead to boys being more likely to be violent as adults, and girls may become more likely to be victims as adults.**

*(Garmezy, N. 1993)*



Children will feel fearful,  
distressed,  
and have degrees of physical,  
psychological or emotional  
developmental problems.  
*(Borowsky, I.W. and Ireland,  
M. 2002)*



## Giving Children a Voice

- Children Act 1989
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children Act 2004
- Every Child Matters Agenda
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- National Domestic Violence Plan 2005
- Contact Point



**Working collaboratively to support children**

**Acknowledgment by professionals that the interest of the child is paramount.**

**Recognising that children's exposure to domestic violence as a 'passive observer' is harmful.**

**Legal requirement for agencies to co-operate - Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, MARACs, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, National Database of children, Children's Workforce Development.**



## Listening to Children

Research indicates that children want and need to talk about the domestic violence they experience.

*(Calder, C. 2004)*

They need to feel safe, be respected, listened to and helped to understand what is happening.

*(Hester, M., Pearson, C. and Harwin, N. 2000)*



Turning intentions to actions

Widespread agreement about the harm domestic violence can have on children.

Desire to improve outcomes for children.

Legal framework to make the outlook for children brighter to secure their wellbeing and to provide timely and appropriate support and intervention.



Families experiencing disadvantages including depression, domestic violence and periods of homelessness can cost the state between £55,000 and £115,000 a year.

These figures reflect the cost of parental problems only.

Children from families with additional support needs can add to the cost of the family.



If children are our future. . .

Stable public funding is needed to support comprehensive and coordinated services for women and their children, as well as program evaluations and replication of effective interventions.

Professionals with regular contact with families and children, including teachers, child care workers, health and mental health care providers, police, and court personnel, should receive ongoing training on domestic violence and its impact on children.

Increased and ongoing public support is needed to develop effective prevention programs that address the underlying causes of domestic violence.