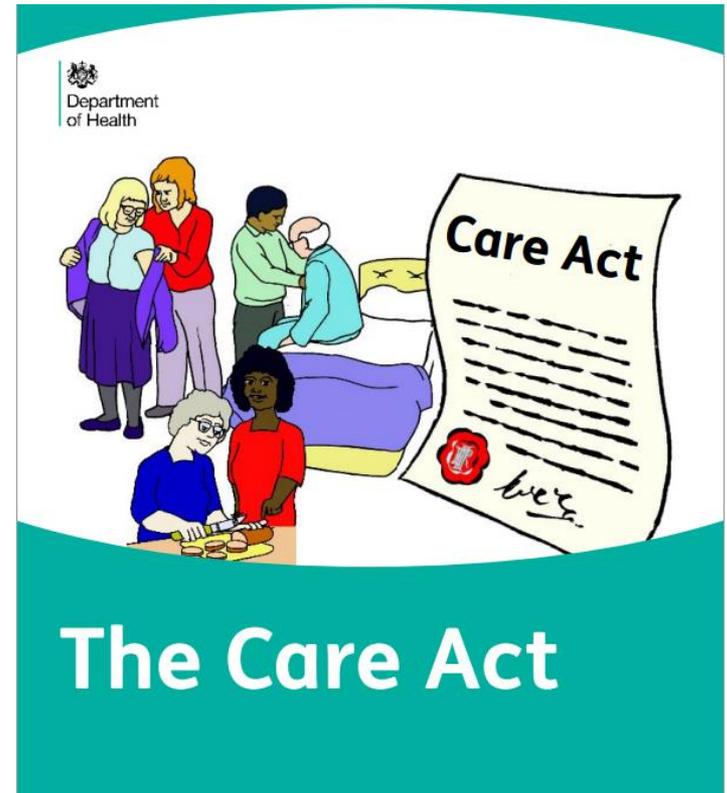


# Child to Parent Abuse and the Care Act

Jo Sharpen



# Definitions

There is currently *no legal definition* of child to parent violence and abuse. However, it is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse and, depending on the age of the child, it may fall under the government's official definition of domestic violence and abuse.

A commonly used definition of this problem is '*any act of a child that is intended to cause physical, psychological or financial damage in order to gain control over a parent*' (Cottrell, 2001: 3 )

# Prevalence

- A Parentline Plus (2010 ) survey revealed that the helpline received **22,537** calls from parents who were being abused by their children between June 2008 and June 2010
- Oxford Uni research found almost **1900** cases of APV recorded as offences in the Metropolitan Police area in a one year period\* (Condry and Miles, 2013)
- Practitioners and parents describe the abuse as often *involving a pattern of aggressive, abusive and violent acts across a prolonged period of time*
- No single explanation for this problem\*\*

# Gender

- Adolescents reported to the police for violence against their parents were overwhelmingly male (**87.3** per cent)
- Parent victims reporting the violence were overwhelmingly female (**77.5** per cent)
- The majority of reported cases of adolescent to parent violence involved a son-mother relationship (**66.7** per cent)

# Challenges

- CPV poses significant challenges to parents as it inverts traditional familial relationships of power and control
- A complex problem and the boundaries between 'victim' and 'perpetrator' can be unclear.
- Additional shame, blame and reluctance to report
- Lack of knowledge and understanding surrounding APV and little official policy/guidance
- Lack of appropriate support/safeguarding for victims
- Need to consider the family as a 'system'\*

# Safeguarding

- For a safeguarding response to be required under the Care Act 2014, the person has to meet the usual three criteria:

1. having care and support needs
2. experiencing (or being at risk of) abuse or neglect
3. being unable to protect themselves because of those needs.



# Safeguarding

It is crucial that a young person using violence towards a parent receives a safeguarding response themselves and that appropriate risk assessment tools are used.

But....

What about the safeguarding needs of the parents?



- Based on professionals' reported experiences, if interventions are not found, there is a high risk of family breakdown, serious injury, damage to property, poor mental health for all concerned, and long term risk to the safety and wellbeing of the young person, who may be made homeless, become marginalised in society and go on to perpetuate abuse against a partner in the future

# Care Act Statutory Guidance states...

“Many people think that domestic abuse is about intimate partners, but it is clear that **other family members are included** and that much safeguarding work that occurs at home is, in fact concerned with domestic abuse. This confirms that domestic abuse approaches and legislation can be considered **safeguarding responses** in appropriate cases.”

“More focus now needs to be given to **family and intergenerational abuse**, and the way in which it may be different from partner violence, for example if the perpetrator is the victim’s (adult) sibling, **child, or grandchild**”.

(LGA/ADASS guidance, 2015)



# 'Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse' is a guide that emphasises the need to:

- develop a good relationship with the adult at risk and put their views and wishes at the forefront of all discussions
- be alert to patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour, and be aware that an adult at risk may refuse to report abuse because of fear
- consider any additional likely impact of abuse on an adult with care and support needs
- understand how local safeguarding services and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) fit together
- be aware of the legislative options and local resources that are available both to safeguarding teams and to MARACs, so that practitioners know the full range of responses available to them when supporting an adult with care and support needs.

Local  
Government  
Association

Directors of  
**adass**  
adult social services

## Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse

A guide to support practitioners and managers



**Crucial to see this as BOTH domestic abuse AND a safeguarding issue**

# Safeguarding Adults Reviews

- Replace Serious Case Reviews
- Must happen when: *An adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult*
- Question – should a domestic violence homicide review also take place? Does one have precedence over the other? Can they take place in parallel and share learning?

# Coercive and Controlling Behaviour

- The new criminal offence of coercive and controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship
- Introduced under section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and carrying a penalty of up to five years in prison

For the offence to apply:

- The continuous behaviour has to have a serious effect on the victim
- Intent by the perpetrator
- The perpetrator and victim were personally connected when the incidents took place (incl: living together and being family members)

# Questions to Ask



- Immediate safety: Are all family members safe in the current situation? How can their safety be maintained?
- What is it that the parent(s) are describing? Do you need to see the family home to get a full picture of the damage or threat?
- Young people may minimise, blame or simply deny abuse, or may make counter-allegations
- What is it that the parent(s) want? What are they actually asking for? What help have they already sought or received?
- If the family is requesting removal of the young person it is likely they are experiencing high levels of threat and risk. Can they be helped to find a respite solution within the wider family, or is care the only option?

## Questions cont.

- What can be done if there is no available service or knowledge locally? What training can be sought?
- What is the level of knowledge of CPV within the local authority?
- Where are referrals coming from?
- Are there joint protocols between services?
- Are there bespoke services available locally?

# Useful Resources

- <http://holesinthewall.co.uk/>
- <http://community21.org/partners/cpv/>
- <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/content/adolescent-parent-violence>
- <http://www.rcpv.eu/the-project>
- [Home Office Guide \(2015\)](#)



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