**All Wales Pathway**

**Antenatal Routine Enquiry – Domestic Abuse**

**NB** The Pathway is to be used in conjunction with the 10 Standards for Routine Enquiry. Supporting evidence is available within NHS Trusts / LHBs – Please contact your local Pathway Co-ordinator / Trust Named Child Protection Specialist for details.

**Pathway Aims**

- To ensure Health Professionals in Wales carry out Routine Enquiry for Domestic Abuse within the antenatal period
- To ensure that disclosures are appropriately recorded and support systems implemented

**Pathway Requirements**

- This is a multi disciplinary document. Midwives / Health Visitors or other professionals recording information within the pathway **must** sign and date the pathway where specified. This is a legal requirement (NMC 2004 Guidelines for Records and Record Keeping).
- Ensure that each section is fully completed in **black ink**
- Ensure that indicators of abuse are recorded at the end of each stage and that appropriate support systems are in place. N.B. Support systems will vary for each Trust / LHB. Consider contacting Voluntary / Statutory Agencies for referral and / or advice

**BEGIN ROUTINE ENQUIRY ONLY IF THE WOMAN IS ALONE**

**AND IT IS SAFE TO DO SO**

_When completed the pathway should be filed appropriately in the woman’s medical notes._
Routine Enquiry

NEVER DOCUMENT ANY INFORMATION IN THE HAND HELD RECORDS - THIS COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO A WOMAN’S SAFETY

Facts

- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse at some time during their life
- Domestic abuse often starts or intensifies in pregnancy
- 2 women are murdered each week in the UK by a partner or ex partner

Possible Indicators of Domestic Abuse (RCOG 2004 - Why Mothers Die 2000 - 2002)

- Late booking / Non attendance at clinic appointments
- Repeated attendance at Antenatal clinics, Accident and Emergency Departments /GP surgery with minor injuries or trivial / non existent complaints
- Unexplained repeated hospital admissions
- Non compliance with treatment regimens / early or self discharge from hospital
- Poor obstetric history
- Recurrent sexually transmitted diseases
- Minimalisation of signs of violence on the body
- Repeat presentation with depression, anxiety, self harm, psychosomatic symptoms
- Constant presence of partner at examinations who may answer questions for her and be unwilling to leave the room
- A woman who is evasive or reluctant to speak in front of or disagree with her partner

Explain why you are asking the question. For example:-

“Domestic Abuse affects many women in the UK throughout their lifetime and often starts or becomes worse in pregnancy. This is why we are asking all women about domestic abuse routinely throughout their pregnancy”

Disclosures of abuse require privacy, confidentiality and sensitive questioning by non-judgemental staff. Women may not disclose unless asked directly.