

The Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Standards



A Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Worker:

If an incident is reported to the police, and it is categorised as domestic abuse, the worker can be available to you throughout the court process to give you information about court, offer safety and risk advice and support, and to be your voice in the criminal justice process.

The worker is trained in domestic abuse and responding to trauma.

The worker can explain the criminal court process to you and keep you informed with the court case.

They can pass information to and from court. The information is always about feelings of risk and safety and court measures like special conditions of bail.

They can help you feel emotionally prepared for court and help voice your practical needs if you are going to court. They are not able to appear in court on your behalf.

The worker can offer space and time to talk about more than the reported incident.

They can talk with you about:

- ✔ Current risk of domestic abuse that you may be fearful of
- ✔ Safety planning options like home security options or emotional support options
- ✔ Your feelings and how the court case is impacting on you
- ✔ They can talk to you about the safety needs of your child /children.
- ✔ Other local projects and supports that might be useful to you and your children. They will know how to connect you to other projects and supports.
- ✔ At times, if you need them to, they will be able to speak to other agencies, to help the other agency understand the situation you are experiencing.

About the standards

The standards are for you regardless of how you identify, or are identified.

The standards start from the understanding that:

Everyone has a right to live their life free from abuse.

Everyone should have access to free, independent, and accredited domestic abuse court advocacy.

Domestic abuse is an intersectional gendered issue. We recognise that society is not equal, and power and privilege co-exist both between genders, and within genders

What are the standards for?

The Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Standards are minimum standards.

They are:

- ✔ A way to explain domestic abuse court advocacy to the general public, including victims and survivors and professionals
- ✔ A way for everyone to know what to expect, at a minimum, from domestic abuse court advocacy services
- ✔ The basis for accrediting services.
Domestic abuse court advocacy services only meet the Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Standards once accredited.

The Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Standards for Scotland

Client-worker relationship is a partnership and central to this service

Clients always know who their worker in this service is throughout the court process.

Contact is safe, tailored and regular, as agreed with each client.

This service can communicate with clients in safe and accessible ways.

Workers are trained professionals who are:

- ✔ domestic abuse competent,
- ✔ knowledgeable about the criminal justice process
- ✔ trauma responsive,
- ✔ empathetic, non-judgemental, and realistic.

Client safety is the priority

This service understands the client is the expert of their own situation and partners with them.

This service works with clients at all levels of risk from a partner or ex-partner.

Workers regularly offer the client:

- ✔ domestic abuse risk assessment
- ✔ tailored safety planning

Risk is managed and reviewed appropriately by this service.

This service tries to reduce unnecessary risk for clients who engage with the service.

This service ensures workers are safe and supported.

The right information is provided at the right time

Information is available about this service and what support it can provide.

This service contacts the client before and on the day of every court hearing.

The worker can:

- ✔ Explain court processes
- ✔ Communicate the client's view to criminal justice partners on points relevant to the court case
- ✔ Identify practical and emotional support for attending court

In partnership, workers and clients identify and refer to services that can help with clients' wider needs including at the end of support.

Domestic abuse can only be addressed in partnership

Case notes and information sharing are respectful, legal and explained to clients.

This service has established ways of working and communicating with criminal justice agencies.

This service has clear remits, roles and responsibilities when working in partnership with other agencies.

This service is actively involved in multi-agency risk management and child/adult protection.

Incorporating clients' expertise is essential to this service

Every client is treated as an individual, the context they live in is recognised, and this service understands how this affects clients and their needs.

This service is always learning from people who have used the service by:

- ✔ Consistently gathering information
- ✔ Responding to and actioning feedback

This service's strategy, direction and development is continuously informed by lived experience.

This service ensures that learning from clients is safe and authentic.

This service strives to improve the systems that affect clients

This service uses client feedback and data collection to promote positive change in the criminal justice system.

Workers challenge other agencies' misconceptions about domestic abuse.

This service encourages change in systems affecting clients through:

- ✔ Relationships with other agencies
- ✔ Taking part in wider groups

This service understands the impact that domestic abuse and the criminal court can have on parenting

This service can make referrals to specialist young person and children's services for support for the client's child(ren).

The worker will ask and support clients about their child(rens) situation including:

- ✔ Impact of domestic abuse
- ✔ Any risk to children
- ✔ Current child contact arrangements

The worker will partner with the client to support safety planning for their child(ren) of all ages.

This service discusses with clients possible criminal court decisions that could affect their children.

This service will inform and support clients with local court processes for child witnesses.

When is domestic abuse court advocacy available?

