
**PRACTICE GUIDELINES
TO SUPPORT THE REPORT
DOMESTIC ABUSE AND
THE METHODIST CHURCH
TAKING ACTION**



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These guidelines have been developed to support districts, circuits and churches in following through the resolution and recommendations from the report *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church... Taking Action*, brought to Methodist Conference in June 2005 (agenda no.48). In the report, the main focus is on abuse of women by male partners, but abuse of all kinds is unacceptable, thus these *Good Practice Guidelines* apply in **any** relationship (1.5).

The terms violence / abuse are used interchangeably throughout this report. The Home Office describes domestic violence as follows:

Domestic violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. Usually it's a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their family member or partner.

Domestic violence occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth or geography. Women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence, and children are also affected – they can be traumatised by what they've seen, and there is a strong connection between domestic violence and child abuse.

Aims

- To raise awareness about domestic abuse in districts, circuits and local church communities.

- To increase awareness of and access to support services for victims of domestic abuse and where appropriate for perpetrators.

- To offer suitable training from appropriate specialist agencies for key staff and relevant church leaders and to encourage church members to undertake basic training.

- To encourage churches to become places of safety.

- To encourage collaborative working with other denominations and agencies.

The Methodist Church seeks to offer a safe place for all people in its worship and its community life, where boundaries that safeguard acceptable behaviour are known and respected, practices are openly addressed and where inappropriate or harmful behaviours and attitudes are addressed.

About Policy

In its Recommendations, *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action* proposes that churches adopt a code of practice which is based on the Charter on page 6 of these guidelines. Developing policy is not just about having a policy statement, but also about gaining a working knowledge of the effects of domestic abuse on all involved, and using pastoral and practical strategies to assist people who are in an abusive relationship. A policy helps people think through the issues. Policy documents give a structure to the work of prevention and support, and are a useful reference for monitoring.

(Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action 4.1 and Recommendation 1)

These guidelines include the Charter, and also a model policy for a local church (Section 14, p22), that demonstrates how the Charter can be used to develop an action plan for the church in straightforward stages.

This church -

- 1 holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent/ incompatible with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living;**
- 2 accepts that domestic abuse is a serious problem which occurs in church families as well as in wider society;**
- 3 undertakes to listen, support and care for those affected by domestic violence;**
- 4 will work with the support agencies, will learn from them and support them in appropriate ways, and will publicise their work;**
- 5 will play its part in teaching that domestic violence is a sin;**
- 6 believes in a God of love, justice, mercy, and forgiveness;**
- 7 will teach what it means to be male and female, equally made in God's image;**
- 8 will seek to appoint advisors to encourage the use of good practice guidelines and keep the Church informed about the implementation and development of this Charter and the Recommendations of this report.**

(From a Charter developed by Churches Together in Gloucestershire, and adapted by Churches Together in the Merseyside Region, The Baptist Union of Great Britain, and others)

(Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church... Taking Action 4.5)

In each district, the working party suggests that a group (or an individual) is set up which takes responsibility for domestic abuse issues by following up the recommendations of the report Taking Action and the resolutions from Conference. It may be possible for this to be part of the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer, or in any event should be done in close liaison with her/him.

This will entail

- encouraging the dissemination of and use of these *Good Practice Guidelines*;

- developing a library of resource materials and information, using available resources such as those listed in the Resources section of these guidelines (p18 onwards);

- encouraging local churches and circuits to be aware of relevant local phone numbers and support services;

- being a point of contact for ministers, lay leaders, and church members and able to offer advice and information to them;

- advising and informing the district, and monitoring practice;

- enabling and encouraging workshops and other forms of training through networking with local support services and agencies

- encouraging the district to mark 25th November as the international day against Violence Against Women, or its closest Sunday

Prevention, Protection and Justice, Provision and Support

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Across England, Wales and Scotland there are now comprehensive provisions for responding to domestic violence in the courts. These cover matters dealt with in the criminal, civil and family courts. Advice about any of these matters should be without charge from solicitors, using public funding. Detailed information can be found on the Women's Aid website, and the Rights of Women website provides a detailed Injunctions Handbook.

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How Can The Church Participate In Prevention?

(*Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action 4.7*)

Raising awareness through teaching and worship

Working with children and young people

Sharing information about local agencies

Training people at all levels of the Church

7.1 Raising awareness through teaching and worship

(see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action*, Sections II and III 3.6 to 3.10)

- Worship leaders can speak out against domestic abuse in preaching, teaching and prayers especially but not exclusively on November 25th. (The International Day of Action Against Violence Against Women.) Useful material can be found in these guidelines in Section 16 *Further resources* (p23), and in the Theology section (Section II) of *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action*.
- Ministers, deacons and church leaders should be offered resources so that they can give clear statements that domestic abuse is wrong, and tackle the myths that perpetuate disregard of abuse (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action* Section I p13).
- Gender inequality must continually be challenged in all aspects of the life of the Church. Opportunity to discuss these issues within the church community should be offered in districts, circuits and local churches.
- Language should reflect our beliefs about equality and dignity, and not increasingly marginalise those who may already feel of little value. ¹
- Thought needs to be given to the way we use the Bible, and how theological emphases can be affirming or damaging to those caught up in abusive situations (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action*, Section II Theology).

7.2 Working with children and young people

- There is an increasing awareness of Safeguarding throughout the Church in relation to children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable. An addition to existing policies is recommended, providing clear information on what to do if a child or young person discloses information about domestic abuse. This should include recognising the need to ask someone competent for advice, and who to approach.
- Workers with young people, Sunday school and Junior Church teachers, and leaders of weekday clubs for children and young people should be given some training on domestic abuse, alongside leaders ministering to the adult congregation.

¹ *Inclusive Language and Imagery about God*. Report to Methodist Conference 1992

How Can The Church Participate In Prevention?

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- Leaders should aim to affirm and model good, positive relationships in their work with young people.
- Awareness of the local schools' Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) programme can be used to open discussion about respect in partnerships and working relationships. Discussion might include such topics as –

What qualities do I value in people I know and in my rôle models?

What does it mean to respect difference?

When should I keep a secret for myself or a friend?

Who can I go to for help and support? ²

- Youth leaders can be encouraged to invite a guest speaker to stimulate discussion, perhaps from the Domestic Violence Forum or the Police Family Unit.

7.3 Sharing information about local agencies

- Local churches are encouraged to display posters and information from the local support agencies - Domestic Violence Forum, Women's Aid, Refuge, Victim Support, Respect – and to make the phone number of the local women's refuge available in the church and hall. See Section 14 (p19) for contact information.

These can help to make it clear that the church is safe for victims to talk and is a place where perpetrators will be challenged.

- Links can be made with relevant ecumenical organisations such as Churches Together in England (CTE), Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), CYTÛN (Churches Together in Wales), the World Council of Churches Project to Overcome Violence Against Women and the new campaign Restored www.restoredrelationships.org.uk, all of which have useful resources or contacts. (See Section 16 *Further resources*, p24)

- MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) now operate across the United Kingdom. These meetings consider the most serious 10% of domestic violence cases. They receive referrals from the police, Domestic Violence workers (DV), Womens Aid and any other voluntary agency or group that wishes to make a referral. This includes the local church, usually via a DV worker or someone else working specifically in this field. The aim is to develop a safety plan in each case based on the combined knowledge and commitment of everyone working with the family and then track progress over coming months. Information is available through CAADA (coordinated action against domestic abuse) www.caada.org.uk
- Churches or circuits are encouraged to join the local Domestic Violence Forum (most towns and districts now have a such a Forum). These can be found through the phone book or Citizens Advice Bureaux, or via the internet.

² Taken from *Respectful Relationships: Raising awareness of Domestic Abuse in Primary School* Peterborough Domestic Violence Forum

7.4 Training people at all levels of the Church

The main report, *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action*, covers the subject of training, in paragraphs 3.18–3.22. Training and awareness-raising will need to include those preparing for pastoral ministry, in-service training, and training in circuits and local churches. Basic awareness of the extent and effects of domestic abuse on individuals, families and society should be an essential part of core training for all pastoral ministry. Training will assist individuals and churches to reflect on how domestic abuse affects everyone caught up in it, and how best they might support someone within their church community.

Basic listening skills, and understanding when more help is needed, must be included in the training for pastoral workers and listeners. (See Section 13, p18)

It is also vital that people at all levels of the Church are encouraged to reflect upon the issues raised in the Theology Section (Section II) of *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action*.

Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action also emphasises (paragraphs 3.23-3.24) the importance of collaborative working with other agencies. This can include both the sharing of good practice, and benefitting from specialist expertise. Agencies such as the local Domestic Violence Forum, Women's Aid, or the local Safeguarding Board may offer training modules at different levels for other statutory and voluntary bodies (see Section 8 for more information). They are usually very willing to work with churches to provide training or information. Collaborative working has a strategic place in enabling the church to play a positive role in the community.

Circuits may like to consider setting up a study day to help raise awareness in local church congregations of the issues.

The Methodist Church has a network of Training and Officers who are a point of contact for all training.

Participating in a training day set up for other agencies is an excellent way of discovering how others work, and enables opportunity to develop good networking practice. This means it is much easier to access support from other agencies, as well as being able to offer appropriate support from the church, when that is needed.

Training modules may use video clips, agency presentations, and group work. Modules may include the following:

Basic training

- 1** Raising Awareness:
 - What is domestic abuse?
 - Looking at the myths
 - Understanding attitudes
 - What do other agencies do, and how do they work?
 - Networking with other agencies

- 2** What are the effects of domestic abuse on women, men and children?
 - Life cycle events
 - Effect on self-esteem and behaviour
 - Why do women stay?
 - What help is available?
 - Links between child abuse and domestic abuse
 - What about contact issues?
 - Links with alcohol and drug abuse
 - Effects on health

Specialist training

In addition, some places will have the facility to present specific training modules for those working with particular groups of people directly involved in abusive situations, but this is more specialised training:

- 3** Working with victims and survivors
- 4** Working with perpetrators
- 5** Working with children

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What Happens When There Are Allegations Of Abuse?

When allegations are made, there are immediately questions which need to be considered. There are degrees of urgency and risk where disclosure and allegation are concerned. People may disclose long-standing abuse, which may have ended or be on-going. A victim may be safe but traumatised, where there is no new allegation or disclosure, but support and healing are still needed. Another issue is about police involvement – a victim should not be under any pressure to involve the police in order to get a response from the church.

Questions to have in mind in deciding how to proceed include -

- Are the victim and any children in immediate danger? (see Section 11 *Disclosure Flow Chart* on p15 of these guidelines)

- Has the victim voiced a concern about someone, or is someone else doing so? In the latter case, is the victim aware this is being raised?

- Ask yourself if this is likely to be a formal complaint under the churches disciplinary procedure, or is it primarily a need for help and support ?

- Has there been a complaint to the police, and if so, what action has been taken?

Congregations caught up in the situation may need help; holding the tension (eg between those who are “on the side of” one partner or the other) can be very difficult. This is where the support of wider church (circuit or district) can be invaluable, and could be part of the role of those with district responsibility. (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...Taking Action* Section III and these guidelines Section 5 *Responsibility*)

Offering support and protection involves recognising the need for work with perpetrators to be undertaken by someone with specialist skills, and where pastoral support from the church can be offered alongside.

There is a distinction between an abuse where there is already a criminal investigation, or the abuser is subject to a court order, and an allegation which has not been taken to the police. It is at this point that most churches will feel the need to consult with someone with district responsibility in order to make an appropriate response where appointed or liase with a local specialist agencies.(see pp 19-21 for national specialist help)

It is also important to remember that abused and abuser cannot both be supported in the same church community unless that is the express, independent wish of each, nor can they be supported pastorally by the same person.

Safety of ministers, deacons and church workers

The safety of church workers is important.

Good practice in pastoral listening, whether by a minister or deacon, a lay leader, or another member of the church community, means that there will always be more than one person on the premises during planned meetings. Quiet and confidential places should be available for listening, but ideally someone else should also be aware of where and when confidential listening is taking place. This protection is for both listener and the one seeking help.

It is important that those who listen know when it is essential to say that they must talk to someone else, whether it is for their own need, or for that of the seeker or when it is mandatory. (eg awareness of child abuse or other safety issues or criminal action)

Those who are listening need to be aware of the nature of, and constraints of pastoral relationships.

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What Is The Role Of The Church In Offering Protection And Support To Survivors Of Abuse?

10.1 Responding appropriately

This involves providing resources for individuals and church communities so that they can respond appropriately and helpfully to allegations of domestic abuse, recognising that abused women and men find it difficult to tell their story and may approach a friend in the congregation rather than a minister or pastoral worker.

Research tells us that women may approach a number of individuals before finding belief and reassurance. It is likely that a distressed woman will sound out a friend or relative before approaching anyone in authority. Male victims of abuse also find it very difficult to confide in anyone.

Professional expertise is essential for more specialist work but it is essential that tackling domestic abuse is not sidelined, but is made the responsibility of the whole church community. Training in how to respond is also essential – if someone is not believed, or is not listened to appropriately, or if good information and support is not given, their progress can be put back for years.

Perpetrators. It is important to be able to hold perpetrators to account but also to be able to respond to perpetrators seeking help. [See these guidelines Section 12 *What about pastoral care for perpetrators?*]

10.2 The role of the church

In these circumstances, the role of the church is to walk alongside the victim on the journey back to wholeness. This may be done in partnership with specialist help from other agencies. Churches can offer real friendship at times of isolation and low self esteem, offering encouragement and hope so that the individual can start to feel safe.

The **culture** of the local church is important (see *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church... Taking Action* Section III). Church life, which has an openness, where processes are transparent and people feel they can be honest with each other, will allow an abused person or an abuser to talk about what is happening.

10.3 Safety first

This is where the basic principles for pastoral workers and listeners are helpful (see these guidelines, Section 13 (p18)).

- i **Belief in what is being** said has to be the starting point when someone makes a disclosure of domestic abuse, as with child abuse.
- ii **What kind of support** is the person looking for or needing? This will depend on many factors not least the emotional state of the victim and the nearness of the perpetrator. Trust and confidentiality are vital for the safety and well being of the victim and those who are supporting them. Once a support relationship has been established between victim and listener other agencies can be contacted for more specific advice and help. It is important to realise that from the moment of disclosure the victim can usually only cope with taking one step at a time.

iii **Essential for maintaining the safety** of the person alleging abuse and the family are

- confidentiality.

- one church or one pastoral carer, should not try to support both partners in one fellowship unless this is the expressed wish of each, individually (in which case reference should be made to the District support person or group). Trying to support both partners makes the church unsafe for the victim and may be seen to condone the behaviour of the abuser. **It should never be the victim who has to leave the church unless this is the only safe option.**

- working with other agencies – it is essential that the church members, ministers or pastoral workers do not take on a rôle outside their competence.

- in the case of allegations against ministers, or staff members, the Methodist Church's complaints procedure should be followed.

iv. Emergency plan

Where appropriate, talk through an emergency plan to ensure that a victim who decides to return home can escape safely at any time. More information is available about government services from www.direct.gov.uk or in the voluntary sector from www.womensaid.org.uk

The key points for emergency planning are:

- 1 Plan an emergency escape and get your neighbours' support if possible
- 2 Keep money safe for taxis, bus fares and telephone calls.
- 3 Make sure you have your own key to the house.
- 4 Have clothes ready for you and your children in case of need.
- 5 Get the telephone numbers of your nearest Women's Aid group, the Police, Samaritans, Social Services your GP and any personal numbers you need.
- 6 Try to have your Post Office Child Benefit Account Card, your rent book, bank book, marriage and birth certificates, passport and driving licence with you when you leave.

10.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality needs to be emphasised. It is vital that those offering support keep confidences over addresses, information about children and schools etc, and about where and when it is safe to contact the person who is being abused. It is important not to undertake to pass on letters from the perpetrator - the victim knows where the perpetrator lives and can contact them if they wish.

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What Is The Role Of The Church In Offering Protection And Support To Survivors Of Abuse?

10.5 Children

Children are also at risk in situations of abuse. They know much more than parents suspect. 90% are in the same room or next room when abuses are happening. Children who see a parent being abused may be physically injured trying to intervene, and in any event are at risk of emotional and psychological abuse. There is also increasing evidence of crossover between domestic violence and other forms of direct child abuse. This highlights the importance of a **Safeguarding policy**, and of always knowing and respecting the limits on confidentiality when a child is at risk.

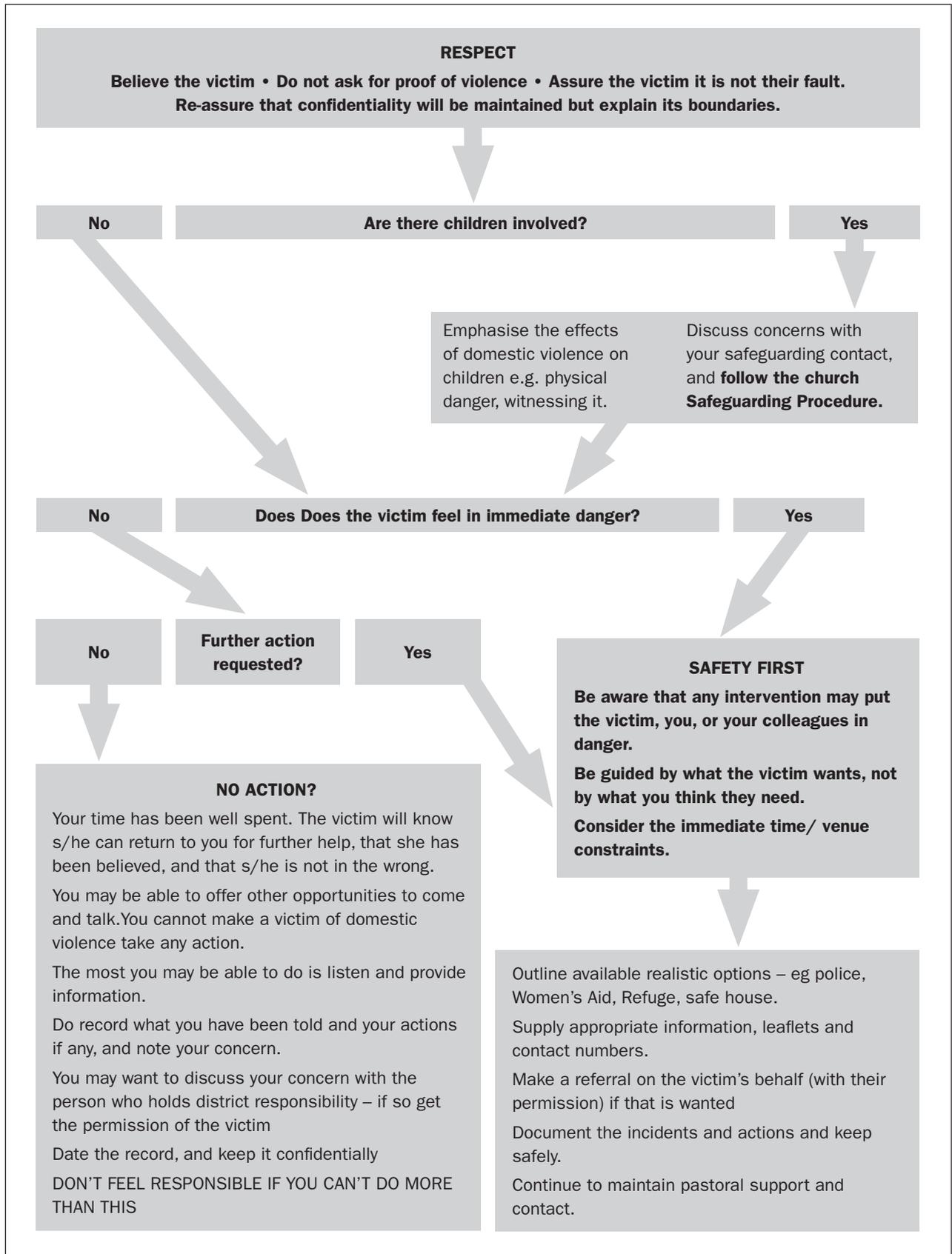
10.6 Offering support and referring on

It may be appropriate to refer to another agency or the district the Connexion for support. When there are no children, permission from the victim must be sought before doing this. Ask if the victim would like another opportunity to talk with you or clarify what is hoped for from the church and what it is realistic to offer. If the victim does not wish you to refer to another agency, you should provide key contact details, so that they can make contact in their own time if they so wish. (See Section 14, p19)

10.7 Risks

Leaders and workers must be aware that the greatest risk for the victims of domestic abuse is at separation or immediately after separation.

NB it is NOT the role of the church or its minister or members to intervene between partners.



Challenging perpetrators to take responsibility for their attitudes and actions is part of demonstrating that the church considers domestic abuse unacceptable. However, working with perpetrators is extraordinarily difficult work, **which ministers and deacons are not trained to do**. Despite what a perpetrator might say, or sometimes a minister feeling that this is a part of pastoral care, it is better that work with perpetrators be undertaken by someone with specialist training, and a proven track record. Appropriate pastoral support can be offered in addition to this, from the presbyter or deacon preferably with the knowledge and co-operation of the specialist, or agency concerned. Pastoral care for perpetrators should be provided by a church and supporters who are not at the same time providing care and support for the victims or survivors.

There are not many intervention programmes working with perpetrators, and those run by the probation service work mainly with men who have been convicted. Communities will need to be realistic about the level of support which can safely and effectively be offered to perpetrators who do not have external support.

Pastoral Care for Perpetrators - Guidelines

Time for Action has reproduced Pastoring Guidance for those who support child sexual abusers, taken from the Code of Practice for the Diocese of Southwell. It emphasises the view that **“most professionals who work with perpetrators believe they will need maintenance counselling for the rest of their lives. In theological terms, recovery from the ‘sin’ of sexual abuse is a daily ongoing process”**.¹

The proposals outlined here are very similar to those in *Time for Action* -

- Those who are providing support should feel able to work alongside agencies or services working with the individual on a validated, accredited intervention programme, with the knowledge of the individual concerned. (This may be a probation officer.)

- It should be made clear that it is expected that individuals who are known to be perpetrators will accept whatever discipline the church has agreed, either through the national organisation, or by the local congregation.

- There should be clear guidelines on recruitment and discipline, with reference to domestic abuse, as there are for child abuse and for sex offenders: for example, whether someone is limited in holding specific offices. If this means a perpetrator worshipping at a different church, not attending particular groups, not taking leadership roles, then this should be seen as part of the acceptance of the need for repentance and the desire to lead a new life in a different way.

- It may be appropriate to draw up a contract between the church and the perpetrator, which outlines any activities, roles or behaviour which are proscribed and any agreed activities. The contract will be known only to the minister, those who are providing support, and any essential officers of the church, and to whoever is working immediately with the individual concerned (eg probation officer).

¹ *Time for Action* Appendix 1 page 156

What About Pastoral Support For Perpetrators?

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- Desire to see the best in people must not cloud realistic expectations and perceptions
 - Those who are providing support will need their own ongoing support, and opportunity to ensure they remain comfortable with that role, and the issues which may be raised.
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13

Basic Principles Of Good Practice For Pastoral Workers And Listeners

PRIVACY	Ensure that there is a private place, where someone wanting to talk is comfortable to speak. Don't put yourself at risk.
RESPECT	Allow enough time to talk, and LISTEN. It is important to be NON-JUDGEMENTAL, as people may be afraid they will be condemned by the church. Treat people with respect and sensitivity – it is difficult enough to talk about these issues. Don't ask what they did to provoke abuse.
CONFIDENTIALITY	Treat what is said in confidence. Let the individual know that the listener can be trusted, but also ensure that they are aware of the limits of confidentiality. It might be necessary for safety reasons, either for the individual or for a child, that some information is shared. Always be prepared to ask the victim if you may speak to someone who can offer further help, or to explain if an issues arises where you are aware of the need to talk to someone else – for example, if child abuse is also an issue, or if safety is compromised.
BELIEVE WHAT IS SAID	Victims of abuse need to be believed, and fear that they won't be, and may easily be discouraged from ever speaking out again if they sense disbelief.
REASSURANCE	It may be necessary to reassure someone who is suffering or has suffered from abuse more than once, that abuse is not the fault of the victim.
KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS	Recognise the work of other agencies and work with them. Be able to signpost someone to services that can help, and encourage them to use appropriate help. Offer to accompany them to an appointment if that would help.
SAFETY	<p>Safety is the first priority for the victim and any children. Plan ahead when possible, so that workers or colleagues are not placed in a dangerous situation, and take sensible precautions to avoid putting yourself in danger.</p> <p>It is not safe to 'check the story' with the perpetrator, or to challenge him in any direct way. To do so places the victim, children and yourself at serious risk. If it is absolutely necessary to raise the issue with the perpetrator, you should plan carefully and usually obtain professional advice before doing so.</p>

Training and support for workers

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM Most areas now have a domestic violence forum, at which both statutory and voluntary agencies are represented, to enable agencies to work and plan together, with a full-time or part-time co-ordinator who can offer information. The Forum will usually offer training opportunities at different levels for those who need to be aware, and for those who are working directly with victims or perpetrators. Details can be found through the phone book or through Citizens Advice Bureaux.

CAADA/MARAC Multi-agency risk assessment conferences are held for the most serious situations. The aims is to produce a shared safety plan that all agencies work to. A referral to MARAC can be made by anyone working with the family. More information on the CAADA website (coordinated action against domestic abuse) www.caada.org.uk

RESPECT is a registered charity and national membership organisation, promoting best practice for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated support services in the UK. Among RESPECT’s aim are the belief that safety is the primary goal of all work with perpetrators and that domestic violence is unacceptable and must be challenged, that men can change, that men are responsible for their use of violence. RESPECT will provide information for those who are endeavouring to offer pastoral help for perpetrators.

The National Helpline is open Monday – Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm. Men who are perpetrators of abuse on a partner can themselves ring. The helpline will also take calls from other professionals, from concerned relatives, and about concern in other relationships. RESPECT will offer advice and aim to put callers in contact with appropriate local support.

NATIONAL HELPLINE NUMBER	 0845 122 8609	 www.respect.uk.net
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Support and help for victims

WOMEN’S AID is the key voluntary agency in this field. Local services may vary, but will usually offer emergency accommodation and often outreach support services. Each local WA agency is autonomous, but linked to the national refuge network, through the National Federation. Scottish Women’s Aid is a separate federation.

	 www.womensaid.org.uk
WALES	 www.welshwomensaid.org
SCOTLAND	 www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk

REFUGE also offer emergency accommodation and one-to-one counselling support in some areas.

	 www.refuge.org.uk
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Which Agencies Provide Help, And What Do They Do?

REFUGE PROVISION is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through a national helpline run by Women's Aid and Refuge.

FREEPHONE ENGLAND NATIONAL 24HR HELPLINE	 0808 2000 247
SCOTLAND 24HR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE	 0800 0271 234
WALES 24HR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE	 0808 8010 800

POLICE / PUBLIC PROTECTION UNIT The police are often the first point of contact when domestic violence takes place. They aim to protect the victims, identify and protect children who may be at risk, take action where a crime has been committed and an offender identified, ensure appropriate support for the victim, identify cases of repeat victimisation and seek to provide necessary support.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES When children are present or involved, information may be shared with Children's Social Care by the Police, in order that the most appropriate support can be offered, dependent on the available information and risk factors.

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE The National Probation Service works with both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse. It also supervises people on community sentences for domestic violence offences, and those on release from a custodial sentence under licence. The Service works to recognised national standards.

HOUSING Local priorities and policies may differ, but councils have a duty to arrange housing for anyone who is homeless, in priority need, and not intentionally homeless. It may help a victim to be accompanied to an appointment, to have a record of the episodes of violence, and to have supporting evidence from a social worker or doctor.

In Scotland, the *Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001* ensures the right of the abused person to remain in the family home in safety by the use of interdict and power to arrest the abuser.

HEALTH Domestic abuse has a substantial impact on the health and welfare of adults and children, and health care services are often the first point of contact for people living with domestic abuse. Victims may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, but often they are hoping someone will notice or ask, and so can be encouraged to speak to their health care workers, and may have an excuse for attending for some other reason.

HELP FOR DISABLED WOMEN experiencing abuse can be accessed through	 www.edfwomen.org.uk/abuse.htm
CHILDREN NEEDING HELP can find information at	 www.thehideout.org.uk
SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE The charity Action on Elder Abuse campaigns for the prevention of abuse of older people.	 www.elderabuse.org.uk

NATIONAL HELPLINE for older people	 080 8808 8141
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Support for male victims of abuse and violence

MALE (Men's Advice Line and Enquiries) national helpline	 0808 8010327
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SURVIVORS UK Open Mon, Tues, Thurs 7pm – 9.30pm Help for men who have been sexually abused or raped	 0845 1221201
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Support for gay, lesbian and bisexual victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse

BROKEN RAINBOW HOTLINE Open Mon 2 – 8pm, Wed 10am – 1pm, Thurs 2 – 8pm. Help for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender victims of domestic violence	 0300 999 5428
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Other Agencies

Some of the agencies below will also have a local number in the phone book, which should also be made available in any local publicity.

RAPE CRISIS UK	 www.rapecrisis.org.uk
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VICTIM SUPPORT	 www.victimsupport.org.uk	 0845 30 30 900
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VICTIM SUPPORT SCOTLAND	 www.victimsupportsco.org.uk	 0845 603 9213
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CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX – Contact local branch

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ADVISORY SERVICES – Contact local agencies

AGENCIES WORKING WITH MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS – The following offer advice across the UK

Afruca If children are involved Africans Unite Against Child Abuse	 www.afruca.org.uk	 0844 660 8607
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CIAC Chinese information and advice centre	 www.ciac.co.uk	 0845 313 1868 ex 211
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Kiran Project Asian Women's support	 www.kiranproject.org.uk	 020 8558 1986
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LAWRS (Latin American Women's Rights Service)	 www.lawrs.org.uk	 020 7336 0888
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Southall Black Sisters For Asian, African and African-Caribbean women	 www.southallblacksisters.org.uk	 020 8571 9595 Mon – Fri 10am – 5pm Closed Wed
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NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline	 0800 800 500
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SAMARITANS (UK)	 www.samaritans.org	 08457 90 90 90
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Model Policy And Action Plan For A Local Church

Aims and intentions

This policy aims to encourage the church fellowship and organisations

- 1 to raise awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and the community
- 2 to ensure that teaching and worship reflect awareness of gender justice, use appropriate language, and say clearly that domestic abuse is wrong and must be condemned and affirm the Methodist Church stance that all human relationships are to be cherished.
- 3 to ensure that the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority, and to be aware of the need for confidentiality (*unless there are specific indications to the contrary, such as child protection or safety issues*)
- 4 to consider how best to provide support and information for anyone seeking help
- 5 to encourage discussion of how the church might ensure those who feel marginalized are made welcome
- 6 to inform discussion on implementing the good practice guidelines, and the underpinning theology and principles.

Action Plan

- 1 Discussion with the church leaders, introduction to the church meeting, affirmation of the policy.
- 2 Defining the church's expectations of the fellowship and organisations and developing an action plan
 - i Identification of an individual or group of people to take this forward
 - ii Understanding how to listen and recognise when help and support are needed and how to access specialist help
 - iii Introduction of appropriate information and leaflets
 - iv Identification of training needs and how these might best be met, with broader training using organisations outside the church specialising in this field, and a process for ongoing training
 - v A way of ensuring that people are aware of the policy and that principles are being met
- 3 Confirming when this policy was agreed, and when it will be reviewed (eg. annually)

Date: Signed by:	Date of next review: Church Role:
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Bible study booklet *What is this place*

Six studies following the journey which a women experiencing violence may make, from recognition of her situation to making a new beginning. Price: £2.00 plus postage and packing.

Available from: Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH **Tel:** 020 7529 8132 **Fax:** 020 7529 8134

Following Jesus in a Violent World - Breaking the silence ...about domestic violence

Pack raising issues for local churches. Includes material for ministers, for those living with domestic abuse, and a charter for a local church. Price £3.50.

Available from: Baptist Union of GB, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT. **Tel:** 01235 517714

Home Truths

Five young people tell of their experiences of domestic violence in this short animated DVD. The DVD is suitable for a wide audience, but is particularly designed for use with 8-13 year olds in a youth group or school setting. (Published: 2000) Price: £10 to hire, £40 to purchase.

Available from: Leeds Animation Workshop, 45 Bayswater Row, Leeds LS8 5LF
Tel/Fax: 0113 248 4997 **Email:** info@leedsanimation.org.uk

Women and Violence

Resource Pack produced by the Women's Network of the Methodist Church. (Published: 2000) Price £5.

Available from: Women's Network Office, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR **Tel:** 020 7467 5175 **Fax:** 020 7486 7792 **Email:** womens.network@methodistchurch.org.uk

Hitting Home: Domestic violence and young women

YWCA Briefing giving information and helpful resource list, including details of research papers. Price £4.

Available from: YWCA, Clarendon House, 52 Cornmarket Street, Oxford OX1 3EJ.
Tel: 01865 304215 **Email:** campaigns@ywca-gb.org.uk

Breaking the Chains...

of the past, of the silence, of the churches' teaching .. on violence against women. A booklet of theological reflections and suggestions for discussion and action. Price £3.50, including postage

For information, contact: CTBI, 39 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1BX. **Tel:** 020 7654 7254
Fax: 020 7654 7222 **Email:** chliffe@ctbi.org.uk

Understanding Domestic Abuse

nine-minute video and workbook. Useful for opening the subject and raising discussion.

Available from: Oadby and Wigston Domestic Violence Forum, c/o Helping Hands Advice Centre, 11b Leicester Road, Oadby, Leicestershire LD2 58D

Website

www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/VictimsOfCrime/DG_4003136

Contains much helpful information, and useful links to other sites

Ecumenical organisations

Action of Churches Together in Scotland / Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland

Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland, Inglewood House, Alloa, Clackmannanshire, Scotland FK10 2HU **Tel:** 01259 216980

Churches Together in England

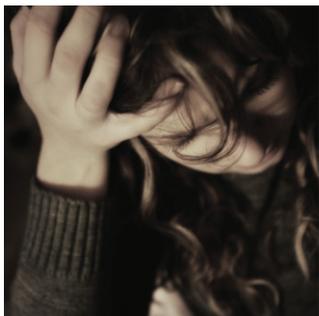
27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH.
Tel: 020 7529 8132. **Email:** women@cte.org.uk

CYTŪN (Churches Together in Wales)

58 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF24 3UR
Tel: 029 2046 4204. **Email:** post@cytun.org.uk

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



The Methodist Church

Design and production: Methodist Publishing,
on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain,
Registered Charity no. 1132208

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Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 6SG

Tel: 01733 235962

Email: resources@methodistchurch.org.uk

Web: www.methodistpublishing.org.uk