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WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

Force Policy Document

POLICY TITLE:	Domestic Abuse
POLICY REFERENCE NO:	PP/04

Executive Summary.

In partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police has identified preventing and detecting domestic abuse as a strategic priority. West Midlands Police recognises the impact that domestic abuse has on the lives of victims, children and our communities and that the suffering is often hidden from view. We will work in partnership with external agencies to safeguard those at risk and ensure information is shared to protect vulnerable adults and children.

Safeguarding those at risk of domestic abuse is everybody's business and West Midlands Police will equip its staff to recognise and respond quickly and effectively to protect those at risk of harm.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the policy contact / department shown below.

Intended Policy Audience.

All members of West Midlands Police who may have contact with victims or offenders of domestic abuse and their families.

Current Version And Effective Date.	Version 5.1	30/10/17
Business Area Owner	Public Protection	
Department Responsible	Public Protection	
Policy Contact	DCI Adam Henderson	
Policy Author	DCI Adam Henderson	
Approved By	ACC Alex Murray	
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Suitable For Publication – Freedom Of Information	No	

Supporting Documents

- *(List supporting documents)*
- *Code of Ethics* (<http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx>)

Evidence Based Research

Full supporting documentation and evidence of consultation in relation to this policy including that of any version changes for implementation and review, are held with the Force Policy Co-ordinator including that of the authorised original Command Team papers.

Please Note.

PRINTED VERSIONS SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON. THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION OF ANY POLICY OR DIRECTIVE CAN BE FOUND ON THE EQUIP DATABASE ON THE INTRANET.

Force Diversity Vision Statement and Values

“Maximise the potential of people from all backgrounds through a culture of fairness and inclusion to deliver the best service for our communities”

“All members of the public and communities we serve, all police officers, special constables and police staff members shall receive equal and fair treatment regardless of, age, disability, sex, race, gender reassignment, religion/belief, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity. If you consider this policy could be improved for any of these groups please raise with the author of the policy without delay.”

Code of Ethics

West Midlands Police is committed to ensuring that the Code of Ethics is not simply another piece of paper, poster or laminate, but is at the heart of every policy, procedure, decision and action in policing.

The Code of Ethics is about self-awareness, ensuring that everyone in policing feels able to always do the right thing and is confident to challenge colleagues irrespective of their rank, role or position

Every single person working in West Midlands Police is expected to adopt and adhere to the principles and standards set out in the Code.

The main purpose of the Code of Ethics is to be a guide to “good” policing, not something to punish “poor” policing.

The Code describes nine principles and ten standards of behavior that sets and defines the exemplary standards expected of everyone who works in policing.

Please see <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx> for further details.

The policy contained in this document seeks to build upon the overarching principles within the Code to further support people in the organisation to do the right thing.

Standards of Behaviour

Police Staff standards of behaviour will apply at all times across all levels of staff.

Manager Expectations

WMP Managers will take responsibility for consultation/engagement with staff and recognised Trade Unions throughout the change process. Throughout the consultation/negotiation period, managers will aim to support staff to secure suitable alternative roles in line with redundancy legislation where redeployment opportunities are available. Staff (or their Trade Union representative) need to be given opportunity for views and feedback on changes and proposals. Managers need to ensure that any staffing costs associated with change including redundancy are managed effectively.

People & Organisational Development (POD)

Support will be provided to minimise detriment to staff at risk of redundancy through the provision of a careers transition service. This will support staff in making applications and meet other employers recruiting in the region including third party employment agencies. If staff are facing redundancy, payroll and pension information will be provided in a timely way which will assist individuals in their decision making process. POD will support application of this policy in a fair and transparent manner and address any appeals against redundancy. POD will ensure adverse impact analysis is undertaken across change projects and mitigated where possible.

Staff Expectations

Staff will co-operate with managers and ensure they attend all consultation and briefing sessions (with their Trade Union representative if appropriate) in a timely way. Staff need to give due consideration to all potential suitable alternative work identified by the Force or themselves to mitigate a redundancy situation.

Trade Unions/Staff Associations

Trade Unions and Staff Associations will consult and negotiate with WMP managers and staff throughout the change process to ensure that where possible reasonable timescales for change projects are met. Resources taking into consideration availability of representatives will need to be identified to support representation and consultation with staff.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police has identified preventing and detecting domestic abuse as a strategic priority. West Midlands Police recognises the impact that domestic abuse has on the lives of victims, children and our communities and that the suffering is often hidden from view. We will work in partnership with external agencies to safeguard those at risk and ensure information is shared to protect vulnerable adults and children.

Safeguarding those at risk of domestic abuse is everybody's business and West Midlands Police will equip its staff to recognise and respond quickly and effectively to protect those at risk of harm.

2. AIMS

The aim of this policy is to ensure that West Midlands Police has a consistent and professional approach to policing incidents of domestic abuse in line with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice for Domestic Abuse. All officers and staff will understand their responsibilities when dealing with incidents of domestic abuse in order to reduce the risk of harm to victims.

This will be achieved by:

- Responding to all incidents of domestic abuse and investigating these in a professional manner;
- Recognising the risk and responding to this to protect anyone perceived to be at risk of harm;
- Ensuring offenders are held accountable for their actions, where appropriate through the criminal justice system;
- Adopting a multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing domestic abuse.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Domestic abuse is defined as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

This definition includes so called 'honour' based abuse (HBA), female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM), and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender, ethnic or social group.

Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.

3.2 Controlling behaviour is:

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

3.3 Coercive behaviour is:

- *An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.*
- Controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship is a specific offence under section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 with effect from 29th December 2015. It states that it is an offence for a person to repeatedly or continuously engage in behaviour that is controlling or coercive towards someone to whom they are 'personally connected' and that behaviour has a serious effect on the victim.
- Statutory guidance detailing the provisions of the offence, personal connection and serious effect can be accessed here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/section/76>

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a to c/controlling or coercive behaviour/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a%20to%20c/controlling%20or%20coercive%20behaviour/)

3.4 Repeat Victim

A repeat victim is a person who has within a twelve month period suffered two or more domestic abuse incidents.

3.5 Serial Perpetrator

A serial perpetrator is someone who has been reported to the police as having committed or threatened domestic abuse against two or more victims. This includes current or former intimate partners and family members.

4. DOMESTIC ABUSE CRIME TYPES

- Domestic Abuse may be linked with other crimes, officers and staff must be aware of these lines of enquiry when taking reports and investigation of domestic abuse and other associated crimes.
- In particular, the following types of offences may be linked:
 - Child Abuse
[http://intranet2/content/publicprotection/A-Z/Child Abuse Policy, September 2012.pdf](http://intranet2/content/publicprotection/A-Z/Child%20Abuse%20Policy,%20September%202012.pdf)

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- Missing Persons
[http://intranet2/content/B PRD/Policy Portal/Policy Documents/Missing Persons.pdf](http://intranet2/content/B_PRD/Policy_Portal/Policy_Documents/Missing_Persons.pdf)
 - Vulnerable adult abuse

Policy under review
 - Honour based abuse and forced marriage
http://intranet2.wmpad.local/policy_portal/policy_library/honourbased_abuse_and_forced.aspx
 - Sexual Offences
[http://intranet2/content/B PRD/Policy Portal/Policy Documents/RASSO.pdf](http://intranet2/content/B_PRD/Policy_Portal/Policy_Documents/RASSO.pdf)
 - Homicide

<http://library.college.police.uk/docs/APPREF/murder-investigation-manual-redacted.pdf>
 - Stalking/Harassment
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/stalking-and-harassment/>
- Almost any other offence type may be linked to domestic abuse and it is therefore important that officers approach incidents with an open mind and be aware of the added risk factors that domestic abuse will bring to an incident.

5. CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- Any domestic abuse incident has the potential to escalate into a critical incident. A critical incident is defined as:

“Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community”.

- For details of critical incident management please see the Force Critical Incident Policy

[http://intranet2/content/B PRD/Policy Portal/Policy Documents/Critical Incidents.pdf](http://intranet2/content/B_PRD/Policy_Portal/Policy_Documents/Critical_Incidents.pdf)

6. APPROACH & PRINCIPLES

- West Midlands Police will adopt the following principles when receiving reports of domestic abuse:
 - Domestic abuse is a serious crime and will be treated as any other serious crime would be.
 - The reduction of domestic abuse is a policing priority and is the responsibility of all police employees.

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- Early positive intervention is essential to save lives, and the first priority of officers attending domestic abuse incidents is to protect victims and their families, especially children and vulnerable adults.
- When dealing with victims of domestic abuse officers must be aware of protected characteristics and ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect regardless background or lifestyle choices. Further details on protected characteristics can be found here:

http://intranet2/hq_departments/corporate_hr/di_hub_of_excellence/diversity_and_inclusion.aspx

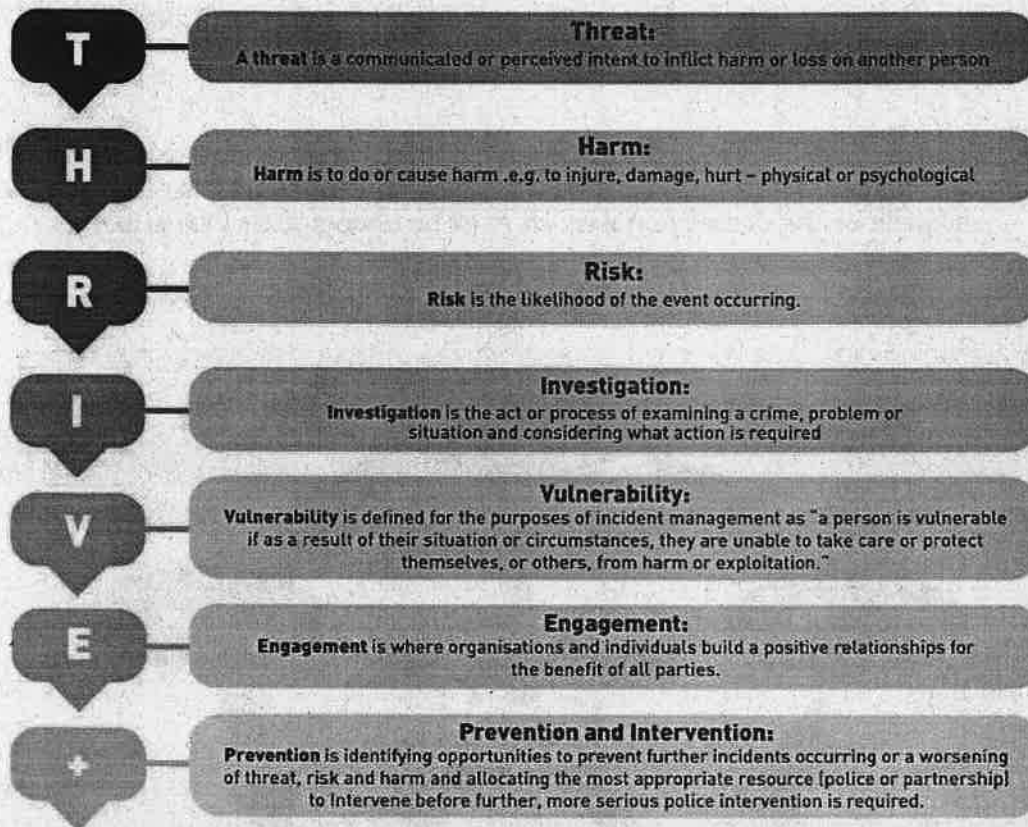
- The level of intervention will be intelligence based and depend upon the perceived risk of harm. Factors to be considered are:
 - Previous history
 - Risk indicators (DASHH)
 - Officers' professional judgement
- When considering level of intervention, the arrest of the alleged perpetrator must always be considered.
- Officers must be able to justify a decision not to arrest where that power exists.
- Officers will take firm and positive action against offenders or take other positive steps to ensure safety of victim, children and other vulnerable person.
- Criminal investigations into domestic abuse will ensure all necessary and proportionate lines of enquiry are considered to both protect the victim and prevent further incidents.
- Investigations should not solely focus upon the willingness of a victim to engage. It is the decision of the police and the Crown Prosecution Service, not the victim, to arrest and/or charge a suspect.
- We are committed to working in partnership with other agencies to eradicate domestic abuse, to build safer communities and thereby improve the quality of life for victims and their children.
- We will comply with the West Midlands Domestic Violence and Abuse Standards

<http://violencepreventionalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WMDV-standards.pdf>

6.1 THRIVE +

THRIVE+ is a tool to **ASSESS THE SITUATION**

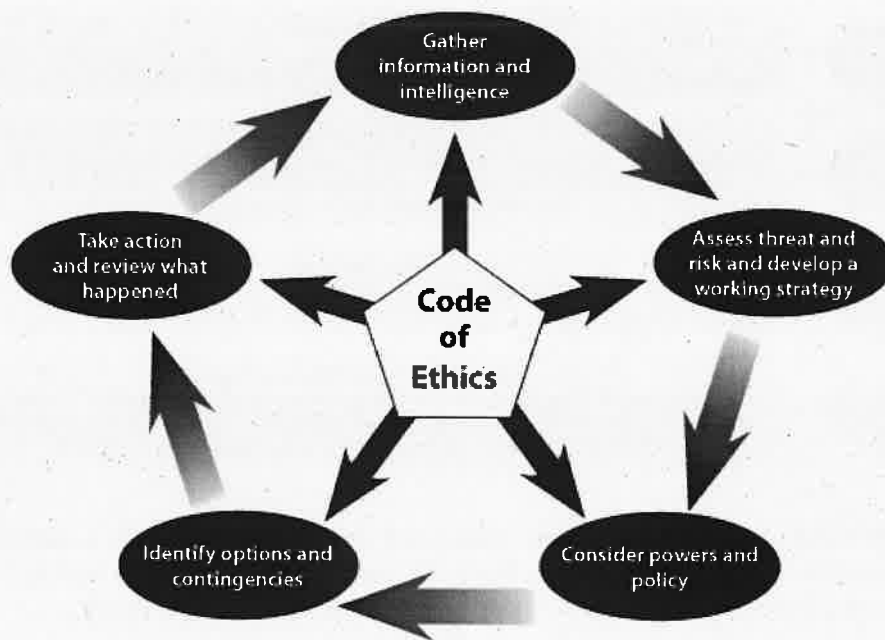
The THRIVE+ mnemonic has been adopted as risk assessment tool to improve the understanding and assessment of an incident from the moment the call is received by West Midlands Police.



- THRIVE+ does not replace policy but rather compliments existing policies by providing staff with the autonomy to make a final decision based on as full an understanding of the circumstances of an incident as possible.
- THRIVE+ supports the use of professional judgement and should be used in conjunction with the National Decision Model (NDM) and the Code of Ethics.
- THRIVE+ is an on-going assessment process and as a situation changes so do the elements of THRIVE+.
- The elements of THRIVE+ should be documented concisely by anyone making a new assessment *after new information or intelligence is received*. This will enable others to see and understand the rationale, and how staff have reached their decision.
- Officers and staff are to be aware that THRIVE+ is to be utilised when dealing with incidents of domestic abuse.

6.2 Positive and Appropriate Action

- The duty of any officer attending a domestic abuse incident is to protect the victim, children and any other vulnerable person from the risk of harm.
- Any action must be necessary, proportionate and justifiable. The National Decision Model (NDM) is provided to assist officers in making the right decision. Where a power of arrest exists, the most common option to remove the risk is to arrest the offender. This must be considered in line with the circumstances and legislation (i.e. Code G PACE).
- Positive action is about doing something to actively manage risk and should be considered on a case by case basis. Officers must record their decision making rationale on the crimes portal which must be endorsed by their supervisor.



- This guidance details considerations and direction for officers and staff dealing with domestic abuse incidents. It must not be read in isolation, but alongside the relevant section of the College of Policing domestic abuse authorised professional practice.
- The link and relevant chapter number is contained at the start of each section, however please see below for the full index:

Full Index

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/domestic-abuse-index/>

Introduction

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/introduction/>

Context and dynamics of domestic abuse

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/context/>

Understanding risk and vulnerability in the context of domestic abuse

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/risk-and-vulnerability/>

Identification, reporting and associated investigations

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/identification-reporting-and-associated-investigations/>

Call handler and front counter staff response to domestic abuse incidents

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/call-handler-and-front-counter-staff-response/>

First response

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/first-response/>

Arrest and other positive action

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/arrest-and-other-positive-approaches/>

Investigative development

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/investigative-development/>

Post arrest management of suspect and case file

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/post-arrest-management-of-suspect-and-casefile/>

Victim safety and support

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/victim-safety-and-support/>

Leadership, strategic oversight and management (Including Internal DA)

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/>

Partnership working and multiagency responses/mechanisms

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/partnership-working-and-multi-agency-responses/>

Quick access checklist

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/quick-access-checklists/>

7. INTERNAL REPORTING – DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

This section should be read alongside the College of Policing APP section 7 <http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#management-of-personnel>

7.1 Victims

- Being a good employer includes supporting staff through new or difficult periods in their lives. Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on individuals and their families. People experiencing domestic abuse can often be subject to disciplinary action within the workplace because their behaviour, being late for example, is misinterpreted.
- However, a steady income is often the key to a survivor's economic independence and their opportunity to escape from an abusive relationship. West Midlands Police has a responsibility to provide all staff with a safe haven and effective working environment. For some employees the workplace is a safe haven and the only place that offers a route to safety.
- Identifying that an employee (member of police staff, police officer, associate staff member, or agency staff member) is experiencing domestic abuse at an early stage will lead to appropriate help being offered and allow that member of staff to deal with their situation far more effectively.
- Incidents of domestic abuse may affect the employee's ability to function effectively in the workplace and supervisors must be alert to possible signs of domestic abuse:
 - Changes in character, for instance members of staff who are normally outgoing may become introverted or reserved;
 - They may display a lack of participation with a reduction in normal performance;
 - A change in the quality of work/performance;
 - Visible bruising or the wearing of clothing not conducive to weather conditions to cover injuries;
 - Excessive use of make-up to hide injuries may be indication of physical abuse;
 - Uncharacteristic lateness, last minute requests for time off or annual leave, regular periods of self-certified sick leave;

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- The receipt of repeated upsetting telephone calls, texts, emails etc.
- This list is not exhaustive and there will be some victims who do not display signs of violence or abuse. However, where line managers fear that a member of staff is suffering domestic abuse they should sensitively enquire as to their well-being and to offer support and advice where appropriate.
- If a supervisor / manager suspects that an employee (member of police staff, police officer, associate staff member, or agency staff member) is experiencing domestic abuse they should facilitate a conversation to be able to discuss this and identify and implement appropriate support. Shying away from the subject can perpetuate fear of stigma and increase feelings of anxiety. Often employees will not feel confident in speaking up, so a manager making the first move to being a conversation can be key.
- Supervisors / managers should ask the employee questions to help establish a relationship with the employee and develop empathy. Below are some example of questions that could be used:
 - How are you doing at the moment, are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?
 - I have noticed recently you are not yourself, is there anything the matter?
 - Are there any problems or reasons that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absence/under performance at work?
 - Is everything alright at home?
 - What support do you think might help, what would you like to happen now?
- The role of the supervisor / manager is not to deal with the abuse itself but to make it clear that employees will be supported and to outline what help is available.
- Supervisors / Managers should always:
 - Take the member of staff seriously, listen and believe what's being said;
 - Ensure that any discussion with a member of staff about their circumstances, takes place in privacy;
 - Respect confidentiality but be clear that if any criminal offences are disclosed they will be recorded;

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- Understand that the member of staff may not wish to discuss any details with their line manager, and may prefer to involve a third party such as a colleague, another officer, trade union representative or outside agency or with a Public Protection officer;
 - Find out what the member of staff wants and whether a manager, another officer or another agency can help them achieve it;
 - Be honest about what can be offered;
 - Be aware of any additional issues faced by the member of staff, because of their protected characteristics such as age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background or disability etc.;
 - Be aware of what support is available and explore these options with the member of staff;
- Information to assist this can be located in the 'Someone to Talk to' section of the People & Organisational Development internal webpage and the internal domestic abuse intranet pages:
[http://intranet2/force operations/sentinel/domestic abuse/are you a victim at work.aspx](http://intranet2/force%20operations/sentinel/domestic%20abuse/are%20you%20a%20victim%20at%20work.aspx)
 - Managers may have to consider additional factors following disclosures of domestic abuse. Such incidents may involve violent partners or ex-partners visiting the workplace, abusive phone calls, intimidation or harassment of members of staff by the alleged perpetrator. These issues could be addressed by the following measures:
 - Improving security measures such as changing key pad numbers or ensuring that access to buildings is open to authorised staff only;
 - Reinforce to staff not to divulge information about colleagues, especially personal details such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns (disclosing personal data is likely to lead to disciplinary action);
 - Offering changes in specific duties, such as removing them from public contact offices or call handling roles where perpetrators could easily initiate a confrontation;
 - Agreeing what to tell other staff and how they should respond if the abuser rings or calls at the workplace;
 - Providing colleagues with a photograph of the abuser and other relevant details such as car registration numbers, which may help to maintain security in the workplace;

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- Making sure that the officer or staff member's duties are up to date on GRS and if their duties require visits outside the office, considering how risks can be minimised (e.g. changing duties or allowing another colleague to accompany them on certain journeys);
- Recording any incidents of domestic violence in the workplace, including persistent phone calls, emails or visits to a member of staff by their partner/ex-partner. Details of any witnesses should also be recorded. These records could be used as evidence in subsequent proceedings.
- Additional support and advice can be obtained by speaking with Domestic Abuse Protection Teams.
- The right of every employee to make their own decision about the course of action at every stage will be respected. It is recognised that an officer or member of staff may need some time to decide what to do. They must be informed that if any criminal offences are disclosed they will be recorded, the views of the victim will be considered alongside any necessary safeguarding action.
- Confidentiality must be afforded to the individual (subject to the requirements of child and adult protection). Disclosure or information sharing will only be conducted with the full knowledge and consent of the victim except in relation to child protection matters or high risk of harm or death to the victim or any other identified person.

7.2 Perpetrators

- A robust response to West Midlands Police employees who are perpetrators of domestic abuse is vital to maintain public confidence and the confidence of victims in the policing of domestic abuse as well as maintaining confidence in the integrity of the service.
- Domestic abuse perpetrated by officers or members of staff will not be tolerated under any circumstance nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Domestic abuse is unacceptable and West Midlands Police will robustly investigate all allegations of domestic abuse made against its officers and staff:
 - Allegations against WMP officers and staff members will be dealt with in the same manner as any complaint against a member of the public;
 - Decisions as to whether to arrest perpetrators at the scene should not be influenced in any way by the fact that the person works for West Midlands Police;
 - Officers and staff should immediately inform their inspector or police staff manager upon receiving an allegation against an officer or member of staff. The inspector or manager should then ensure that early advice is sought from a supervisor within the relevant domestic abuse investigation and ensure that the Professional Standards Department is informed.

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- The local domestic abuse investigation team will assume responsibility for the investigation of any reported incident and safeguarding of any victim.
- In cases where offenders are found guilty in criminal proceedings for such offences the full range of disciplinary options will be considered including dismissal. In the absence of a criminal conviction, disciplinary proceedings may still take place, again with the full range of disciplinary sanctions being available, including dismissal. Officers that disclose to any member of the police service that they are committing domestic abuse-related criminal offences are not entitled to confidentiality. Any report of such criminal conduct must be treated as an admission of a crime and investigated as such.
- Police employees will be required to notify their NPU/Department Commander of any domestic abuse related civil court orders or domestic abuse-related child contact restrictions related to them.
- NPU/Department Commanders will be notified of all allegations of domestic abuse related criminal offences against their police officers and staff.
- A crime number must be obtained for all allegations of domestic abuse related criminal offences committed by police employees. It should be noted that a suspect(s) of any crime (including police employees) must have their details recorded in full on the crimes system.
- The officer responsible for obtaining a crime reference number in domestic abuse cases where the victim and/or suspect is a police officer or member of police staff should seek immediate authorisation from an officer of the rank of chief inspector or above to restrict the crime report. Any associated call log is to be similarly restricted.

8. RECORDING AND INITIAL RESPONSE

8.1 Call Handlers' Responsibilities

This section should be read alongside the College of Policing Domestic Abuse APP section 5 <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/call-handler-and-front-counter-staff-response/>

8.2 Log Classification and Closure

A domestic abuse incident should always be appropriately classified as soon as the call handler or public contact officer becomes aware if is connected to domestic abuse. An OASIS log should always be closed with a domestic abuse final classification.

8.3 Initial Response Principles

West Midlands Police adopts the following principles when recording and directing the initial response to domestic abuse:

- A domestic abuse matter **cannot** be resolved over the telephone and must always be prioritised under the grading framework as a P1 or P2 log. Where the victim is not immediately available, a P3 log may be used **but only if the**

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victim's immediate safety can be confirmed. Call handlers should ensure they ascertain when the perpetrator is likely to be in the company of the victim again as this will assist in the THRIVE+ assessment to determine whether a P3 log is an appropriate and safe response.

- All domestic abuse incidents must be recorded as per NSIR.
- An officer must be despatched to all incidents. The timing of this will be based on the THRIVE+ risk assessment, grading framework and the above protocol.
- Where the incident is classified as a repeat domestic incident the duty sergeant must be informed. It is usually appropriate for a duty sergeant to attend a repeat incident, however where this is not possible the duty sergeant must intrusively supervise action being taken and ensure that officers consider the repeat as an additional safeguarding issue.

8.3.1 Online Reporting Principles

West Midlands Police have adopted an online incident reporting process with effect from July 2017. It is recognised that online reporting is inappropriate for domestic abuse. The online reporting process includes built in safeguards to prevent emergency incidents or violent offences from being reported in this way with callers being diverted to the appropriate emergency or non-emergency contact channels.

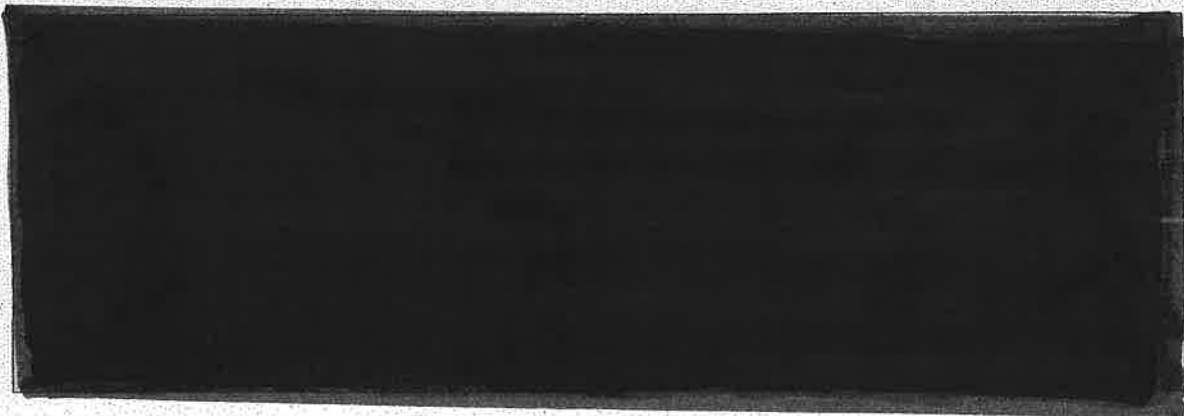
However, despite this it is recognised that there may be occasions when domestic abuse is disclosed through this channel. Where domestic abuse becomes apparent the online contact handler should continue to record the incident, with the appropriate domestic abuse special interest markers.

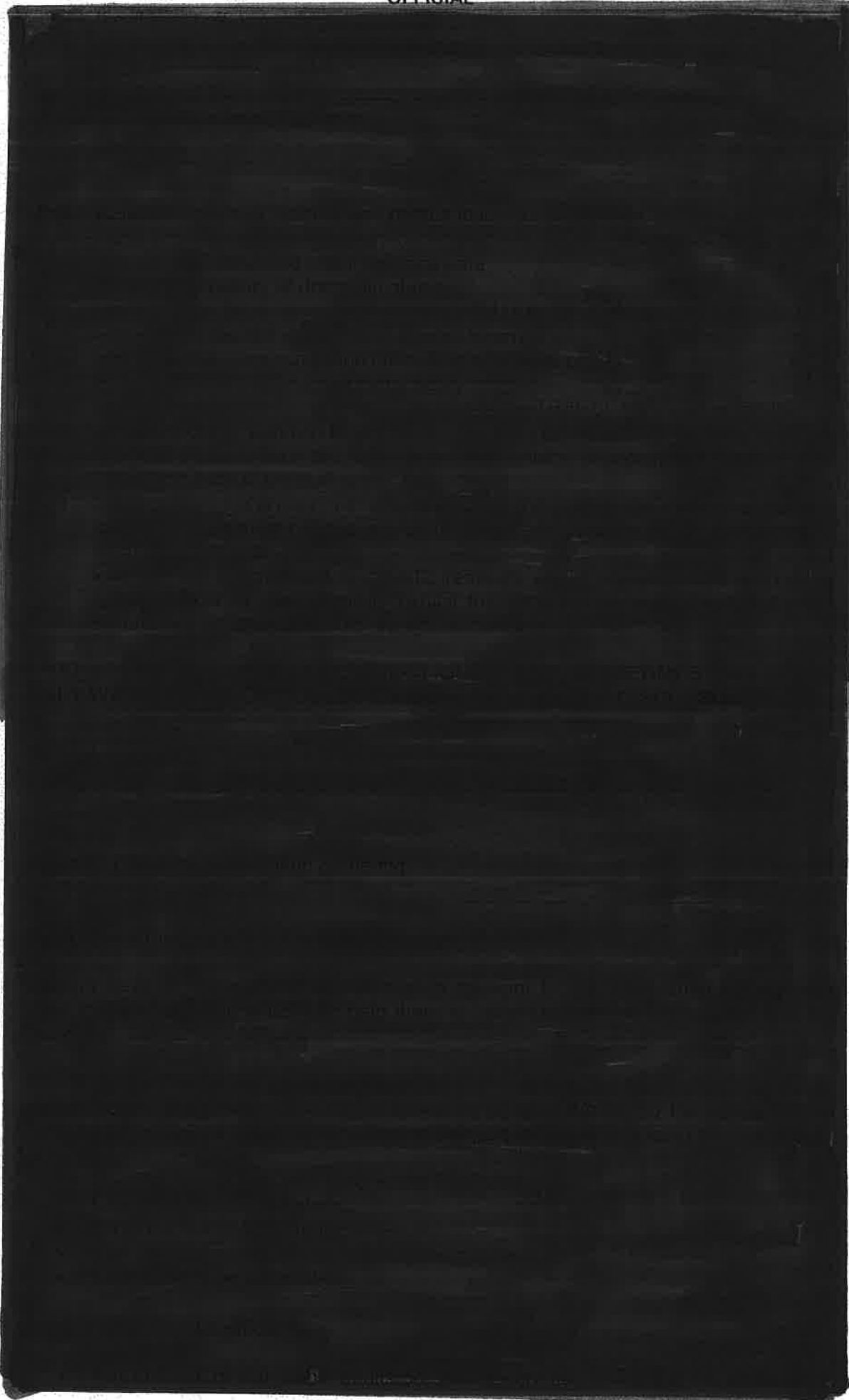
Once the domestic abuse crime or non-crime incident has been recorded the contact handler should then create an OASIS log, graded appropriately using THRIVE+ and arrange for the dispatch of an appropriate resource to complete face-to-face contact and undertake the necessary primary investigation and safeguarding (e.g. a victim statement, DASHH risk assessment etc.).

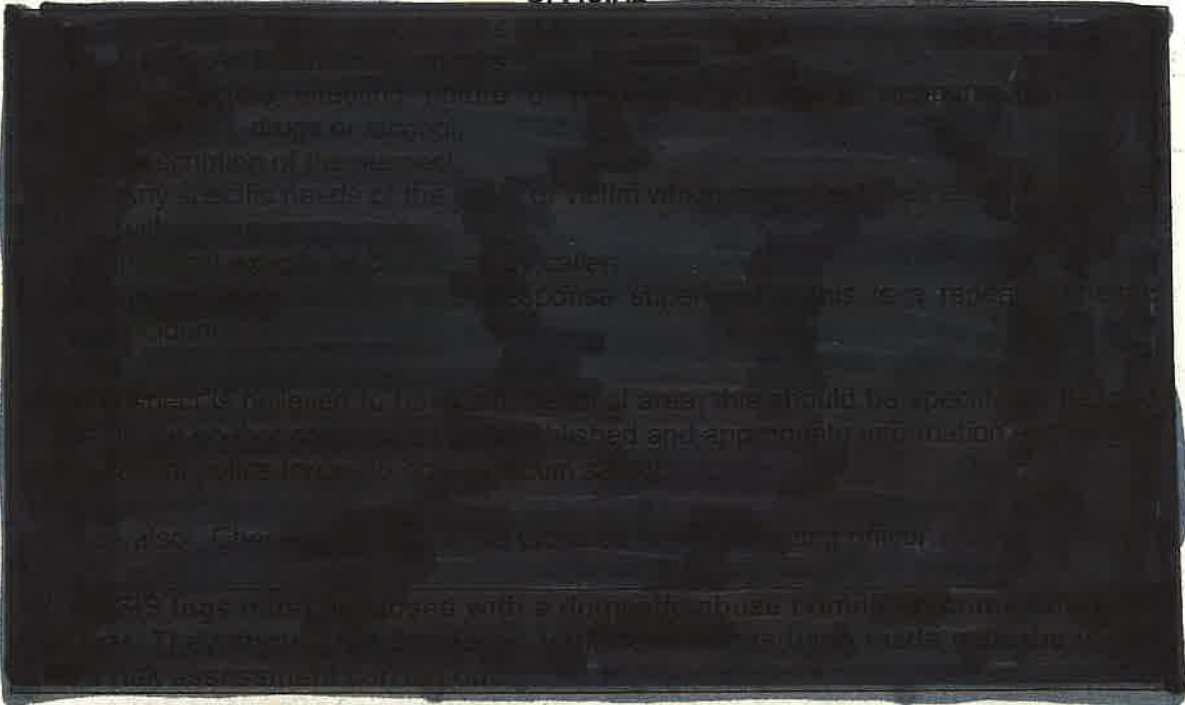
Practice Direction
• Always dispatch an officer to a domestic abuse incident
• Always inform a Force Response supervisor of a repeat domestic incident
• Force Response supervisors will intrusively supervise all repeat domestic abuse incidents and attend them whenever possible

8.4

Call Handler Quick Reference Guide







8.5 Checklist of Key Considerations for Public Contact Officers



9. FIRST RESPONSE

- The first response section should be read alongside the College of Policing Domestic Abuse APP section 6.
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/first-response/>
- The first priority for the police in responding to a domestic abuse incident is to protect the victims and children, witnesses, the suspect and police officers. The responding officers remain responsible for the investigation and safety planning until the case is handed over to a specialist or investigating officer. Officers must seek all opportunities to secure evidence to build an evidence-led prosecution and should not assume that lack of victim engagement will result in a negative outcome. For further guidance, officers are advised to refer to the College of Policing Domestic abuse APP section 8 'Building an evidence-led case'.
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/investigative-development>

9.1 Body Worn Video (BWV)

- Where available, BWV will always be used when attending a report of domestic abuse in line with the West Midlands Police policy:
http://intranet2/hq_departments/it_digital/what_we_offer/body_worn_video_guide.aspx.
- BWV at the scene may record the condition, environment and people present including children and other vulnerable people in the household. Such recordings may capture unsolicited comments, this is unavoidable and can provide good res gestae evidence of the situation.
- Initial account questions should only establish the nature of the incident and identify any offences and relevant early investigative information: to protect life and property, identify offenders and witnesses/victims and secure and preserve evidence.
- The subsequent use of BWV for recording accounts from victims and witnesses must be done with valid consent and officers should avoid leading and suggestive questions at all times. Where the victim or witness is under 18 years or is a vulnerable adult BWV should not be used for this purpose (please refer to child abuse policy on obtaining evidence from children).
- Where the victim is reporting a serious sexual offence their explicit and informed consent is required.

9.2 Risk Levels

- First responders are responsible for risk identification, assessment and response and remain so unless and until the case is handed over to a specialist domestic abuse officer. It is essential that the risk assessment procedure is carried out thoroughly as in some cases it may be the only assessment carried out in that case. Officers must remember that lack of injury (whether visible or not) does not mean that a victim is at a lower risk of harm and categorisation of risk must never be dependent upon injury alone.
- Regardless of the result of the risk assessment the initial attending officer is responsible for putting in place immediate victim safeguarding which is both suitable and sufficient to mitigate the identified level of risk and is proportionate to the circumstances. The attending officer should also make all necessary and proportionate referrals and be especially cognisant of the risk posed to other individuals living in the same household or who might be at risk from the perpetrator, especially children and young people (see 9.11).
- The initial attending officer should be cognisant that where the risk is identified as being 'standard' (see below) there will be no further review of the risk by a specialist domestic abuse safeguarding officer within the Public Protection Unit and that there will be no additional, enhanced safeguarding measures put in place over and above what the measures that the initial attending officer implements.

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- Whilst the arrest of an offender may temporarily manage the risk to a victim, officers should always remember that custody status can change at any time, therefore the considerations around safeguarding must always take account of any potential release from custody. The initial attending officer's supervisor is responsible for reviewing and confirming the risk level given to the case by the attending officer and for referring high risk cases to the relevant Force Response inspector for review.
- If the initial attending officer is not a Force Response officer then it will be their own supervisor who will be responsible for reviewing and confirming the risk level given to the case and for referring high risk cases to the relevant Force Response inspector for review. If the initial attending officer's supervisor is not available then it is the responsibility of the initial attending officer to refer the case to the relevant Force Response sergeant instead.
- There are three levels of risk identified by the 2009 DASHH Risk Assessment Model:
 - **Standard** – Current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm;
 - **Medium** – There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The perpetrator has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in the circumstances. E.g. failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, drug or alcohol abuse and release from custody;
 - **High** – There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm*. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious (all high risk cases will be referred to the Duty Inspector for consideration of a threat to life assessment – Please see Duty Inspector responsibilities for further detail).

*Serious Harm

Serious Harm is defined as 'a risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible'.

For further guidance please see College of Policing domestic abuse APP on risk identification and assessment section 3

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/risk-and-vulnerability/>

9.3 DASHH

West Midlands Police operates a policy whereby the completion of the DASHH risk assessment is mandatory at all domestic abuse incidents, including both crime and non-crime incidents.

DASHH risk assessments will be submitted electronically. This will auto populate the Crimescan system with the DASHH risk assessment form

In all cases, the DASHH risk assessments must be completed by the attending officer and checked by a supervisor, via the crimes portal, before the end of that tour of duty. The Supervisor will check the crime portal to understand the detail of the DASH risk assessment and obtain an overview and understanding of the risk.

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9.5 Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage

Victims may not wish to report domestic abuse for fear this may bring dishonour on their family. If officers think this may be the case, they must not attempt to mediate between family members and must consider how they can protect the victim and any other associated person who may be in danger. Further guidance can be obtained from the Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage Policy and/or the Karma Nirvana risk assessment :

http://intranet2/policy_portal/policy_library/honourbased_abuse_and_forced.aspx

http://intranet2/content/B_Press/PPU/KN_Risk_Assessment_West_Midlands_December_2014.pdf

9.6 Gender Reassignment

Officers must be aware of the many factors that can impact upon domestic abuse, and lead to increased risk. Domestic abuse can occur in opposite and same sex relationships and can be perpetrated by male, female and transgender offenders. Similarly victims can be male, female or transgender. Victims who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment may face additional barriers to reporting domestic abuse and may face additional risks from family or their community due to their gender.

9.7 Disability

Disability can affect many people in many different ways. Officers should never make assumptions about a victim of domestic abuse and should never stereotype based upon their own belief about a disability. Officers should always consider safeguarding and vulnerability of that individual based upon their presenting needs and by talking to that victim about their individual circumstances.

Those who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or have a speech impediment can contact the police in an emergency via textphone on 18000. In a non-emergency situation police can be contacted on textphone 18000 101. The police can also be contacted by through the *emergencySMS* service which lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the UK send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service where it will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire rescue, or coastguard. Simply by sending an SMS message to 999 you can call for help and the emergency services will be able to reply to you. You will need to register your mobile phone before using the *emergencySMS* service. Further details can be found on this link <http://www.emergencysms.org.uk/>

9.8 Links between Stalking/Harassment and Domestic Abuse

- There are close associations between harassment and stalking and domestic abuse. Many offences of harassment and stalking are perpetrated against partners from a previous intimate relationship. The suspect may use child contact arrangements as further opportunities to harass the victim or use knowledge of the victim's movements in relation to the children (such as collection from school, child care arrangements) to commit offences.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was introduced to address harassment where conduct was such that it did not necessarily constitute an offence under any existing legislation. It addresses a series of incidents that in isolation may not amount to the commission of a substantive offence per se, but when looked at as a course of conduct are likely to cause fear, alarm or distress.

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- In November 2012 two further offences of stalking were introduced to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- Stalking is different from harassment as it involves fixation and includes repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and/or contact on another person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress and/or fear in any reasonable individual. Stalking may be domestic abuse related, but could also affect those who have not had an intimate relationship with their 'stalker'.

9.9 Risk Identification for Non Domestic Stalking and Harassment Incidents

- Where it becomes apparent that an officer is dealing with a stalking and harassment case that is a non-domestic incident then they must refer to the stalking and harassment practice advice on investigating harassment, which includes a stalking and harassment checklist / stalking screening tool for risk identification. This checklist will direct officers to specific areas that will give officers an indication of the victim(s) risk of future violence/harm. The more 'yes' answers officers have, the higher the risk that the offender could physically attack the victim at any time.
- The use of this tool should be applied in the same way to the full DASHH checklist in that its use is mandatory for both crime and non-crime incidents.

http://intranet2.wmpad.local/functions/public_protection/domestic_abuse1/stalking_and_harassment/stalking_and_harassment_11_qs.aspx

9.10 The Domestic Abuse Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

The Domestic Abuse APP states:

*"The first priority of the police is to make people safe. At domestic abuse incidents it is particularly important that officers take positive action to make the victim and any children safe. This may mean arresting a person suspected of an offence, where the power to arrest exists, or taking other positive steps to ensure safety, such as providing refuge accommodation or providing the fitting of a panic alarm. Officers must be able to justify the decision **not** to arrest where the grounds exist and it would be a necessary and proportionate response.*

"In some situations, other positive approaches may be more appropriate (e.g. when the behavior does not amount to criminal conduct). The basic principles of safeguarding apply in relation to both adults and children.

"Officers must always consider risk in accordance with the National Decision Model (NDM). If the assessment identifies a risk of harm, it is never appropriate to do nothing. Arrest may not be possible because the grounds for arrest are not met or arrest would be a disproportionate response to the incident.

"Where there is domestic abuse and the victim is at risk of harm, however, the duty of positive action requires officers to consider and implement proportionate alternative measures to protect the victim and their children."

Practice Direction

- Always record the rationale for your positive and appropriate action within the crimes portal

For further discussion on arrest at domestic abuse incidents, please refer to Domestic Abuse APP section 7

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/arrest-and-other-positive-approaches/>


9.11 Children

- Officers should identify whether a child was present when the incident occurred, or whether a child is ordinarily resident at the address where it occurred. The details of all children in the household whether or not they are present at the time of the incident must be recorded. **If the children are present they must be seen and spoken to by the attending officers to make sure they are safe.** Officers must ensure they consider all of the circumstances of the incident, the children's demeanour and the environment that child is living in when considering whether a child is safe. Officers should not solely rely upon what a child chooses to tell them when making an assessment. When officers consider that there is concern as to the welfare or safety of any child officers should notify the Child Abuse Investigation Unit and take any immediate action necessary to make the child safe.
- When dealing with children and young people officers and staff are reminded to take into consideration articles 3 and 12 of the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child (what is in the best interests of the child and respect for the views of the child). https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf
- For further guidance on dealing with children and young people as victims and witnesses, officers and staff should refer to the child abuse policy [http://intranet2/content/publicprotection/A-Z/Child Abuse Policy, September 2012.pdf](http://intranet2/content/publicprotection/A-Z/Child%20Abuse%20Policy,%20September%202012.pdf)
- The police have a duty to protect children from harm. In all investigations the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount should be observed. Officers should seek to establish whether any children ordinarily resident in the household or present are subject to child protection plans.



- When officers are told that there are children are on the premises, officers should ensure they see each child to check that they are safe and well.
 - Children should only be asked sufficient questions to:

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- Establish the safety of the child;
 - Locate the scene of any offence;
 - Identify any suspects and their location;
 - Ensure the preservation of evidence.
-
- When directly questioning children, either to confirm their welfare or conduct fast track questions officers should switch off any Body Worn Video devices they may be wearing. The answers to all fast track questions should be recorded contemporaneously for the preparation of any subsequent interview. It is important to allow the child to answer without interruption.
 - Children exposed to domestic abuse are subject to harm and risk and officers must be aware of potential offences committed against children as well as adults within the household. Officers do not need parental consent to speak with the child to establish their wellbeing.
 - Where there are concerns for children, officers must make referrals to the appropriate Local Authority Children's Social Care Department, using the locally agreed procedure. Where necessary, officers should consider exercising police powers of protection under section 46 of the Children Act 1989. It is the decision of the officer at the scene whether to invoke their powers under the act and they do not need to seek the agreement or authority of children services or child abuse investigation teams to use their powers.
 - However officers will may wish to consult with Children's Social Care, Emergency Duty Team and Child Abuse Investigation Units and should do so in any case as soon as the powers are utilised. Furthermore, officers exercising their powers under section 46 of the Children Act 1989 will need to consult with their inspector who will act as the *Designated Officer* for the purposes of recording and reviewing the decision on the Police Protection system:

 - If the child is a potential witness to the domestic abuse, either as an observer or as a victim in their own right, they should be interviewed in accordance with the guidelines set out in Ministry of Justice (2011) Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and using special measures.
 - Officers should consider involving a registered intermediary from the outset. Further details can be found in the Child Abuse Policy.
 - West Midlands Police routinely shares information regarding domestic abuse incidents with multi agency partners. It is essential that accurate and comprehensive details are recorded to allow for risk to be assessed and responded to.

Practice Direction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always see and speak to any children present during a domestic incident. Wake sleeping children where necessary.• All children should be recorded as a nominal within the crimes portal

9.12 Vulnerable Adults

- Vulnerability may result from an environmental or individual circumstances or behaviour, indicating there may be risk to that person or another. Additional factors to vulnerability may include mental health, disability, age or illness.
- THRIVE+ defines vulnerability for the purposes of incident management as:
“a person is vulnerable if as a result of their situation or circumstance, they are unable to take care or protect themselves, or others from harm or exploitation”.
- The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as anyone aged 18 or over who:
 - Has needs for care and support;
 - Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect;
 - And as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
- Domestic abuse victims are likely to be classified as vulnerable through THRIVE+ or at risk through the Care Act 2014. Officers must consider this vulnerability when applying the NDM when responding to domestic abuse. All action taken must be documented within the crimes portal including a rationale for why action was, or was not taken.
- When dealing with vulnerable adult, officers and staff should refer to the vulnerable adult abuse policy which can be found here:***Policy under review***

9.13. Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (also known as Clare’s Law)

- The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) gives members of the public a ‘right to ask’ police where they have a concern that their partner may pose a risk to them or where they are concerned that the partner of a member of their family or a friend may pose a risk to that individual. If an application is made under the scheme, police and partner agencies will carry out checks and if they show that the individual has a record of abusive offences, or there is other information to indicate that there may be a risk from the individual, the police will consider sharing this information.
- In some cases, the police may become aware of the risk without an application, which creates an obligation for the police to inform a person they may be at risk from a partner (the ‘right to know’). Ordinarily, this is completed in consultation with other safeguarding agencies, however there may be occasions where the safety of a person is immediately at risk. When conducting relevant intelligence checks (PNC, PND etc.) officers may become aware of information which due to the circumstances places the victim at immediate risk of harm. In these occasions the officers in receipt of the information, must immediately refer the matter to their inspector to review the right to know and coordinate disclosure. If the officer has become aware of the information “out of hours” and they are not a Force Response or Force Support officer then it is possible their inspector will not be on duty. Where this is the case and there is an immediate risk of harm then the information should be referred to the PPU duty adult SIO up to 23:00 hrs, and overnight cases should be referred to the inspector on duty in the Centre for Tasking & Coordination (CTAC).

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- For further information, please refer to the DVDS Clare's Law Guidance on the PPU Intranet A-Z useful documents page:

[http://intranet2.wmpad.local/functions/public protection/a to z of useful documents1.aspx#D](http://intranet2.wmpad.local/functions/public%20protection/a%20to%20z%20of%20useful%20documents1.aspx#D)

10. RESPONSIBILITY OF INITIAL ATTENDING OFFICERS

10.1

Quick Reference Guide for First Response

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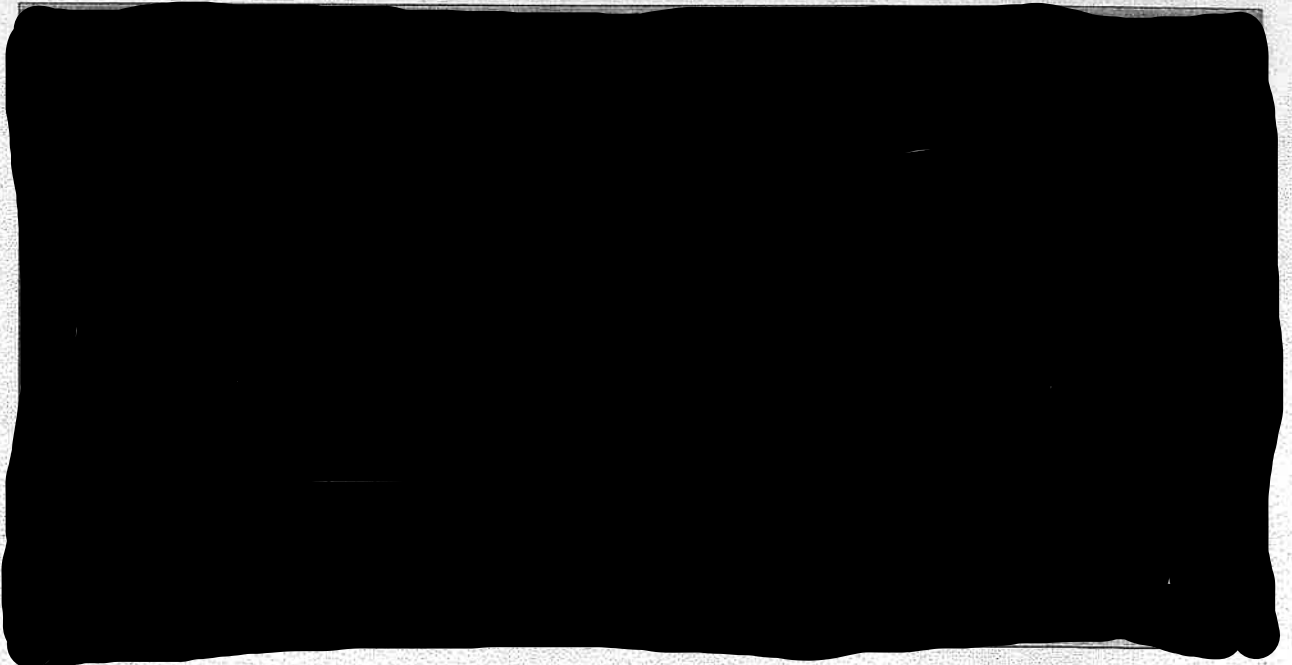
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10.2

Checklist for First Responding Officer's Statement





11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FORCE RESPONSE SUPERVISOR

11.1 Attendance at incidents of domestic abuse

- West Midlands Police adopts the default position that a Force Response supervisor will attend all serious incidents of domestic abuse. For example, allegations of coercive and controlling behaviour, physical assaults amounting to serious section 20 or section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, firearms incidents and allegations of rape or serious sexual abuse.
- It is acknowledged that there will be occasions when a Force Response supervisor cannot attend the scene of a serious domestic abuse incident. When this is the case the incident should still be brought to the attention of the relevant Force Response supervisor and should be endorsed to this effect, together with rationale as to why a Force Response supervisor cannot attend.
- When they cannot attend a serious incident of domestic abuse the relevant Force Response supervisor should make contact with the attending officer to ensure that the victim and any other vulnerable people or children living at the address or present at the time are appropriately safeguarded. They should also actively supervise the primary investigation to ensure that all lines of enquiry are being pursued and that an appropriate level investigation is being undertaken. They should give direction and guidance in relation to crime scene management and evidence gathering.
- Where possible a Force Response supervisor will attend all repeat incidents of domestic abuse. If it is not possible to attend or it is not appropriate in the individual circumstances the relevant Force Response supervisor will endorse the incident log to that effect and ensure that they remotely supervise the attending officers to ensure the safeguarding of the victim and any other vulnerable people or children at the address. They should also ensure that appropriate actions and / or referrals take place to help prevent further domestic abuse incidents.

In addition to the above, Force Response supervisors are responsible for ensuring:

- The most appropriate course of action has been taken following the report of a domestic abuse incident;

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- Officers have completed the DASHH risk assessment as per policy and that the crimes portal has been updated fully with the responses given during the risk assessment before officers go off duty;
- They record an initial investigation and safeguarding plan within the crimes portal, and review and endorse the DASHH risk assessment;
- Ensure all high risk incidents are referred to the relevant Force Response inspector for consideration of a threat to life assessment;
- Officers have recorded the reasons for their actions on the crimes portal;
- Any external agency referrals have been carried out, for example Children's Services;
- Filing any standard risk domestic abuse non-crime report;
- In relation to honour based abuse the force policy has been adhered to;
- A statement is taken immediately or if the victim is unable or unwilling to, ensuring the attending officers produce their BWV footage and a witness statement detailing the scene, demeanour, injuries and any other relevant information;
- Wanted persons have been placed onto PNC;



- Ensure the relevant Force Response inspector is notified of all outstanding domestic abuse suspects where the victim is identified as being at high risk.
- Where any party is a firearms licence holder ensuring that they inform the relevant Force Response inspector to ensure necessary actions are carried out.

Practice Direction
• Always review investigation, and safeguarding action taken at the scene of a domestic incident
• Always review and endorse the DASHH risk assessment
• Always attend serious domestic abuse incidents and ensure intrusive supervision of repeat incidents

11.2 Checklist for Supervisors of First Responders


The below checklist is provided by the College of Policing domestic abuse APP to allow supervisors to improve the front line response to domestic abuse.

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Checklist of areas for observation and improvement	Y/N	Areas for improvement
1. Victims made to feel safer after police intervention		
2. First responder demonstrates empathy		
3. First responder not judging a victim		
4. First responder not judging coping mechanisms such as alcohol/drugs/self-harm		
5. Collection of evidence and evidence-led prosecutions		
6. Completion of DASHH as a tool to assist investigation and safeguarding not a tick box exercise		
7. Recognition of and asking about coercive control		
8. Checks on children's welfare and reassurance given to children at the scene		
9. Recognition of, and recording offender manipulation of first responder		
10. History checks before arrival at scene from the call taker		
11. Addressing counter allegations		
12. Ensuring privacy when separating parties		
13. Telling the victim they are believed and it was the right decision to seek help		
14. Demonstrates an understanding of why victims can be uncooperative		
15. Safety planning with a victim and children		
16. Safeguarding according to need and with consideration of Thrive+		
17. Using Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)		
18. Demonstrates understanding of the MARAC process and what the MARAC marker means (if applicable)		
19. Dealing appropriately with the needs of victims from diverse communities		
20. Targeting perpetrators for disruption and diversion		
21. Understanding and communicating with young victims and young people that harm in relationships		
22. Recognising harassment and stalking behaviours		
23. Recognising interfamilial DA and its dynamics		
24. Taking positive action and explaining this to the victim		
25. Referral pathways for victims, children and perpetrators		

12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FORCE RESPONSE INSPECTOR




- 
- The relevant Force Response inspector will be responsible for reviewing all high risk domestic abuse incidents for consideration of a threat to life assessment. The relevant Force Response inspector must document and rationalise within the DASHH form whether or not a threats to life assessment will be carried out. For further details please refer to the managing threats to life policy:

*** Policy under review ***

- Consider and authorise where appropriate the 'right to know' under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. For further information, please refer to the DVDS Clare's Law Guidance on the PPU Intranet A-Z useful documents page:
http://intranet2.wmpad.local/functions/public_protection/a_to_z_of_useful_documents1.aspx#D

Practice Direction



13. REQUESTING ADVICE FOR SERIOUS INCIDENTS

- The Public Protection Unit (PPU) provides an adult abuse senior investigating

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officer (SIO) for serious domestic abuse incidents and serious sexual offences. For domestic abuse incidents, between 0800 and 1600 hours, in the first instance this will be the relevant geographic domestic abuse detective inspector.

- Between 1600 and 2200 hrs one DI or DCI will be on duty for the force, and can be identified through the on call SIO rota on the PPU website:
- Between 2200hrs and 0700 hrs the on call SIO can be contacted via telephone.
- The on-call procedure is not a replacement for bringing incidents that require immediate briefing and decision-making to the attention of the force incident manager (FIM).

13.1 Overnight call out Rationale for PPU Adult SIO

- The on call SIO should be contacted for any adult abuse offences that have aggravated factors. The SIO will provide the relevant and necessary advice.
- The following incidents may require contact with the Adult SIO:
 - Stranger rape;
 - Stranger sexual assaults which are part of a series;
 - Honour based abuse;
 - Attempt domestic murder.
- This list is not exhaustive as any form of aggravated incident may prompt the overnight contact of the duty SIO if deemed necessary (note that a request for the PPU adult SIO needs to be authorised by the duty crime superintendent).
- Contact with the duty crime superintendent would usually come from the night duty Force Response inspector, Force Contact (YM1) or the duty FIM
- The on call SIO rota on the PPU website provides primary contact numbers for each PPU adult SIO. Officers should refer to the Bluepages for any additional contact numbers.

14. OUTSTANDING SUSPECTS



14.1

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14.2

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15. NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

In some occasions, neighbourhood officers may be the first responders to domestic violence incidents, in which case they should be familiar with the guidance for first responders contained within this policy.

Neighbourhood officers should seek opportunities to engage with repeat victims of domestic abuse, in order to increase confidence in the police, seek further opportunities to safeguard, and to encourage victims to engage with support services with a view to preventing further harm occurring to that victim.

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16. DOMESTIC ABUSE INVESTIGATION AND PROTECTION TEAMS

The detective chief superintendent designated as Head of Public Protection will hold overall responsibility for the coordination of the force's response to domestic abuse.

16.1 The West Midlands Police Public Protection Unit (PPU) will:

- Ensure compliance with the national and regional standards on domestic abuse;
- Develop, review and advise on force policy, ensuring a corporate standard;
- Monitor force performance;
- Provide continuous engagement with communities and partners at a strategic level;
- Ensure mechanisms are in place in order for the effective engagement and multi-agency approach in dealing with cases;
- Maintain the WMP and CPS protocol on the handling of domestic abuse cases;
- Provide consultancy service to NPUs and other departments and will review, assess and disseminate best practice;
- Provide a consultancy service to Learning and Development (L&D) and NPUs in identifying and meeting training needs;
- Together with the corporate communications department provide public information and representation to the media on domestic abuse issues;
- Support NPUs and departments to take proactive steps to change attitudes and increase public awareness of domestic abuse in order to encourage reporting and in the long term reduce incidents or prevent escalation;
- The PPU senior leadership team (SLT) provides leadership and direction for all domestic abuse specialist officers and through its strategic delivery plan for domestic abuse ensures that the force is able to recognise and respond to incidents of domestic abuse appropriately. The delivery plan also ensures compliance with the 'Regional Standards for Domestic Violence and Abuse' which provides a framework of professional practice reflective of the commitment of statutory organisations and specialist domestic abuse services across the West Midlands region.

<http://violencepreventionalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WM-DV-standards.pdf>

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- Sitting within the PPU, West Midlands Police has specialist domestic abuse teams which consist of investigation teams responsible for the secondary investigation of all domestic abuse incidents regardless of crime type or risk grading and protection teams responsible for safeguarding medium and high risk domestic abuse victims.
- The following section should be read alongside the College of Policing domestic abuse APP sections 8, 9 and 10.
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/investigative-development/>
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/post-arrest-management-of-suspect-and-casefile/>
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/victim-safety-and-support/>

16.2 Specialist Domestic Abuse Detective Inspector

The detective inspector responsible for the management of domestic abuse teams provides both senior investigative advice and crime management oversight.

16.2.1 Specialist Domestic Abuse Detective Inspectors' Responsibilities:

- Conducting reviews and setting actions on all high risk investigations within 24 hours of report and ensuring on-going reviews as the investigation progresses;
- Conduct reviews and setting actions on all serious sexual offence investigation in accordance with the rape and serious sexual offences policy; [http://intranet2/content/publicprotection/Rape and Serious Sexual Assault/Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Policy 2009.pdf](http://intranet2/content/publicprotection/Rape%20and%20Serious%20Sexual%20Assault/Rape%20and%20Serious%20Sexual%20Assault%20Policy%202009.pdf)
- Liaising with local geographic senior leadership teams to ensure the risk presented by outstanding domestic abuse suspects is known and acted upon;
- Managing the performance of the investigation and safeguarding teams;
- Considering requests for emergency charging decisions;
- Overseeing and authorising the domestic abuse disclosure scheme process for disclosure under right to know and right to ask;
- Undertaking the role of senior investigating officer (SIO), including where necessary within an incident room; and / or by use of the Home Office large major enquiry system (HOLMES);

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- Managing critical incidents giving consideration to risk, threat and harm and organisational reputation;
- Attending NPU TRM and NPU Local Tactical Delivery Board (LTDB) meetings and NPU vulnerability, violence, intervention and prevention forums where appropriate;
- Attending, chairing and overseeing the MARAC process.

[REDACTED]

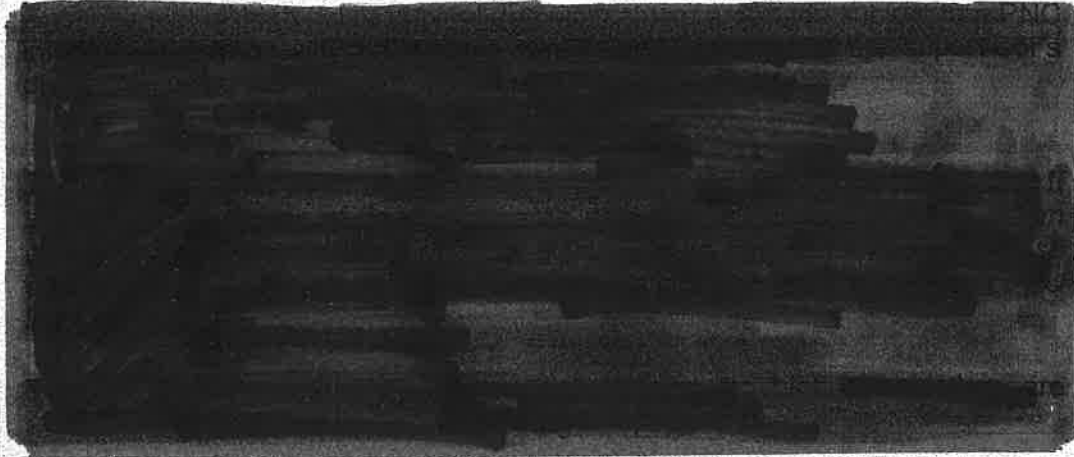
[REDACTED]

16.3 Specialist Domestic Abuse Investigation Team Sergeants Responsibilities:

- Reviewing all recorded domestic abuse crime and recording investigation plans which are proportionate and timely;
- Reviewing safeguarding plans (for standard and medium risk crime investigations);
- Completing on-going reviews of investigations, ensuring that they are timely, compliant with victim's code and cognisant of changing circumstances that may alter risk levels;
- Providing feedback to officers and supervisors where standards in primary or secondary investigation and supervision are inadequate;
- Reviewing the status of any domestic abuse prisoner and ensure appropriate officers are allocated;

[REDACTED]

- Ensuring the submission to CPS of case files and requests for investigative advice, are timely, accurate and contain all relevant material and information.
- Completing daily reviews of all medium and high risk domestic abuse records and allocating safeguarding tasks (with the exception of medium risk crime owned by investigation teams);




- Completing on-going reviews of safeguarding plans;
- Taking ownership for the safeguarding strategy of domestic abuse victims, honour based abuse crime and non-crime including forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Implementing strategies to reduce repeat victims of these crimes;
- Collating and reviewing Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) actions and tasking staff accordingly;
- Maintaining safeguarding responsibilities for crime post-investigation including prior to release from prison for high risk victims.

16.4 Specialist Domestic Abuse Investigation Team Officers' Responsibilities:

- Investigating any offence where the government definition of domestic abuse is met, progressing the investigation plan and ensuring a continual reassessment of risk throughout the investigation;
- Where BWV records the initial account, the officer conducting the interview of the victim or witness should view the recording to assist with the planning of the visually recorded interview or statement taking process. The victim/witness should not be shown the BWV recording. If there are any inconsistencies between the BWV initial account and the formal interview process consideration should be given to addressing this at the end of the process in accordance with Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings; Guidance on Interviewing Victims and Witnesses, and Guidance on using Special Measures (2011);
- Conducting comprehensive intelligence checks and understand and manage the appropriate dissemination of such information;
- Safeguarding strategies in medium risk crime incidents will be the responsibility of the domestic abuse team investigation officer;

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- Making appropriate referrals to relevant support agencies where necessary, for victims, witnesses and offenders;
- Liaising with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and completing case files in line with CPS guidelines and within timescales set by them;
- Actively pursuing victimless prosecutions where possible and implementing alternative intervention strategies such as civil orders;
- Liaising with victims who withdraw their support for prosecutions;


Please note: officers must be mindful that when speaking with, and taking withdrawal/retraction statements from victims of domestic abuse crime those victims may criminalise their own behaviour by stating they lied about the original report or statement. In these circumstances, the full protection of PACE 1984 (for example the caution and legal advice) must be considered, and officers should not take statements from victims without this protection.

16.5 Specialist Domestic Abuse Protection Team Officers

Safeguarding considerations must be made by the officer attending the incident. Protection team staff are responsible for high risk safeguarding strategies in both crime and non-crime incidents and medium risk non-crime incidents. Safeguarding in medium risk crime incidents will be the responsibility of the domestic abuse team investigation officer.

16.5.1 Specialist Domestic Abuse Protection Team Officers' Responsibilities:

Medium risk

- Domestic abuse protection staff should attempt to make contact with medium risk victim at the earliest opportunity and in any case within 5 working days of the incident;
- Contacting the victim by telephone and document the contact plan;
- Discussing safety planning and relevant signposting with them;
- Checking/placing a SIG marker is required on their address;
- Documenting the safety plan review on the crimes portal;

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- Conducting comprehensive intelligence checks and understanding and managing the appropriate dissemination of such information including Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme;
 - Providing support and guidance to front line officers regarding the completion of risk assessments where appropriate and highlight to the relevant supervisor risk assessments which require re-assessment;
 - Working closely with offender managers to support intervention strategies with domestic abuse offenders;
 - Working with partner agencies to provide intervention at the earliest opportunity to protect victims of domestic violence and promote a coordinated approach to supporting and protecting victims and their families;
 - Ensuring DASHH form has been completed comprehensively and there is complete understanding of the risk level;
- [REDACTED]

High Risk

In addition to the actions for a medium risk victim, protection team staff should:

- [REDACTED]
 - Conduct comprehensive intelligence and PND checks and relevant information shared with investigation team;
 - Attend and actively contributing to relevant meetings including Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA);
 - Ensure high risk victims are referred to MARAC and complete actions as necessary;
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- Contact victim to arrange contact plan/personal visit and discuss safety planning;

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Signpost to relevant agencies;
- Refer to IDVA / MARAC meeting (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) and ensure the case is listed for the next available joint screening meeting if there are any children;
- Record all actions within the crimes portal.

17. MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

- All high-risk cases should be referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- MARACs share information with a view to identifying victims of domestic abuse who are at high risk of harm. They then construct a management plan to provide appropriate services for, and responses to, all those involved in a domestic abuse situation, including the victim, children and perpetrator. The role of MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety.
- MARACs are chaired by the Detective Inspector for the area where the MARAC takes place. Safelives guidelines are applied to the MARAC meetings to ensure consistency of approach across WMP.

More detail can be found on the Safelives website
http://www.safelives.org.uk/?qclid=CL_u2eK3684CFWsq0wodSCQAMQ

18. OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

18.1 Background

This section outlines the core practises needed to standardise practises in domestic abuse integrated offender management (IOM) across West Midlands Police and partnership arrangements.

The West Midlands Police Public Protection Unit (PPU) remain responsible for the overarching force approach to domestic abuse. However, there is an emerging evidence-base to suggest that effective management of domestic abuse perpetrators can significantly decrease risk of harm to victims, and has beneficial effects on the children of domestic abuse perpetrators who have witnessed abuse and violence within the home.

See Project Mirabel: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/criva/projectmirabal/>

As such, West Midlands Police seeks to identify and invest in evidence based domestic abuse offender management approaches to support the force domestic abuse strategy.

Domestic abuse offender management applies to perpetrators over the age of 18. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) will be responsible for management of cases involving offenders who are under 18 years of age in line with offender management policy.

<http://intranet2/content/B PRD/Policy Portal/Policy Documents/Integrated Offender Management.pdf>

REDACTED INFORMATION.

18.2.2 Domestic Abuse Offender Risk Assessment Tool (DA ORAT)

REDACTED INFORMATION

REDACTED INFORMATION.

REDACTED INFORMATION

REDACTED INFORMATION

REDACTED INFORMATION.

19. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

The policy has been reviewed and drafted against all protected characteristics in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty embodied in the Equality Act 2010. The policy has therefore been Equality Impact Assessed to show how WMP has evidenced 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Supporting documentation in the form of an EQIA has been completed and is available for viewing in conjunction with this policy.


20. HUMAN RIGHTS

This policy has been implemented and reviewed in accordance with the European Convention and principles provided by the Human Rights Act 1998. The application of this policy has no differential impact on any of the articles within the Act. However, failure as to its implementation would impact on the core duties and values of WMP (and its partners), to uphold the law and serve/protect all members of its community (and beyond) from harm.

21. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

Public disclosure of this policy document is determined by the Force Policy Co-ordinator on agreement with its owner. Version 5.0 of this policy has been classified as GCS OFFICIAL

Public disclosure does not automatically apply to supporting Force policies, directives and associated guidance documents, and in all cases the necessary advice should be sought prior to disclosure to any one of these associated documents.

Which exemptions apply and to which section of the document?	Whole document	Section number
Exemptions Under S31 Section 8.4 as below 		Section 8.4

22. TRAINING

Training in domestic abuse is delivered by WMP Learning and Development.

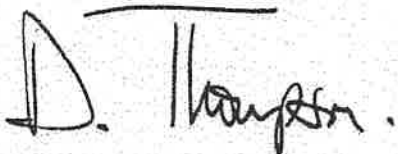
23. PROMOTION / DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING

The following methods will be adopted to ensure full knowledge of the Policy:

- Publication of policy onto force policy portal
- Noticeboard message

24. REVIEW

- The policy business owner Public Protection maintain outright ownership of the policy and any other associated documents and in-turn delegate responsibility to the department/unit responsible for its continued monitoring.
- The policy should be considered a 'living document' and subject to regular review to reflect upon any Force, Home Office/NPCC, legislative changes, good practice (learning the lessons) both locally and nationally, etc.
- A formal review of the policy document, including that of any other potential impacts i.e. EQIA, will be conducted by the date shown as indicated on the first page.
- Any amendments to the policy will be conducted and evidenced through the Force Policy Co-ordinator and set out within the version control template.
- Feedback is always welcomed by the author/owner and/or Force Policy Co-ordinator as to the content and layout of the policy document and any potential improvements.

**CHIEF CONSTABLE**



25. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Amended/Agreed by.
V.1.0	February 2013	Supersedes previous guidance on Public Protection intranet website and Circulated to all Public Protection managers for comment. Feedback received and policy updated to reflect comments.	DI Kim Madill
V.1.1	April 2013	Draft forwarded to selection of DA task and Finish Group who agreed to review and comment. Feedback received from Supt Smallwood and Bell. Policy updated to reflect comments and discussed with ACC Rowe in May 2013,	
V 1.2	19.06.2013	Distributed for mandatory consultation	DI Kim Madill
V 1.3	05.08.2013	Updates following mandatory consultation	DI Kim Madill
V.1.4	17.08.2013	Updates following discussion with Supt Ward re cross over with threats to life policy, Corinne Brazier re use of PND, [REDACTED] Witness Care Unit manager, [REDACTED] PP HQ re lessons from DHR re incident attendance, inclusion of Visual Evidence for Victims from Public Protection feedback, EQIA suggestions.	DI Kim Madill
V. 1.5	23.08.2013	-Updates following discussion with Insp [REDACTED] and Sgt [REDACTED] in relation to [REDACTED] -Updates to Force Contact sections as advised by [REDACTED] -Draft process for adding non-molestation orders onto PNC added to Civil orders section. -Minor additions to the firearms licensing and DA section from Jonathan Cumberbatch.	
V 1.6	27.08.2013	All Hyperlinks added and policy finalised for submission to ACC	

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		Rowe for approval.	
V 2.1	28.10.2013	Final review of formatting, content and policy before submission to Command Team for approval	
V2.1	09/12/2013	Added CC signature and review dates and policy ref number	56408 Couchman
V2.2	03/03/2015	<p>Link for Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence aide memoire (pg2)</p> <p>Inc. Link re taking DNA, finger prints, photographs procedure (pg2)</p> <p>Section 2.6 amended wording and changed links as per above</p> <p>Forced Marriage Inc. in title</p> <p>Forced Marriage/Arranged Marriage included in definitions (sec 2.6)</p> <p>Standard Code of Ethics section included</p>	DS 5454 Runham
V3.0	16/05/2016	Policy review undertaken with internal focus group, policy updated to reflect Domestic Abuse Authorise Professional Practice (College of Policing).	DCI Sally Simpson
V3.1	02/06/2016	Draft Policy circulated to EQIA group for feedback	DCI Simpson
V3.2	13/06/2016	Policy updated following EQIA feedback, Police Staff standards of behaviour added where Police Officer standards of behaviour are discussed, minor alterations made at the request of FOI manager	DCI Simpson
V3.3	03/06/16	Focus group with external partners (Bham Local Authority, Women's Aid, WAITS, BCC Housing). Policy updated with their recommendations	DCI Sally Simpson
V3.4	19/07/2016	EQIA approved	DC Gillian Squires
V3.5	16/08/2016	Minor policy updates added following initial feedback from ACC Foulkes.	
V4.0	30/09/16	Version approved by ACC Foulkes.	DCI Sally Simpson
V4.1	06/09/17	<p>Amendments to language to bring policy up to date with force structural changes.</p> <p>Inclusion of online reporting</p>	DCI Adam Henderson DI Kat Sibley

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		<p>principles.</p> <p>Amendments to DASHH policy, from discretionary model to mandatory completion.</p> 	
v4.2	26/09/17	Updated table of contents	DCI Adam Henderson
v4.3	27/10/17	Correction to paragraph 9.13 Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme	DCI Adam Henderson
v4.4	30/10/17	<p>Update to section 18. Offender Management</p> <p>Version amendments</p>  <p>to take effect as approved by ACC MURRAY.</p>	DCI Adam Henderson
v4.5	01/02/18	Minor corrections and wording amendments made following mandatory consultation with internal partners.	DCI Adam Henderson
v5.0	15/02/18	Final version submitted for upload onto force systems.	DCI Adam Henderson
v5.1	31/10/2018	Paragraph 9 amended to reflect electronic submission of DASH	59206 Booth