

10 February 2022

Subject: Child social services - domestic abuse victim - survivor

Question 1

How often does child social services victim blame a domestic abuse victim / survivor?

Answer

Within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Children's Community Services, our social work practitioners use a range of assessment tools to enhance their understanding of the impact the of domestic violence on families and children so as to ensure that interventions are targeted to maximise safety, protection and recovery from the trauma experienced. Practitioners' interventions are not premised on "victim blaming" but rather on "victim recovery" to ensure children are safeguarded and protected from future harm.

Question 2

How long do you need to be separated or divorced from a domestic abuse perpetrator before child social services accept that you have nothing to do with your abuser? Accept you are a separate entity.

Answer

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is regrettably unable to specifically provide a time period for the requestor as this will be case specific and dependant on a range of protector factors.

Question 3

How often do child social services help a domestic abuse victim, how long does it take for them to help and how long does that help continue for?

Answer

Within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Children's Community Social work Services frequently receive referrals in relation to parents and children who have been the victims of domestic violence and abuse. Duration of support and intervention will be determined on an individual case by case basis and therefore the level of need may range from sign-posting families to other supports such as

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Women's Aid, Nexus or Advocacy Services through to longer term direct social work interventions.

Question 4

Does the council or child social services believe there is a connection between domestic abuse/ violence and the victim suffering from Stockholm syndrome? Has the council or social services done any studies to prove or disprove this theory?

Answer

When undertaking assessments and determining the need for support and interventions, Children's Community social work teams will draw upon a range of knowledge, skills and assessment tools to help understand the child / families circumstances and inform the most appropriate interventions to ensure the child is safeguarded and protected. While the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has not undertaken any direct studies / research in relation to specific theories associated with the experiences of some victims of domestic abuse, staff are knowledgeable in regards the range of theories as they relate to the assessment process.