

FOI 2395

13/05/24

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Request:

The most recent materials/guidelines for midwives, obstetricians [and GPs if you hold it] about domestic abuse and pregnancy which staff are meant to follow when identifying and supporting a pregnant woman in their care who is a potential victim of domestic abuse.

What training you give for using the DASH risk assessment (or equivalent risk assessment).

What training your staff receive on coercive control and behaviour.

If you have them, guidelines offered on what to look for in a pregnant person's partner as to whether they might be a domestic abuse perpetrator.

Response:

Within the SHSCT we have a Domestic Abuse and Safety Support Service (DASS), a specialised service for female victims of domestic abuse. This project was created in partnership with the Acute Hospital Social Work team and Women's Aid Armagh Down in June 2020 and is available within Daisy Hill and Craigavon Hospital. Midwives within the SHSCT avail of bespoke training from the DASS service on a monthly basis and DASS training is included within the midwives induction. The DASS service offers several bespoke training sessions on Domestic Abuse including Risk Assessment and Safety Planning, Coercive Control and Domestic Abuse Awareness. This training keeps midwives up to date with the latest legislation around domestic abuse as well as increasing their awareness of risk and being able to have courageous conversations around domestic abuse, enhancing patient's experiences of making a disclosure within a hospital setting. DASS training also includes signs and symptoms of abuse including indicators of perpetrator behaviour. Midwives are also made aware of high risk indicators of domestic homicide and equipped with knowledge regarding appropriate safeguarding actions to take once identified.

Midwives within the SHSCT are able to make direct referrals for women who experience domestic abuse to the DASS services for ongoing support throughout their pregnancy. Midwives are informed how to make these referrals within training and maternity leads along with the DASS management teams created a direct referral pathway for domestic abuse concerns. This pathway is circulated amongst our maternity staff and saved on shared drive systems. DASS also attends our monthly pathway meetings, these

meetings are held in partnership with the hospital social work team for discussion regarding women who are open to or known to safeguarding teams. Having DASS at these sessions enables midwives to address any concerns regarding the processes in relation to domestic abuse and keep up to date with upcoming training and events. DASS has delivered sessions to our new perinatal mental health team as well as our continuity of care midwifery team within the SHSCT.

Our Maternity department recently worked in partnership with the DASS service to create an easily accessible information section on the SHSCT SharePoint system for Domestic Abuse. This includes domestic abuse leaflets in a variety of different languages as well as information on specialised support service available to victims-women's aid, DASS and the adult safeguarding team.

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