New guidance helps general practices respond to domestic abuse

Patients experiencing domestic abuse should receive a more consistent response from their GP when new domestic abuse guidance for general practices is released in June.

The guidance, called *Responding to Domestic Abuse: Guidance for General Practices*, was produced in collaboration by national charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), the Identification & Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and funded by the Department of Health.

Professor Gene Feder, RCGP Domestic Violence Co-Champion and project lead for IRIS, said: “Domestic violence is a public health concern and an RCGP clinical priority. GPs are increasingly aware of this, but many practices do not have clear care pathways for how to respond to victims. Targeted at practice managers and clinicians, this guidance supports practices to respond appropriately and safely to women and men experiencing abuse.”

“There isn’t a victim, child or perpetrator who doesn’t have a GP,” said Diana Barran, Chief Executive of CAADA. “This means that GPs are in a unique and trusted position to help victims through early identification and signposting to specific support services. By supporting GPs to give a consistent response, this new guidance will help make victims safer.”

**What’s in the guidance?**

The guidance includes key principles to help GPs and healthcare staff respond quickly and effectively to patients who disclose domestic abuse. These include:

- The practice manager should build strong partnerships with local domestic abuse services and ensure domestic abuse training for the practice team.
- The practice should establish a domestic abuse care pathway, so that the team understands the correct process for identifying abuse, responding to disclosure, risk assessment, referral and information sharing.
- Direct referral to a domestic abuse service for further assessment of any patient disclosing abuse to a clinician should take place. Some practices may develop an internal referral route to a practice nurse or other health professional with additional domestic abuse training who will conduct the specialist assessment.
- Domestic abuse should also be addressed by the local strategic lead for the clinical commissioning group.

The guidance also includes resources to help the practice team, including a process map for responding to domestic abuse and a services directory.

[Read](#) the full guidance.

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

For more information please contact Amy Holgate at CAADA on 0117 3178750 or email [amy.holgate@caada.org.uk](mailto:amy.holgate@caada.org.uk).

**About CAADA:**

Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Our work focuses on saving lives and saving public money. CAADA provides practical help to support professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims. The aim is to protect the highest risk victims and their children - those at risk of murder or serious harm.
About Identification & Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS):
IRIS is a general practice-based domestic violence and abuse training support and referral programme. www.irisdomesticviolence.org.uk

About the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP):
The RCGP is a membership body of family doctors committed to delivering excellence in general practice and patient care, in the UK and overseas. www.rcgp.org.uk

This guidance complements the RCGP's e-learning module on domestic violence which can be found here: http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk