

**NSPCC**

# **Domestic Abuse and its impact on children and young people**

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**EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR**

# Rory's story 1

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Living with him for nine years was horrific. The abuse felt never-ending and I couldn't see a way out. Home life was oppressive and violent. When I had bruises from him hitting me or throwing objects at me, he would make me wear jumpers to school to conceal them. If he couldn't hide the cuts or bruises he would send me in with a note for the teacher with a lie about what had happened. He had everyone fooled.

The worst part of living with him was what he did to my mum. He was violent to her on a daily basis. He would push her around and hit her in front of me. If he was angry he would strangle her. When he wasn't happy he would lock her in her bedroom so she couldn't come out and so I couldn't see her. At night I would hear him raping her

# Rory's story 2

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I began to suffer from depression and had suicidal feelings. In the nine years he lived with us, I tried to kill myself 13 times. I felt like I was trapped in this nightmare with no escape.

It's bizarre to say that the happiest day of my life was the day my mum was nearly murdered, but it meant that the abuse was over, we had escaped and he was gone.

After he was arrested and convicted I thought I would feel better but I just felt switched off. I felt as though I wasn't capable of happiness or sadness anymore, just a numb blank feeling. My depression got worse and I continued to have suicidal feelings.

# Rory's story 3

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Life changed when I accessed support from the NSPCC. I was given counselling for six months to help me deal with what I'd been through and what I'd seen. Without the NSPCC's support I don't think I would be here now. It's impossible to understand how my experience wouldn't have an effect on my life, but I try to limit it.

It's been five years since the abuse ended and I still feel positive every day that it's over. I'm stronger and bigger now and know I will never let anything like that happen to me, mum or anyone around me again. I've built myself to be the opposite of him. I campaign against violence against women.

# Impact on child victims

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- Mental health problems
- Acute feelings of betrayal, powerlessness, guilt
- Experiences of flashbacks or intrusive thoughts, nightmares
- Poorer school performance and achievement
- Increased likelihood of negative coping mechanisms such as heavy drinking or substance use

# Femicide census 2009-18:

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- a woman is killed by a man in the UK every 3 days
- in a third of cases (34%) it was known that the woman killed had a child or children
- in almost a fifth of cases it was unknown whether the victim had children

# Women's Aid Federation England's report '19 Child Homicides'

**'This report should not need to be written, that much is disturbingly obvious. First, while it is impossible to prevent every killing of a child, when the risks are known no other consideration should be more important'**

# Welsh Gov have adopted UNCRC

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- Article 19 of the UNCRC states that Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and abuse
- Article 39 that children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation and torture must receive special support to help them recover
- WWA 'Children Matter' concluded 77% of child victims received no support



# Impact of pandemic

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In the first lockdown 23 March- 17 May 2020:

- The number of people contacting the NSPCC helpline about domestic abuse, rose from an average of around **140** contacts to an average of around **185** contacts a week.
- Between 23 March and 17 May 2020, Childline delivered over **500 counselling sessions** to children and young people worried about domestic abuse
- This was an increase from an average of around **50** a week earlier in year to an average of around **65** a week during lockdown

# Action needed this Senedd term

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- **Welsh Government's National Strategy Objective 6:** 'Provide victims, both adults and children, with equal access to ..... (services)
- **Funding** secure and sustainable funding must be put in place for specialist services

## Regionally/ locally:

- **RPB/ LSB needs assessments must include as one as a key priority 'Violence against women'**
- **Victims, both adults and children, should be consulted** when developing strategies/ services
- **Its vital that the shortfall in service provision for children and young people victims must be addressed across Wales**

**NSPCC**

**Thank you for listening**

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