



## Domestic abuse scenario - SEND DSL Information Sheet

### Questions for the DSL to facilitate a discussion:

- Is there reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect? In what way?
- How might the school deal with the issue of consent?
- Who needs to be involved in exploring these concerns?

### Analysis

- There is reasonable cause to suspect Hasan is at risk of suffering significant harm through the potential to witness or hear domestic abuse.
- The information as it stands suggests that Iqbal has perpetrated domestic abuse previously and there is no information to suggest this risk has reduced. However, there has not been a definite identification that this is Zayne Alam.
- Iqbal appears integrated into the family, describing himself as Hasan's father. He is a significant person in Hasan's life.
- At this stage there is no evidence of impact on Hasan or Sufia, but often the severity of domestic abuse builds up over a period of time and Hasan has the right to be protected from the risk of future emotional abuse.
- It is not clear what Sufia knows about Iqbal's history. His change of name may be a means of concealing identity, or he may have introduced himself differently for cultural reasons (he may simply have two names).

### Action

- This will require a referral to children's social care, although at this stage consent has not been sought nor has there been an opportunity to check the information shared by the teacher.
- The school should assess the risk towards the teacher – it might be sensible not to share the information on who has identified Iqbal at this stage until more is known about the risk he poses. Seek advice at strategy discussion from Police.
- It would be sensible to try to speak to Sufia to obtain details on Iqbal (for example date of birth, any other names and any other children) for the



school records and to make definite identification easier. This could be undertaken by a senior member of staff rather than the teacher.

- At first reasonable opportunity talk directly to Sufia about domestic abuse, make information available, local groups, support and compassion. Recognise the potential for Iqbal to be present or listening in to telephone calls. There will be a need to understand Sufia's perspective on the relationship and consider what barriers there may be.
- Advise Sufia about the referral to children's social care as she has parental responsibility for Hasan. Explain that you will come back to her with more information.
- Record the concern with the background and your analysis.
- Make a referral to children's social care because of likely impact of significant harm – if the details match or are not available a strategy discussion must be held. The strategy discussion should ensure information is sought from the other authority and children's social care should gather information from Iqbal's previous children's school. Ensure any plan involves addressing the concern directly with Iqbal (often plans centre on actions required of the victim, which ends up with them carrying 'blame'). The strategy discussion should support the school in undertaking a risk assessment on Iqbal's potential behaviour towards staff.
- The focus of the strategy discussion should be on Hasan and consider whether he is safe from immediate harm. Given the severity of the incident there should also be a strand of actions geared towards assessing the risk to Sufia using the [Safelives risk checklist](#) and considering whether a referral to MARAC is warranted. The strategy discussion should consider the level of information Sufia has a 'right to know' under the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (sometimes known as Claire's Law – links correct November 2020) and there should be a decision about who is best placed to talk to Sufia.
- Have increased awareness of Hasan; provide natural opportunities to talk if he needs to. If he does talk remember: do not interrogate, ask open questions. There is a need to consider how Hasan may be best supported given his additional needs and any associated communication / learning delay. Do we know how Hasan perceives Iqbal and Iqbal's place in the family - how has this been explained to him by the family? Do staff have any other information that may assist with helping to work out how Hasan feels about Iqbal being a member of the family?



- Considering Hasan's additional needs, what steps can be taken to provide him with information about rights and wrongs related to people's behaviour to each other?
- Review risk in light of the on-going investigation.
- What is happening more widely in the school to raise the profile of domestic abuse? Information around the school, covered in curriculum etc.