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Our ref: Gov/CAF 16-89

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23 June 2016

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 23 June 2016. You made the following requests for information:

[What training Cafcass Officers receive on domestic abuse?](#)

Please see below for our response.

The main training we provide on domestic abuse is included in our Risk and Harm induction training. This training aims to help ensure practitioners:

- understand Cafcass' legal responsibilities regarding the assessment of risk and harm
- understand the key requirements of Cafcass' [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Operating Framework](#) regarding risk identification and risk assessment.
- understand what [risk assessment tools](#) are available and when to use them
- apply Cafcass' expectations regarding risk identification and risk assessment to case planning, assessment and analysis in public and private law cases.
- be able to use assessment tools correctly and with confidence

Risk and Harm training includes two required eLearning modules to be completed prior to the training day: 'Risk and Harm in Cafcass' and 'Risk and Harm Domestic Abuse eLearning'. Some relevant screenshots can be seen below.

Core training of Legal Context and Court Skills includes information on domestic violence and the law. Cafcass also provides a knowledge bite 'Post Separation Control: impact on a child'. Other relevant extension training includes 'Static & Dynamic Risk Factors'; 'Assessment in DV cases'; and 'Signs of Safety'.

A range of additional training and courses are available to Cafcass staff. These include:

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- *Child Protection and Decision Making*: in depth training over three days in relation to evidence-based assessments, applying a safeguarding assessment and analysis framework and constructing core and specialist assessments for court.
- *Attachment and Parenting Capacity*
- *16.4 Private Law*: a number of High Conflict Private Law disputes become 16.4 cases where a guardian is appointed to represent a child in proceedings. This course looks at some of these issues.
- *Defensible Decision Making*: explores how to evidence critical decisions in casework
- *Developing Private Law Practice Skills*: all private law staff received this training after the introduction of the Child Arrangement Programme. It explores practitioner intervention skills to support the achievement of safe and child centred arrangements in private law proceedings.
- *Legal Roadshow*: this looks at different family law topics each year
- *Knowledge Bites*: these are short updates in relation to a range of topics with up to date reference lists. These include:
 - *Emotional Harm*: understanding the possible implications of sustained parental conflict on children.
 - *Contact in Private Law Proceedings*: the messages from research and key practice considerations.
 - *Children experiencing domestic violence*: From Research in Practice. Cafcass has a membership and agreement we can deliver their course. It is also available to members (all Cafcass practitioners) as eLearning with their Research Review.

The statutory guidance framework 'Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship' (December 2015) is available to practitioners on our training website MySkills, and a 'knowledge alert' has recently highlighted this guidance to practitioners with a reminder about the relevant new legislation Serious Crime Act 2015 which sets out the criminal offence of coercive control.

Please see below for screenshots from eLearning 'Risk and Harm Domestic Abuse':

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Domestic Abuse Theory
The power and control wheel

Our understanding of the causes and dynamics of domestic abuse is constantly evolving. Early awareness and interventions were based on a feminist analysis, which set domestic abuse in the context of patriarchal societies. It was linked with the oppression of women and the use of coercive control within intimate relationships.

The Power and Control wheels were developed in Duluth, USA, as part of an integrated community response to tackling domestic abuse. The experiences of survivors were used to develop a curriculum for working with perpetrators and to identify, on the flip side, what non abusive relationships should look like. [Michael Paymar and Ellen Pence 1993].
Please click each segment to find out what the behaviours look like



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Domestic Abuse Theory
Why violence is on the edge of the wheel?

Please select the answer that more accurately describes why physical violence is on the periphery of the Power and Control Wheel and is not a separate "tactic" of abuse.

- Because all domestic abuse involves physical violence
- Because all types of abuse have the same impact as physical abuse
- Because the threat of physical violence underpins the control dynamic in all forms of abuse, and is ever present
- Because physical violence is prevalent



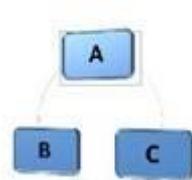
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Domestic Abuse Theory
Current domestic abuse theory

Recent domestic abuse research suggests that whilst the power and control dynamic holds true, mainly, but not exclusively, for male on female violence within intimate relationships. Violence within lesbian relationships; Renzetti, (1992), and among some women who terrorize their male partners (Cook, 1997; Hines & Douglas, 2010), there are other typologies of abuse.

Several studies have suggested that there is a typology of perpetrators of domestic abuse. Click here to find out more about the different typology of an intimate terrorist.
Click the boxes below labelled A, B, C below to read more



Intimate terrorism
This is the pattern of violent coercive control that comes to mind for most people when they hear the term "domestic violence". Although it probably represents a small part of all of the violence that takes place between partners in intimate relationships, it is the type of violence that predominates among the cases that come to the attention of law enforcement, shelters and other public agencies, and that therefore has been the prototype of domestic violence for the battered women's movement (see Almost Any Shelter Web site).

It involves the combination of physical and/or sexual violence with a variety of non-violent control tactics, such as economic abuse, emotional abuse, the use of children, threats and intimidation, invocation of male privilege, constant monitoring.

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Domestic Abuse in Practice
Anger management and domestic abuse

You have seen that whilst the power and control dynamic applies to 'intimate terrorists' there are some abusers whose violence is generalised. These perpetrators may also have issues of impulsivity or anger management.

Top tip: Most perpetrators of domestic abuse attribute their behaviour to 'having anger problems' rather than an attempt to control their partners. Discussion with the victim about whether there has been a pattern of coercive control is key to your analysis.



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We hope that you feel your question has been answered effectively. If you are unhappy with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may ask for an internal review to be undertaken. If you are dissatisfied with the way the internal review is handled or with the final decision made at that review about the information released, you are free to contact the Information Commissioner's office (www.ico.org.uk):

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Yours sincerely,

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