



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Dyfed-Powys Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse

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Introduction

The extent and nature of domestic abuse remains shocking. A core part of the policing mission is to prevent crime and disorder. Domestic abuse causes both serious harm and constitutes a considerable proportion of overall crime. It costs society an estimated £15.7 billion a year.¹ 77 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in 2012/13.² In the UK, one in four young people aged 10 to 24 reported that they experienced domestic violence and abuse during their childhood.³ Forces told us that crime relating to domestic abuse constitutes some 8 percent of all recorded crime in their area, and one third of their recorded assaults with injury. On average the police receive an emergency call relating to domestic abuse every 30 seconds.

People may experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, age or disability. Domestic abuse may also occur in a range of different relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender, as well as within families.

While both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, women are much more likely to be victims than men.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

“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:⁴

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional”.*

¹ Walby, S. (2009). *The cost of domestic violence*. Retrieved from: www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/doc.../Cost_of_domestic_violence_update.doc

² Office for National Statistics (2013). *Focus on violent crime and sexual offences 2012/13* – Chapter 4: Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse. Retrieved from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_352362.pdf

³ Radford L, Corral S, Bradley C et al (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. London: NSPCC.

⁴ All definitions are taken from www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse

Controlling behaviour is defined as 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 needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is defined as: 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. This definition includes so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Tackling domestic abuse and keeping its victims safe is both vitally important, and incredibly complicated. The police service needs to have the right tools, resources, training and partnerships in place to help it identify victims and keep them safe. It also needs to investigate and bring to justice offenders, when no two domestic abuse environments are the same, and some victims have suffered in silence for years or even decades.

In September 2013, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to conduct an inspection.⁵ We were asked to consider:

- the effectiveness of the police approach to domestic violence and abuse, focusing on the outcomes for victims;
- whether risks to victims of domestic violence and abuse are adequately managed;
- identifying lessons learnt from how the police approach domestic violence and abuse; and
- making any necessary recommendations in relation to these findings when considered alongside current practice.

To answer these questions, HMIC collected data and reviewed files from the 43 Home Office funded forces. We spoke to 70 victims of domestic abuse in focus groups throughout England and Wales and surveyed over 100 victims online. We also surveyed 200 professionals working with victims of domestic abuse.

We inspected all police forces in England and Wales, interviewing senior and operational leads in forces, holding focus groups with frontline staff and partners, and carrying out visits to police stations (which were unannounced) to test the reality of each force's approach with frontline officers.

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/news/major-review-of-police-response-to-domestic-violence

Our inspection teams were supplemented by expert peers, which included public protection experts from over 15 forces and those working with victims of domestic abuse in voluntary and community sector organisations.

This report details what HMIC found in Dyfed-Powys Police and at the end of the report we set out some recommendations. These recommendations should be considered in conjunction with the recommendations for all forces made in the national report.⁶ A glossary of frequently used terms also appears at the end of the report.

⁶There is a requirement under section 55(5) and section 55(6) of the 1996 Police Act for the police and crime commissioner to publish a copy of their comments on this report, and the recommendations for all forces in the national report, and forward these to the Home Secretary.

Domestic abuse in Dyfed-Powys⁷

Calls for assistance



In Dyfed-Powys, domestic abuse accounts for 2% of calls to the police for assistance. Of these calls 4% were from repeat victims.

Crime

7%

Domestic abuse accounts for 7% of all recorded crime.

Assault with intent

23%

Dyfed-Powys recorded 127 assaults with intent to cause serious harm, of these 29 were domestic abuse related. This is 23% of all assaults with intent to cause serious harm recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Assault with injury

29%

The force also recorded 1,928 assaults with injury, of these 563 were domestic abuse related. This is 29% of all assaults with injury recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

⁷ Data in this section is based upon forces' own definition of calls for assistance and domestic abuse, and forces' use of domestic abuse markers on IT systems.

Source: HMIC data collection. Crime figures are taken from police-recorded crime submitted to the Home Office.

Harassment

39%

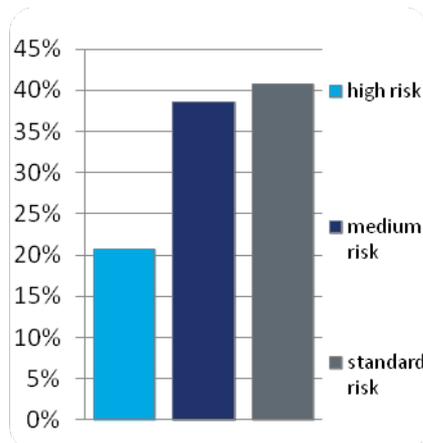
The force recorded 137 harassment offences, of these 54 were domestic abuse related. This is 39% of all harassment offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Sexual offences

6%

The force also recorded 380 sexual offences, of these 23 were domestic abuse related. This is 6% of all sexual offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Risk levels



On 31 August 2013 Dyfed-Powys had 174 active domestic abuse cases, 21% were high risk, 39% were medium risk, and 41% were standard risk.

Arrests



For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 85 arrests in Dyfed-Powys for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

Outcomes



Dyfed-Powys recorded 1,346 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes 29% resulted in a charge, 23% resulted in a caution and less than 1% had an out of court disposal, for example, a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Executive summary

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the force. This is reflected in the culture at all levels of the organisation. Staff understand what this means in terms of keeping people safe, service delivery and public confidence.

The public of Dyfed Powys can have confidence that their local police are committed to providing a good response to victims of domestic abuse, and taking robust action with regard to perpetrators.

The force has taken many positive steps to improve the experience of domestic abuse victims and their families. This report identifies areas where further development can improve the consistency of that experience, and reinforce the priority that senior officers give to dealing with cases of domestic abuse in Dyfed-Powys.

Identifying victims

The force is clearly committed to identifying victims of domestic abuse who contact the force. However, HMIC found that there are weaknesses in the processes in place to deliver this commitment. There is a lack of rigour, particularly in respect of the assessment of risk and the identification of repeat and vulnerable victims, which means that the force cannot be confident that it is consistently identifying victims and accurately assessing the risk they face at the first point of contact. Supervision and monitoring of domestic abuse incidents is not currently informed by a full understanding of threat, risk or vulnerability.

Keeping victims safe

There is strong and visible commitment from the chief officer team. Officers at the scene understand that tackling domestic abuse is an important priority for the force. However, the lines of responsibility and accountability at a strategic level require clarity to ensure effective high-level oversight and management.

The force routinely shares information with partners about children involved in domestic abuse incidents; information is automatically sent to children's social care and health when there has been a domestic incident where children are present, or where the victim is pregnant. This means that children should receive appropriate service from partners and in turn, the police will be aware of all relevant information from partners when developing safety plans for victims and their families.

The force has carried out an internal review of its approach to tackling domestic abuse and has identified some areas for improvement and put in place

measures to achieve this. It has reduced the proportion of domestic abuse related crimes where the offender is given a police caution, rather than being brought before the courts. It has also put in place measures to improve the quality of prosecution files to enable robust prosecutions.

Management of risk

The use of specialist domestic abuse officers to provide assessments of risk in high risk cases, and guidance to investigating officers, is valued by both partners and officers. The demand placed upon that role, however, is exceeding the capacity of those officers to deliver an efficient and effective service in support of those cases.

There are a number of different routes through which a domestic abuse incident may be dealt with by the police, according to the seriousness of the crime, and the capacity of the various teams. HMIC found that this causes confusion and results in a lack of clarity across the force in relation to who is responsible for managing the risk, safety planning, victim contact and supervision. This means that the force cannot be confident that victims are consistently receiving the service they need; and may mean that victims lose confidence in the police, and as a result, may not support a prosecution, or may be reluctant to report any future domestic abuse.

Organisational effectiveness for keeping people safe

Although the force has begun to move towards a quality-driven approach, the focus for monitoring remains on quantitative rather than qualitative information, and there are limited measures to evaluate the outcome from a victim's perspective.

The recent introduction of a process to identify serial perpetrators of domestic abuse is a positive step. It provides a focus to target perpetrators and exploit opportunities to intervene early to prevent future offending. The procedure to identify the most serious offenders needs further refinement by, for example, taking into account the threat, harm and risk they pose to victims.

The force is keen to learn lessons and improve services, and has established a number of force-wide meetings to ensure learning can be shared from a wide range of reviews.

Findings

How does the force identify victims of domestic abuse, and in particular repeat and vulnerable victims?

The force is clearly committed to identifying victims of domestic abuse who contact the force. However, HMIC found that there are weaknesses in the processes in place to deliver this commitment. There is a lack of rigour, particularly in respect of the assessment of risk and the identification of repeat and vulnerable victims, which means that the force cannot be confident that it is consistently identifying victims and accurately assessing the risk they face at the first point of contact. Supervision and monitoring of domestic abuse incidents is not currently informed by a full understanding of threat, risk or vulnerability.

Victims of domestic abuse are identified through calls received into the force control room, reports at police stations, and through referrals from other agencies to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC). As soon as the call handler records an incident on the force's system as domestic abuse-related, it automatically defaults to require an immediate police response to be sent, albeit this grading can be amended on a case-by-case basis, with the supporting rationale for downgrading the response documented within the incident record.

Call handlers have access to an electronic menu to assist with call management and decision making. This is supported by a paper based aide memoire for incidents of domestic abuse. We found the use of the guidance, however, to be inconsistent, with staff using individual professional judgement and experience when asking for details from callers.

Details of domestic abuse incidents are logged on the system by the call handler, and are electronically transferred to an 'incident handler' who reviews and decides on the appropriate police response, and then dispatches an officer to attend. Between the hours of midnight and 8am, the incident handlers will deal with the call in its entirety. HMIC reviewed a sample of calls, and found that there were inconsistencies in the initial assessment of risk to a victim by control room staff.

When dealing with a report of domestic abuse, it is important that the force obtain as full a picture as possible of the circumstances, and of any previous history of abuse, in order that an initial assessment of the risk posed to the victim can be made, and the correct police response deployed. It is also important that the officer attending is given as much relevant information as

possible, so that when they arrive at the scene they are in a position to take the appropriate action, both to deal with the perpetrator, and safeguard the victim.

HMIC found some weaknesses and inconsistencies at this first point of contact. Call handlers only have access to the force electronic command and control system 'STORM'. This system does not provide automatic updates or alerts to call handlers, so it is not immediately apparent to them whether the caller is a repeat or vulnerable victim.

There is the ability to manually research previous callers, and access a 'comments' field which operational staff can update with warning markers and other relevant information. However, there is no mandatory level of research to be undertaken by call handlers, and we found a lack of clarity in their understanding of what was expected of them regarding these options for initial research.

The incident handlers have the ability to interrogate the crime management system and 'information asset' system (IAS). The IAS enables cross-checking of force data to identify previous contact and identified domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk.

Copies of local child protection registers are held within the control room to enable them to be checked against details of any children connected to the incident. This information can then be shared with the attending officer, providing them with relevant details to assist in risk assessing and dealing with the incident. Operational officers highlighted that this information was not routinely provided to them; although it was provided if requested and available.

The force definition of a 'repeat victim' is not clear or widely understood by staff, coupled with an inconsistent process for identification. There is a reliance placed on either individual officers or a specialist domestic abuse officer (DAO) to identify such cases. This lack of clarity and process impacts on the ability of the force to identify, consider and effectively manage threat and risk to such victims.

Initial training for control room staff includes a specific session on domestic abuse. There is also ongoing training through dedicated training days, supplemented with six minute briefings, but these are not specific to domestic abuse. Staff were unclear in their understanding and application of what constituted domestic abuse, stating that they had not received any further recent formal training. This was also reflected by those staff involved in attending or investigating domestic abuse incidents and crimes.

Call handler supervisors have the ability to listen to live calls in order to assess the performance of staff and, if required, staff can request assistance and

advice from supervisors within the control room. A process of retrospective checks of incidents is undertaken that involves random dip sampling, but they are not specific to risk, vulnerability, repeat victims or domestic abuse.

How does the force respond to victims of domestic abuse? This includes initial action, including risk assessment

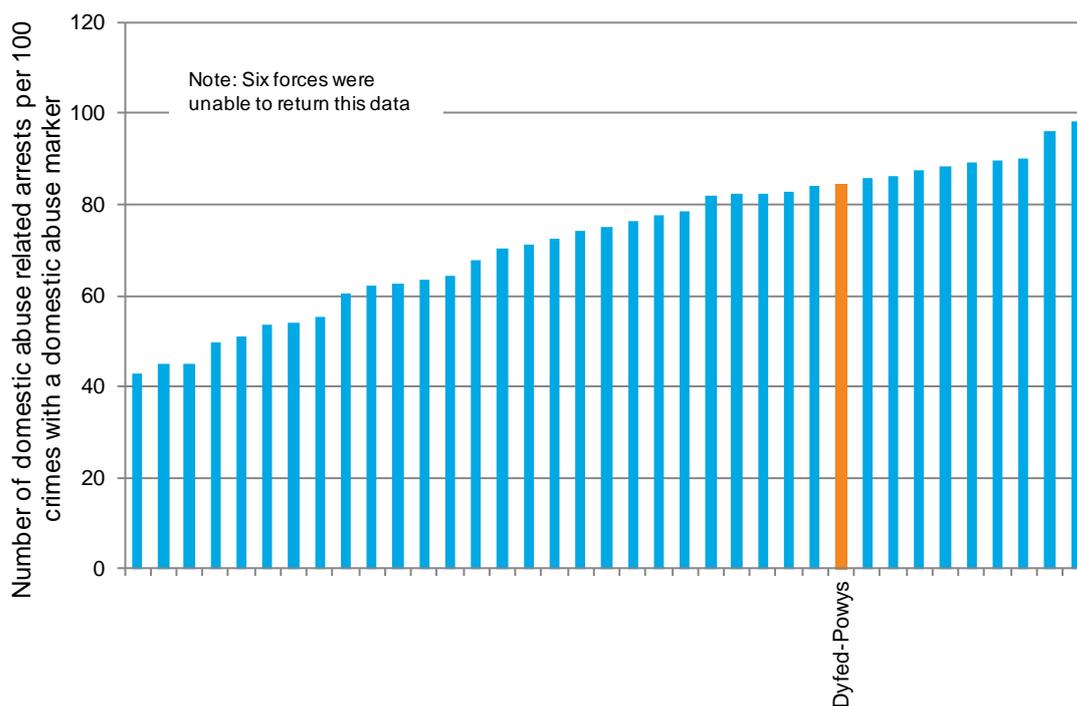
There is strong and visible commitment from the chief officer team. Officers at the scene understand that tackling domestic abuse is an important priority for the force. However, the lines of responsibility and accountability at a strategic level require clarity to ensure effective high-level oversight and management.

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The force has carried out an internal review of its approach to tackling domestic abuse and has identified some areas for improvement and put in place measures to achieve this. It has reduced the proportion of domestic abuse related crimes where the offender is given a police caution, rather than being brought before the courts. It has also put in place measures to improve the quality of prosecution files to enable robust prosecutions.

For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 85 arrests in Dyfed-Powys. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

Figure 1: Number of domestic abuse related arrests per 100 crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to 31 August 2013⁸



Source: HMIC data collection

The assistant chief constable (ACC) is the strategic lead for public protection. The ACC is clear about the force commitment, and there is ownership at senior officer level in relation to domestic abuse. However, lines of strategic responsibility and accountability between local policing senior managers and the heads of crime and public protection are unclear. This means that management and oversight of the way the force is tackling domestic abuse is not as effective as it needs to be.

The police and crime commissioner (PCC) has made a commitment to ensure effective working practices are in place to manage increasing demand, including reports of domestic abuse. The force has adopted the Welsh Assembly Government '10,000 safer lives' project and is working towards the 11 minimum standards it sets out for tackling domestic abuse specifically.

The force has recently undertaken an internal domestic abuse themed review, which has made a number of recommendations. A domestic abuse action plan

⁸ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

has also been produced, which has identified specific tasks and outcomes that the force intends to deliver to address these recommendations. There are a number of themed headings: prevent, protect, pursue, partnerships, intelligence, performance monitoring, leadership, learning and development. The head of crime meets quarterly with the head of public protection to monitor progress. The implementation of the plan, timelines, action owners and risk is still to be established in all areas.

There is a lack of understanding among staff across all ranks regarding the definition of domestic abuse. Staff have not received specific training for a number of years, and there is limited awareness of the new updates provided via the force's internal communication systems. This has also affected the confidence among partners regarding the extent and quality of training provided to officers responding to such incidents, and creates a risk in how staff accurately and consistently identify domestic incidents.

Officers attending domestic abuse incidents are required to carry out a formal risk assessment, using the nationally recognised domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool. They are expected to use their professional judgement to establish the initial level of risk, and to implement immediate actions to mitigate that risk in order to safeguard victims and their families. This will include taking positive action, which in the majority of cases means making an arrest where a crime has been committed, or the removal of the perpetrator.

Following attendance, the officer in the case is required to contact the crime recording bureau (CRB) via telephone and relay the details contained within the DASH risk assessment, to enable full details to be input onto force systems. This is not an efficient process or an effective use of resources. As the CRB is not staffed 24 hours a day, delays result when forms have to be handed over to another officer for calling in when the CRB is staffed.

Details of children, whether present or not, are captured on the DASH form by attending officers and are also recorded on the force case administration tracking system (CATS). Officers recognised the importance of checking and speaking to children, if they are present.

There is an automated process by which information about children present during domestic abuse incidents is passed to children's social care and health. The effect of this process is that partner agencies should be aware of all cases involving children, and are therefore able to undertake an initial assessment regarding those children and the wider family. The force should also be informed of other pertinent information held by partners that could impact on vulnerability and the assessment of risk being undertaken by its officers.

Compliance levels for the submission of DASH forms by officers is good, however the standard in completion of the form is varied, with supervisors being unclear about the extent to which officers understood the risk assessment process. The process of completing the form does not inform the subsequent activity for victim safety and support.

There is no formal escalation of supervision according to the level of risk to the victim. A response inspector would not typically be involved in the oversight of a high risk case or the associated safety planning. Supervision remains at sergeant level with a requirement for them to endorse the STORM incident with their comments.

The force identified that it was using police cautions in a significant number of domestic abuse related crimes. Following a recent internal review, a change in procedure and an increase in the level of authorisation required (to police inspector) before police cautions can be used has been implemented. This new process has resulted in a reduction of the use of cautions in finalising domestic abuse investigations.

The force has also recognised that there were an increasing number of failed prosecutions. File quality has been identified as a key aspect in managing domestic abuse crimes and ensuring that offenders who need to be prosecuted can be brought to justice. The force has implemented the use of pre-charge advisors, who are responsible for checking all case files and ensuring the file quality is sufficiently robust to meet file standards from the outset. The file reviews are monitored and any deficient files are scrutinised to identify themes or specific officers in need of further guidance; this is reported to the ACC.

How are victims of domestic abuse made safer as a result of the police response and subsequent action?

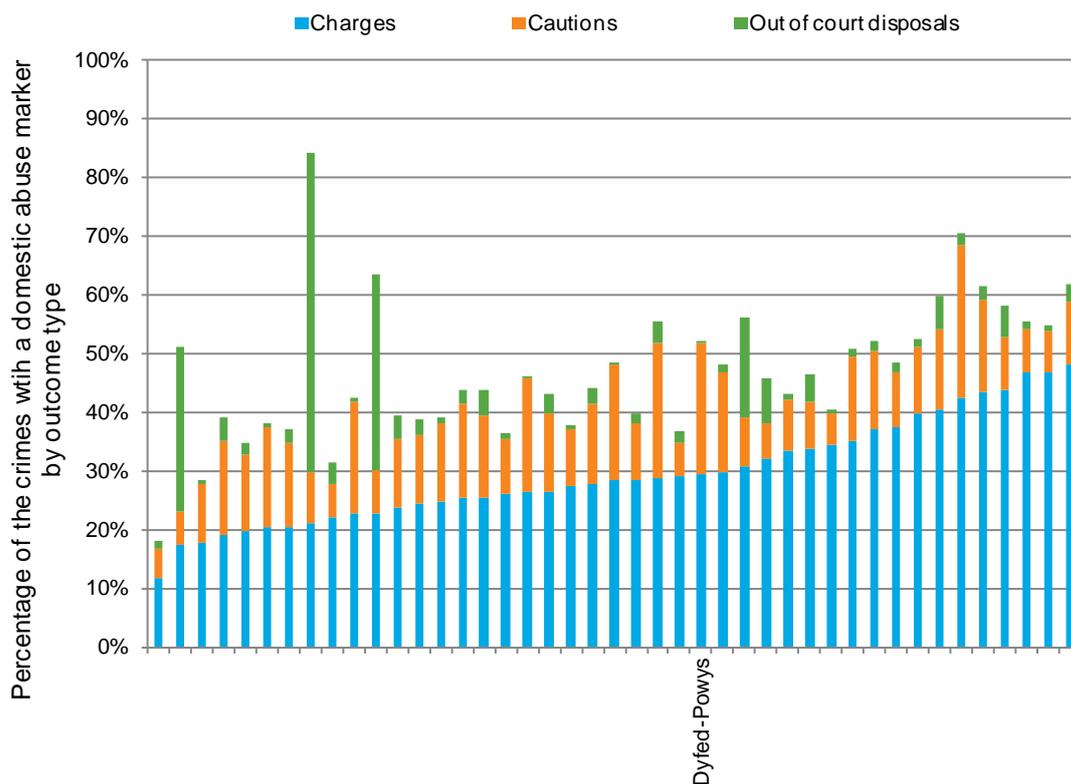
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Dyfed-Powys recorded 1,346 crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes, 29% resulted in a charge, 23% a caution and, 0.4% had an out of court disposal.⁹

⁹ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

Figure 2: Percentage of different outcome types used for crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to 31 August 2013¹⁰

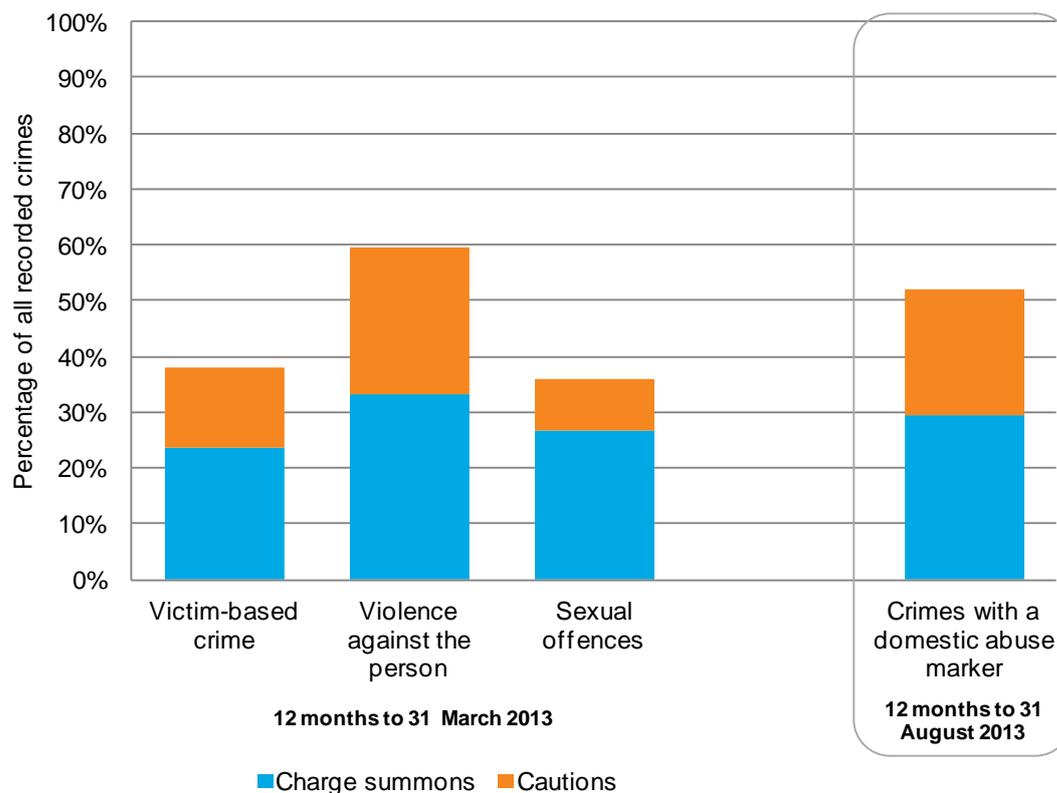


Source: HMIC data collection

Dyfed-Powys charges a higher proportion of crimes with a domestic abuse marker than recorded victim-based crime. This may indicate that the force has a different approach to domestic abuse outcomes than other crimes.

¹⁰ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

Figure 3: Percentage of charge summons and cautions used for victim-based crime, violence against the person, sexual offences and all crimes with a domestic abuse marker ¹¹



Sources: HMIC data collection, Home Office Crimes detected in England and Wales, ONS Crime in England and Wales.

The force has a total of seven domestic abuse officers (DAOs). These specialists do not undertake investigations, but provide advice to officers regarding the investigation and perpetrator management. They are assigned to all domestic abuse victims who have been assessed as high risk. They undertake a reassessment of risk, visiting the victim, taking responsibility for safety planning and information sharing with partners. DAOs will also carry out a similar role in respect of some medium risk cases, but their limited capacity means that they cannot take on all medium risk victims. They are not involved in cases where victims have been identified as standard risk.

The DAO role is also intended to take on the responsibility for identifying repeat victims and reviewing all DASH risk assessments completed by officers. However, HMIC found that this is not routinely done, due to lack of capacity.

¹¹ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

The DAOs are frequently taken out of domestic abuse work and used to support child protection investigations, and undertake the night duty detective role managing a range of crimes such as burglary. This does not correlate with the priority the force states it gives the role. The absence of consistent oversight of all risk by the DAOs creates a disparity in the provision and levels of victim care in some areas of the force, and means that the force cannot be confident that risk is always appropriately assessed and mitigated.

There are currently 3.5 independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA) posts covering the force area. IDVAs are independent of the police and funded separately. They provide a valuable service to high risk victims, contributing to their safety planning, and supporting them through the process, including any court hearings. Due to the limited number of IDVAs in Dyfed Powys, the DAOs are attempting to fill the gap in service provision by taking on some of the roles ordinarily performed by the IDVA. The impact of this is a further dilution of the capacity of the specialist DAO and the role they are expected to undertake.

Domestic abuse incidents can be dealt with across the force through a number of distinctly different routes, dependent on a decision made at the time as to where the greatest capacity currently is. Examples of this are:

- A high-risk victim will have an input from a DAO for safety planning.
- A serious crime and/or high risk victim should be dealt with by the investigation support unit (ISU).
- If the ISU do not have the capacity, it may be retained by local officers.
- CID may deal with cases involving a serious crime; however these are not allocated according to threat or risk to the victim, but on the basis of the severity of injury or crime type.
- Medium-risk victims may be dealt with by a DAO for victim support and may be picked up by the ISU for investigation, if one or both have the capacity at the time. If not, responsibility for both the victim safeguarding and the investigation will remain with local officers.
- Standard risk cases remain with the local officers and may not be reviewed or reassessed at all by a specialist.

This lack of clarity creates a risk that victims do not receive a consistent service across the force, in particular regarding who has the responsibility for safety planning and continuing reviews of risk.

If a local officer retains both the investigation and safeguarding, and the offender is still to be arrested, the responsibility for the case, including the victim

contact, will be handed over to the next shift. The absence of a dedicated officer has the potential to impact on communication, and on providing clarity and reassurance to the victim as to who they should contact or expect updates from. There is a risk that victims may lose confidence in the process and either refuse to engage in any court proceedings or they may be reluctant to report any future incidents to the police.

The force has undertaken to utilise the ISUs that are based alongside custody suites, and line managed by detective sergeants, to investigate high risk domestic abuse cases. The aim of this approach is to improve the quality of investigation in dealing with those perpetrators who have been detained by utilising accredited investigators; however this is not embedded across the force.

Relationships with partners with regard to domestic abuse and information sharing are considered to be effective by the force. However, wider partnership engagement and future development in terms of an aspiration for co-location, multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) and the implementation of a daily domestic abuse conference call, is complex due to the large geographical area involved. The force area is served by four different local authorities each with its own domestic abuse forum and safeguarding partners.

The witness care unit (WCU) is jointly funded by the police and the crown prosecution service (CPS). When a domestic abuse offender is charged and has been to court for a first hearing, the unit conducts an initial needs assessment, and makes contact with the victim. In high risk cases, the WCU liaises with the DAO and IDVA for ongoing safeguarding considerations. The WCU retains sole responsibility for liaison with medium and standard risk cases. HMIC found inconsistencies and weaknesses in the WCU systems for keeping victims informed and updated. The system for initial identification of risk level and informing a victim regarding outcomes, such as bail amendments, is inconsistent, with a lack of clarity as to how such changes would trigger a review of safety planning or associated risk, completed in a timely way with clear ownership.

Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) are meetings where public and voluntary sector partners come together to consider high risk domestic abuse victims, sharing information and agreeing a co-ordinated set of actions to minimise the risk and provide appropriate support to victims. There are five MARACs held in Dyfed-Powys, one for each local authority area. They are viewed by partners and practitioners to be an effective tool in reducing risk focused on victims' needs, with good engagement and attendance at the right level by those agencies represented.

The frequency of MARAC meetings varies according to their locality, either being held fortnightly or monthly dependent on demand. Those held more frequently are considered to provide an improved service to victims being both expeditious and effective. Those with longer lead in times have informal mechanisms for sharing information and engaging partners at an early stage. This potentially undermines the MARAC process and duplicates effort. The current Dyfed-Powys operating protocol states that, as part of the referral criteria for a MARAC, the individual must reside in the area. As much of the force area attracts tourists and holiday-makers, this criterion has the potential to exclude victims who are suffering abuse while visiting or on holiday in the area, denying them access to multi-agency support and services.

Does the force have appropriate systems, processes and understanding to manage domestic abuse and risk to victims in the future?

Although the force has begun to move towards a quality-driven approach, the focus for monitoring remains on quantitative rather than qualitative information, and there are limited measures to evaluate the outcome from a victim's perspective.

The recent introduction of a process to identify serial perpetrators of domestic abuse is a positive step. It provides a focus to target perpetrators and exploit opportunities to intervene early to prevent future offending. The procedure to identify the most serious offenders needs further refinement by, for example, taking into account the threat, harm and risk they pose to victims.

The force is keen to learn lessons and improve services, and has established a number of force-wide meetings to ensure learning can be shared from a wide range of reviews.

Domestic abuse incidents and the management of future risk to victims are included for discussion at the daily management meeting (DMM) in each of the four territorial policing areas (TPAs), chaired at superintendent level. Senior officers from local stations dial into this meeting, which covers all areas of local policing with domestic abuse being a specific agenda item.

Each TPA holds a monthly performance and tasking meeting, which includes the monitoring of performance in relation to domestic abuse incidents and crimes, and identifying trends to establish any underlying issues. A performance pack is produced for discussion at this meeting, with the focus on numbers of incidents, arrest rates, high risk cases, repeat victim rates and levels of compliance in completing DASH risk assessments. In addition, the ACC chairs a quarterly performance event for each TPA, where additional related detail is

discussed including; the outcome of investigations; alcohol-related incidents; and repeat victims. The focus of the monitoring process is very much on a quantitative rather than qualitative basis, there are limited measures of the outcomes of the service from a victim's perspective.

There is a perceived shift in the last six months away from a reliance on performance indicators and a move towards a quality-driven approach. Arrest rates are closely monitored, and any increase is seen as improving performance. There is some confusion around the rate of repeat victims, how it is measured, and if a reduction in repeat victimisation is generally seen as an improvement in outcomes. Supervisors spoken to were unable to articulate how success is measured.

The force does not currently have clear or consistent arrangements in place to inform a victim; or review the risk level; and implement, where necessary a revised safety plan upon the release of a perpetrator from prison.

The force has begun to identify its serial and serious domestic abuse perpetrators, formulating plans to address the risks that they pose. The current collection of data and identification is reliant on individual officers from the TPA referring them for further risk management and targeted action. The current process is inconsistent, requiring incorporation of threat, risk and harm into the assessment and prioritisation of such perpetrators, coupled with a review of the risks posed and appropriate safety plans for victims.

The force has an automated process that generates a notification to the firearms licensing department for them to make an assessment regarding potential revocation of a firearms certificate, following any domestic abuse related incident or an arrest involving a registered firearms licence holder.

Force-wide activity which complements and promotes the All Wales anti-violence and domestic abuse campaign that is supported by the Welsh Government, is being delivered through 'Operation Baltic'. The aim of the initiative, which operates during the festive period, is to improve the police response and subsequent investigation of all reports of domestic abuse and ultimately support prosecutions.

The deputy chief constable chairs a learning lessons group. Corporate learning from this group is shared across the organisation in a variety of media, but there does not appear to be any process or structure for reviewing the impact, and whether the message has been subsequently understood and implemented by staff.

A local scrutiny and involvement panel has been recently established by the ACC, with representatives from the CPS, local magistrates, Women's Aid and

Victim Support. This panel is innovative in its purpose to share learning and, inform future delivery, but also to allow scrutiny by external agencies, generating greater trust and transparency into police decisions and investigations. The representatives specifically review case files from both domestic abuse and hate crimes.

Recommendations

As a result of this inspection HMIC has developed recommendations which are designed to tackle any risks identified in the service to victims of domestic abuse. These force specific recommendations should be considered in conjunction with recommendations to all forces set out in the national report.

- 1 The force should review its process at first point of contact to ensure relevant callers and risk levels are identified and assessed consistently. There is a particular need to clarify and apply the definition of a 'repeat victim' to ensure such victims are identified at the earliest opportunity.
- 2 The force should conduct a training needs analysis, and subsequently implement a training development plan to include all those involved in dealing with domestic abuse.
- 3 The force should provide clarity regarding lines of responsibility and accountability at the strategic level in order to ensure appropriate corporate oversight of performance in relation to domestic abuse.
- 4 The force should review the process of transferring the content of the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment form onto force systems, to provide a more efficient and effective method of information recording and management.
- 5 The force should review the role and capacity of the domestic abuse officers.
- 6 The force should work with the PCC and partner agencies to increase the independent domestic violence adviser provision within Dyfed-Powys.
- 7 The force should review and clarify responsibilities for domestic abuse investigations, safety planning, victim updates and ongoing reviews of risk.
- 8 The force, in conjunction with partners, should review the current multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) protocol regarding access for those victims who are not residents in Dyfed-Powys.
- 9 The force should provide clarity on success outcomes supported by qualitative measures that should be promulgated to all staff.
- 10 The force should establish a process by which victims are updated and risks are reviewed when a perpetrator is released from prison.
- 11 The force has begun to move towards a quality-driven approach, but the focus for monitoring remains on quantitative rather than qualitative

information. The force should review the limited measures available to evaluate the outcome from a victim's perspective.

- 12 The recent introduction of a process to identify serial perpetrators of domestic abuse is a positive step. It provides a focus to target perpetrators and exploit opportunities to intervene early to prevent future offending. However, the procedure to identify the most serious offenders needs further refinement, by, for example, taking into account the threat, harm and risk they pose to victims.

Glossary

Bail conditions

A court can remand a defendant in custody or grant bail, with or without conditions attached. Before the first court hearing, the police can also retain a defendant in custody or grant bail, with or without conditions attached, but their powers to do so are more limited than the court's. Conditions can only be imposed to ensure that the defendant attends the next court hearing, commits no new offences in the meantime, and does not interfere with any witnesses or obstruct the course of justice.

Body worn camera

A video camera, worn on the helmet or upper body of an officer, which records visual and audio footage of an incident.

CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse)

CAADA is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Its work focuses on saving lives and public money.

CAADA provides practical help to support professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims. The aim is to protect the highest risk victims and their children – those at risk of murder or serious harm.

CCTV

Evidence from Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) can be used to support police investigations. It is primarily used for corroborating what is already known in investigating incidents and to trigger further opportunities to carry out investigation, such as the identification of witnesses and suspects.

Clare's Law

Clare's Law – the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – is designed to provide victims with information that may protect them from an abusive situation before it ends in tragedy. The scheme allows the police to disclose information about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is named after Clare Wood who was

brutally murdered in 2009 by her former partner George Appleton, who had a record of violence against women.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Victims' Code) places a statutory obligation on criminal justice agencies to provide a standard of service to victims of crime or, where the victim died as a result of the criminal conduct, their relatives. The obligations the Victims' Code places on the agencies concerned include that:

- They provide victims, or their relatives, with information about the crime, including about arrests, prosecutions and court decisions;
- They provide information about eligibility for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme;
- Victims be told about Victim Support and either be referred on to them or offered their service;
- Bereaved relatives be assigned a family liaison police officer; and
- Victims of an offender who receives a sentence of 12 months or more after being convicted of a sexual or violent offence have the opportunity to make representations about what licence conditions or supervision requirements the offender should be subject to on release from prison.

There are enhanced entitlements for victims of the most serious crime which includes domestic violence.

Coercive control

This is term and concept developed by Evan Stark which seeks to explain the range of tactics used by perpetrators and the impact of those on victims. It highlights the on-going nature of the behaviour and the extent to which the actions of the perpetrator control the victim through isolation, intimidation, degradation and micro-regulation of everyday life. Crucially it sets out such abuse can be psychological as well as physical. Coercive control is explicitly covered by the definition of domestic abuse.

Control room

A police control or communications room manages emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) calls, and sending police officers to these calls.

Counter-allegation

Where someone initially identified as the perpetrator makes an allegation against the victim. If counter-allegations are not identified and resolved agencies may be providing services to the perpetrator and inadvertently helping them isolate and control the victim. The victim may not get access to the services they need because they are labelled 'the perpetrator'.

Crime Scene Investigator

Police staff who work alongside uniformed and plain clothed police officers during the investigation of a crime to locate, record and recover evidence from crime scenes.

DASH – domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH 2009)

DASH is a risk identification, assessment and management model adopted by UK police forces and partner agencies in 2009. The aim of the DASH assessment is to help front-line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based violence.

Domestic Homicide Review

Local areas are expected to undertake a multi-agency review following a domestic homicide. The process aims to assist all those involved, to identify the lessons that can be learned from homicides where a person is killed as a result of domestic violence, with a view to preventing future homicides and violence.

Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPN)

A DVPN is the initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence.

This notice, which must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim.

A DVPN may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that:

- the individual has been violent towards, or

- has threatened violence towards an associated person, and
- the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

Frontline

These are police officers or police staff who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law. The HMIC publication, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge* (2013) sets this out in more detail.

Golden hour

Commonly used to refer to the time after a crime has been committed during which there is maximum potential for recovery of forensic evidence

Harassment

The term harassment is used to cover the 'causing alarm or distress' offences under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 as amended (PHA), and 'putting people in fear of violence' offences under section 4 of the PHA.

House-to- house

House-to-house enquiries are likely to feature in many investigations to: identify suspects and canvas for witnesses in areas connected to an incident, establish who lives or works in a particular location, and obtain an account of their movements during relevant times.

High risk

Term used when, following a DASH risk assessment, there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious. Risk of serious harm (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006): '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'.

IDVA – independent domestic violence adviser

Independent domestic violence advisers or advocates (IDVAs) are trained specialists who provide a service to victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members, with the aim of securing their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis, to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans.

Incident

When a member of the public calls for police assistance, or a police officer observes or discovers a crime the police usually create an incident record. This is the first step, the police will then decide whether a crime has been committed and, if it is appropriate, create a crime record.

Intimate Partner Violence

This describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

MARACs are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented by the IDVA, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. There are currently over 270 MARACs operating across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland managing more than 64,000 cases a year.

MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) brings together staff from police and partner agencies who work from the same location, sharing information and ensuring a timely and joined-up response to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Medium risk

Term used when following a DASH risk assessment there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, for example, failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown, drug or alcohol misuse.

National Domestic Abuse helpline

A Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

The Helpline can give support, help and information over the telephone, wherever the caller might be in the country. The Helpline is staffed 24 hours a day by fully trained female helpline support workers and volunteers. All calls are completely confidential. Translation facilities for callers whose first language is not English, and a service for callers who are deaf or hard of hearing are available.

Partnership

A term used where collaborative working is established between the police and other public, private or voluntary organisations.

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the PACE codes of practice provide the core framework of police powers and safeguards around stop and search, arrest, detention, investigation, identification and interviewing detainees.

Positive action

The term refers to the steps and action taken at all stages of the police response to ensure effective protection of victims and children, while allowing the criminal justice system to hold the offender to account. It is often used in the context of arrest policy, police guidance states that “arrest will normally be ‘necessary’ under the terms of PACE to protect a child or vulnerable person, prevent the suspect causing injury and/or to allow for the prompt and effective investigation of the offence”.

Problem-solving

Problem-solving is a term used in policing where forces systematically identify and analyse crime and disorder problems, develop specific responses to individual problems and subsequently assess whether the response has been successful.

Refuge

A refuge is a safe house where women and children who are experiencing domestic violence can stay free from abuse. Refuge addresses (and sometimes telephone numbers) are confidential. According to Women’s Aid on a typical day, **over 7000 women and children** are resident in refuge accommodation in England

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is based on structured professional judgment. It provides structure and informs decisions that are already being made. It is only a guide/checklist and should not be seen as a scientific predictive solution. Its completion is intended to assist officers in the decision-making process on appropriate levels of intervention for victims of domestic violence.

Safeguarding

The term safeguarding is applied when protecting children and other vulnerable people. The UK Government has defined the term ‘safeguarding children’ as:

“The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.”

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

SARCs are specialist medical and forensic services for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

They aim to be a one-stop service, providing the following under one roof: medical care and forensic examination following assault/rape and, in some locations, sexual health services.

Standard Risk

Term used following a DASH risk assessment where current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm.

Victim Personal Statement

The Victim Personal Statement (VPS) gives victims an opportunity to describe the wider effects of the crime upon them, express their concerns and indicate whether or not they require any support.

Provisions relating to the making of a VPS and its use in criminal proceedings are included in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code), which was published on 29 October 2013 and came into force on 10 December 2013.

Vulnerable

A term used to describe a person who is in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

What Works Centre for Crime Reduction

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction is hosted by the College of Policing. The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction will: review research on practices and interventions to reduce crime, label the evidence base in terms of quality, cost and impact, and provide police and crime commissioners and other

crime reduction partners with the knowledge, tools and guidance to help them target their resources more effectively.

It will be led by a core team from the College of Policing, and supported by a "commissioned partnership programme" which has been jointly funded by the College and the Economic and Social Research Council.