



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Hampshire Constabulary's approach to tackling domestic abuse

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-352-8

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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. Our inspection teams were supplemented by expert peers, which included public protection

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

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 Hampshire Constabulary 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.

⁶ There 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 Hampshire⁷

Calls for assistance



In Hampshire, domestic abuse accounts for 6% of calls to the police for assistance. Of these calls, 3% were from repeat victims.

Crime

8%

Domestic abuse accounts for 8% of all recorded crime.

Assault with intent

18%

Hampshire recorded 298 assaults with intent to cause serious harm, of these 53 were domestic abuse related. This is 18% of all assaults with intent to cause serious harm recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Assault with injury

30%

The force also recorded 10,393 assaults with injury, of these 3,133 were domestic abuse related. This is 30% 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

49%

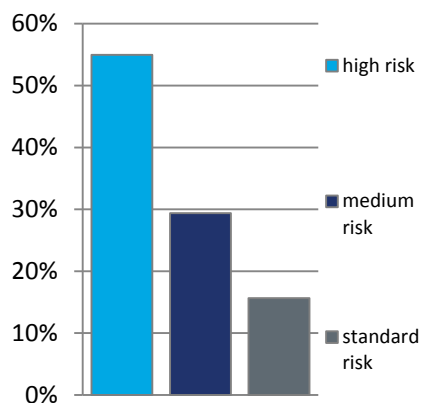
The force recorded 1,085 harassment offences, of these 537 were domestic abuse related. This is 49% of all harassment offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Sexual offences

9%

The force also recorded 1,772 sexual offences, of these 167 were domestic abuse related. This is 9% of all sexual offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Risk levels



On 05 November 2013 Hampshire had 211 active domestic abuse cases; 55% were high risk, 29% were medium risk, and 16% were standard risk.

Arrests



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

Outcomes



Hampshire recorded 8,068 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes, 48% resulted in a charge, 11% resulted in a caution and, 3% had an out of court disposal, for example, a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Executive summary

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Hampshire Constabulary and the police and crime commissioner (PCC), with staff demonstrating a good level of commitment and awareness. Frontline officers have received domestic abuse training, and there is emphasis on making sure that victims are safe.

Although high risk cases receive a great deal of scrutiny and high risk victims of domestic abuse (those at high risk of serious harm or murder) receive a good level of service, this is not the case for incidents assessed as standard risk.

The force has established good working relationships with partners and the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process is regarded as working well.

This report outlines a number of areas where the force could further strengthen its response.

Identifying victims

Victims of domestic abuse are generally identified by staff in the force control room when a call is received from someone wanting to report an incident. The call handlers are empathetic and they understand the questions that they need to ask to identify victims, and in particular they are able to identify those who have suffered previous domestic abuse or who are vulnerable. This is despite call handlers not having received recent domestic abuse training.

The force is working to improve how it can better identify repeat victims through its IT systems. Although responding officers receive some limited background information before they attend the incident, the multi-search facility that staff will soon have access to, will automatically search across the police databases and will provide information more quickly, allowing them to assess risk and take steps to make victims safer. The force defines what a repeat victim is and staff understand that if someone has been subject to domestic abuse previously (whether it had been reported to police or not), then this places them at greater risk.

Control room supervisors monitor domestic abuse calls to ensure that victims receive a timely and appropriate response.

Keeping victims safe

Domestic abuse is a priority for the force. Staff dealing with domestic abuse take their role seriously and understand the importance of minimising the risks to victims.

Frontline officers have received domestic abuse risk assessment training and some have had additional training covering coercive control, stalking, harassment and so-called honour-based violence.

Responding officers are aware of the need to consider the safety of victims and the welfare of children at domestic abuse incidents. The staff in the central referral unit (CRU) have responsibility for reviewing and assessing all incidents where a vulnerable victim has been identified, allocating them to the appropriate police team or other partners for further action. The CRU supervisors view all incidents where there may be a risk to children and pass the information to children's social care for their consideration.

The force is part of a national pilot trialling the reduced use of the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment process. Concerns have been raised by partners about what might change as a result of the DASH pilot. The College of Policing has oversight and is evaluating the outcomes of the trial. During the inspection it was too early to comment on whether victims were getting a reduced level of service and, as a result, if they were being placed at an unacceptable level of risk, in an effort to cut police paperwork. This is a matter that HMIC will follow up with the force. The force is also running a project looking to reduce re-offending by some perpetrators. It has yet to be evaluated. HMIC will monitor with interest its findings, when published.

The force places a real emphasis on reducing the risk to victims and making them safer. It has a dedicated public protection department with specialist safeguarding officers who work with partners to reduce the risk of harm to medium and high risk victims.

Management of risk

All cases assessed as high, medium or standard risk using the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment are reviewed by specialist staff. Those assessed as standard risk are not seen by the area safeguarding teams who refer to outside agencies and make safety plans for high and medium risk cases. This may mean that some victims may not receive support from other agencies at the earliest opportunity.

The force has established good working relationships with partners and the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process is regarded as working well. However, the volume of cases at some MARACs means that

police and partners may not be able to provide the full consideration necessary, as there is sometimes insufficient time to discuss all the cases properly.

Body-worn video equipment is being used by the majority of frontline police officers and this is improving the quality of evidence collected in domestic abuse cases.

Recent changes to how the force is structured has meant specialist domestic abuse investigating officers have been removed from the public protection department and cases are now being managed by local investigators; some of whom have yet to receive specialist domestic abuse training and who lack knowledge of safeguarding issues.

Although there was not a domestic abuse multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) at the time of the inspection, one has been introduced and there are plans for a second. Police and partners already work well together to protect, reduce the risks and safeguard victims.

Organisational effectiveness for keeping people safe

Over the last few years the force has focused its attention on crimes such as burglary and theft. Resources have been directed to reduce and prevent those crimes from happening, and crime reduction in these areas, has been seen as the force's priority. Although domestic abuse has always been important, it has not been seen as one of the main force priorities. There is now more focus on reducing repeat incidents of domestic abuse and on better safeguarding of victims. The PCC has placed strong emphasis on how the force deals with domestic abuse and its service to victims and witnesses. This helps keep the force focused on this vitally important issue. The force performance framework has some information relating to how effective the force is at tackling domestic abuse.

The force also has established arrangements for dealing with the most dangerous offenders, although very few are domestic abuse-related. More information on serial domestic abuse perpetrators needs to be provided to local officers so that they can help to deal with them effectively and reduce the risk to victims. Local officers have some knowledge about high risk victims in their area, but they lack information about offenders living in the local area. Neighbourhood officers are not routinely made aware of the repeat domestic abuse perpetrators, and there are no structured arrangements for dealing with those individuals or informing officers and staff about them.

The force has effective processes in place to ensure that any lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews are shared across the organisation. Steps are taken to ensure that necessary improvements are implemented.

Findings

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

Victims of domestic abuse are generally identified by staff in the force control room when a call is received from someone wanting to report an incident. The call handlers are empathetic and they understand the questions that they need to ask to identify victims, and in particular they are able to identify those who have suffered previous domestic abuse or who are vulnerable. This is despite call handlers not having received recent domestic abuse training.

The force is working to improve how it can better identify repeat victims through its IT systems. Although responding officers receive some limited background information before they attend the incident, the multi-search facility that staff will soon have access to, will automatically search across the police databases and will provide information more quickly, allowing them to assess risk and take steps to make victims safer. The force defines what a repeat victim is and staff understand that if someone has been subject to domestic abuse previously (whether it had been reported to police or not), then this places them at greater risk.

Control room supervisors monitor domestic abuse calls to ensure that victims receive a timely and appropriate response.

Hampshire Constabulary has good systems in place to identify victims of domestic abuse, when calls are received in the force control room. Most reports of domestic abuse incidents are made by telephone and are received in the control room. Some reports also come in to enquiry counters at police stations or from specialist workers in other organisations that provide assistance and support to victims of domestic abuse.

The person who receives the call in the police control room (the call handler) has responsibility for identifying the initial risk to the victim and assessing how the call should be responded to – both in terms of the urgency of response and the most appropriate officers to attend. Although the majority of call handling staff have not received recent training, they are effective in the way they initially identify domestic abuse incidents and in how they deal with the callers.

Call handling staff have access to information stored on the police IT systems which allows them to check for any previous police involvement with the victim, the offender and others who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm including children. The search of police systems provides details of previous incidents

and warnings about those involved, for example, if there is a history of violence, weapons or drug usage.

The responding officers are provided with this background information which assists them in deciding how best to respond to the incident. Some of the information is automatically provided once the details are entered onto a new incident record, some require access to more than one system, which is time consuming for call handlers, and may result in some information being overlooked during busy periods. The force recognises that this needs to be improved and is moving towards a multi-system search facility which will automatically check across all the police databases and provide enhanced information about repeat and vulnerable victims to responding officers.

The force has a repeat victim definition and staff understand that if someone has been subject to domestic abuse previously – whether it had been reported to police or not – then this places them at greater risk and influences the risk assessment and safety planning. The response to a report of domestic abuse is assessed on the threat, harm and risk posed to the victim, and is based on the information that is available at that time.

The force control room supervisors monitor domestic abuse incidents to ensure an appropriate response is provided. They monitor outstanding incidents and domestic abuse incidents which have not been allocated. Supervisors have incident information available, which means that they can monitor whether target times for attending an incident can be met, and callers can be told how long it is likely to be before an officer will be with them.

Supervisors carry out routine quality assurance checks of calls to the control room, which allows them to review how their staff are dealing with callers and managing requests for police assistance. However, they complete a very small number of checks for each member of staff, and these checks are not always recorded. This means that it may be difficult for the supervisors to identify any significant development needs, for example, whether call handlers are asking the right questions or if they are managing the calls as they are expected to.

The control room managers have developed a new process for dip sampling incidents for supervisory purposes. In-depth assessments will be carried out on a three-monthly basis with the aim of identifying areas that are working well and those that need improvement. At the time of the inspection the next area due for in-depth review is domestic abuse.

HMIC undertook a review of a small number of calls into the control room, and found that the force's response was appropriate and timely.

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

Domestic abuse is a priority for the force. Staff dealing with domestic abuse take their role seriously and understand the importance of minimising the risks to victims.

Frontline officers have received domestic abuse risk assessment training and some have had additional training covering coercive control, stalking, harassment and so-called honour-based violence.

Responding officers are aware of the need to consider the safety of victims and the welfare of children at domestic abuse incidents. The staff in the central referral unit (CRU) have responsibility for reviewing and assessing all incidents where vulnerability has been identified, allocating them to the appropriate police team or other partners for further action. The CRU supervisors view all incidents where there may be a risk to children and pass the information to children's social care for their consideration.

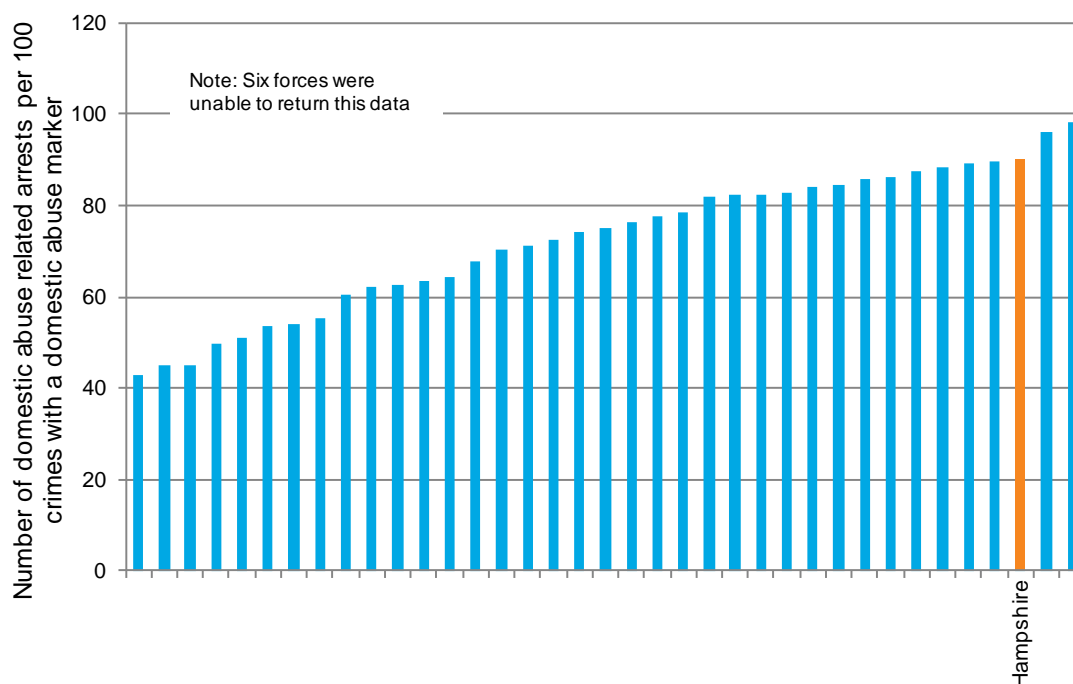
The force is part of a national pilot trialling the reduced use of the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment process. Concerns have been raised by partners about what might change as a result of the DASH pilot. The College of Policing has oversight and is evaluating the outcomes of the trial. During the inspection it was too early to comment on whether victims were getting a reduced level of service and, as a result, if they were being placed at an unacceptable level of risk, in an effort to cut police paperwork. This is a matter that HMIC will follow up with the force. The force is also running a project looking to reduce re-offending by some perpetrators. It has yet to be evaluated. HMIC will monitor with interest its findings, when published.

The force places a real emphasis on reducing the risk to victims and making them safer. It has a dedicated public protection department with specialist safeguarding officers who work with partners to reduce the risk of harm to medium and high risk victims.

For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 90⁸ arrests in Hampshire. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

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

Figure 1: Number of domestic abuse related arrests per 100 crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to 31 August 2013⁹



Source: HMIC data collection

Frontline staff recognise the importance of their role in dealing with these incidents and minimising the potential risks to victims of domestic abuse. The police and crime commissioner’s police and crime plan places a strong emphasis on how the force deals with domestic abuse and its service to victims and witnesses. This helps to keep the force focused on this vitally important issue.

Although tackling domestic abuse effectively features as a priority in the force’s strategic plans, it is evident that greater emphasis is placed on dealing with serious acquisitive crime such as burglary or theft and other types of violence in the performance framework. Improving force performance in tackling domestic abuse has been a lower priority. Tackling domestic abuse is now a stated priority for the force, and commitment to this at a senior level is clear.

Staff across the organisation understand that effective responses to domestic abuse reports are imperative for helping and safeguarding victims and

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

witnesses. There are a number of ways in which the importance is underlined to staff, for example, intranet messages to raise awareness; training; and individuals identified as domestic abuse leads across the force, responsible for ensuring a good response to incidents.

All frontline staff receive initial training which helps them understand what domestic abuse is, and how the police should respond. This has been supplemented by additional training on completion of the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment forms. In addition staff have been trained on how to recognise and deal with so-called honour-based violence, stalking and harassment. Staff and officers have a good understanding of how to assess the risk to victims of domestic abuse. They understand why the DASH forms are completed and the relevance of questions that are designed to help identify coercive and controlling behaviour, so-called honour-based violence, stalking and harassment.

Officers understand the need to consider the safety and welfare of children present at domestic abuse incidents. A children and young persons' referral form must be submitted and this is reviewed by sergeants in the CRU. This information and children's details are shared with local authority children's social care department in all cases. Given the volume of child referrals stemming from domestic abuse incidents, some children's services professionals said that they felt 'swamped' by the number of referrals from the police. However, HMIC is of the view that it is entirely appropriate for the police to provide this information promptly to agencies, so that they can also take whatever action is necessary to minimise the risk to children. There would be a risk to some children if only details relating to high risk domestic abuse cases were provided.

The majority of risk assessment forms completed by the response officers are submitted straight to the CRU without any local supervision. CRU review all cases, medium and high risk cases are referred on to the area based safeguarding teams who make referrals to outside agencies for support and advice and provide safety planning.

If an offender is considered to have committed a domestic abuse related crime but is not arrested at the scene, then the responsibility for locating and arresting them will remain with the response team until they go off duty. At that point it will be allocated to the next team. There is a robust process in place to ensure that the outstanding suspect is identified through the allocation process. However, the focus tends to be on dealing with the offender and the crime rather than the protecting the victim. The force has a far less robust approach to keeping the victim informed of the police action. Staff considered that information collected by response officers at the scene of the incident, including evidence of the

offences and victims' needs are sometimes of a poor standard and lacking in detail. The poor approach to evidence gathering and building an effective case may not be confined to domestic abuse cases alone. However, there is no force-wide system for improving the quality of the initial investigation through supervision and feedback to officers about shortcomings.

The role of frontline supervisors is clearly set out in training and guidance. It is their responsibility to ensure that domestic abuse incidents are responded to in a timely manner, that positive action is taken, risk is assessed, appropriate paperwork completed and the investigation is appropriately supervised. Supervisors and their teams understand their role but all too often effective supervision is extremely patchy and dependent on the commitment of individual officers and their capacity to oversee the incident.

Hampshire Constabulary is willing to explore new ways of working and has introduced pilot projects in specific areas of the force. It is one of only two forces taking part in the national pilot for reduced use of DASH risk assessments and focuses specifically on officers' use of professional judgement in relation to submitting a risk identification form. The pilot is ongoing and is being evaluated by the College of Policing. Some partners expressed their concern that the drive to reduce police bureaucracy might be at a potential cost to victims. HMIC shares those concerns and will carefully review the outcome of the pilot. At the time of the inspection it was too early to comment on whether victims were getting a reduced level of service and consequently if they were being placed at an unacceptable level of risk. The force should provide HMIC with a copy of the College of Policing evaluation report.

The force is also running a pilot project for the conditional cautioning of offenders (Operation Cara). Domestic abuse offenders who have not been previously convicted or cautioned for an offence can be given a caution on the condition that they do not re-offend, and for some, it is compulsory that they attend sessions aimed at reducing the risk of offending, as well as not committing any further offences. If they fail to comply with the conditions, then they will be charged and required to attend court, but if not, then the caution will still stand. A full evaluation will take place in the future.

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

All cases assessed as high, medium or standard risk using the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment are reviewed by specialist staff. Those assessed as standard risk are not seen by the area safeguarding teams who refer to outside agencies and make safety plans for high and medium risk cases. This may mean that some victims may not receive support from other agencies at the earliest opportunity.

The force has established good working relationships with partners and the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process is regarded as working well. However, the volume of cases at some MARACs means that police and partners may not be able to provide the full consideration necessary, as there is sometimes insufficient time to discuss all the cases properly.

Body-worn video equipment is being used by the majority of frontline police officers and this is improving the quality of evidence collected in domestic abuse cases.

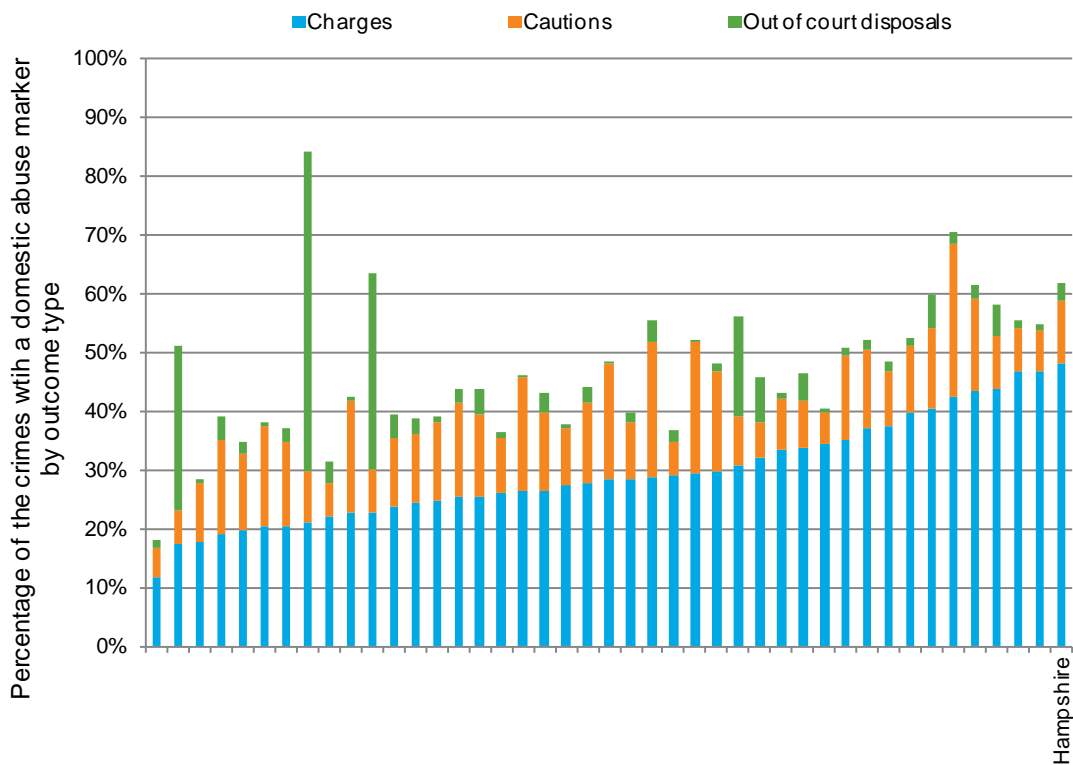
Recent changes to how the force is structured has meant specialist domestic abuse investigating officers have been removed from the public protection department and cases are now being managed by local investigators; some of whom have yet to receive specialist domestic abuse training and who lack knowledge of safeguarding issues.

Although there was not a domestic abuse multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) at the time of the inspection, one has been introduced and there are plans for a second. Police and partners already work well together to protect, reduce the risks and safeguard victims.

Hampshire recorded 8,068¹⁰ domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes 48 percent resulted in a charge, 11 percent resulted in a caution and 3 percent had an out-of-court disposal, for example a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

¹⁰ 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 2013¹¹

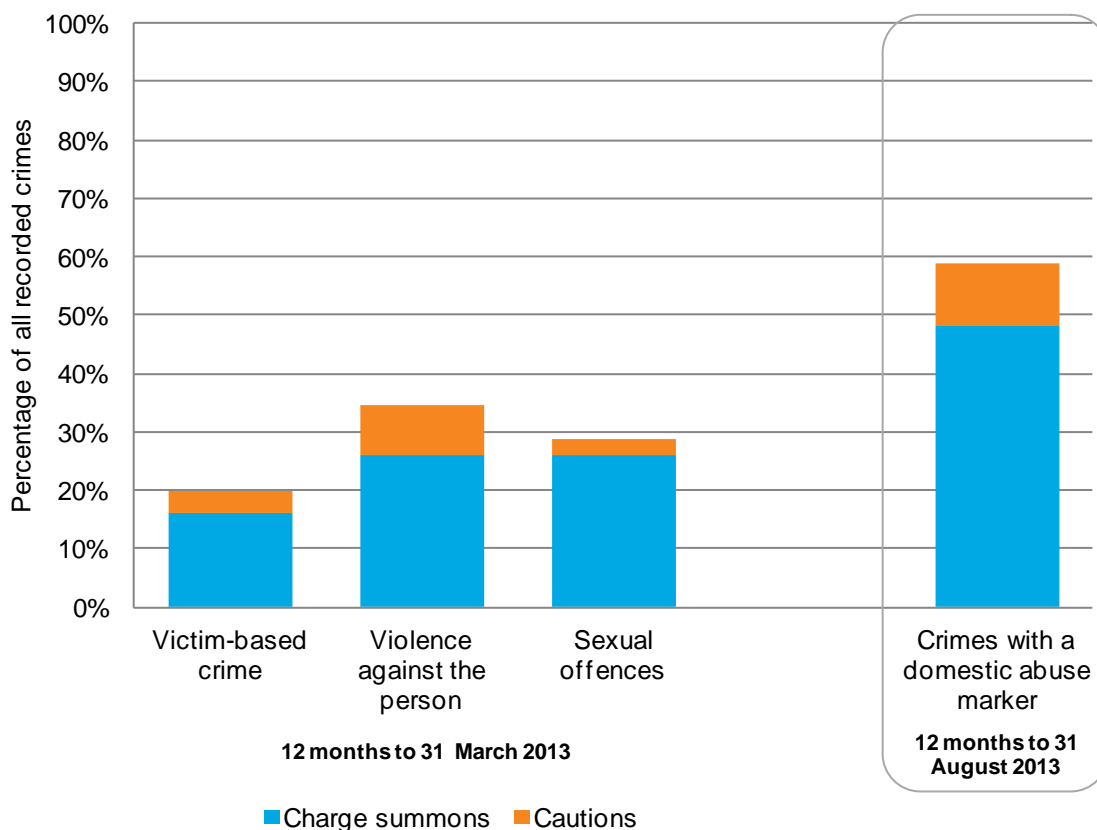


Source: HMIC data collection

Hampshire Constabulary has 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.

¹¹ 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 marker¹²



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

There is a strong focus across the force on victim safety when dealing with domestic abuse. Officers and staff demonstrate a real commitment to making domestic abuse victims safer.

Hampshire Constabulary has a dedicated public protection department which has responsibility for child protection and safeguarding of high risk domestic abuse victims. Until recently, there were specialist vulnerable adult teams who investigated domestic abuse, however following a restructure to a new policing model, these officers have been removed, and responsibility for domestic abuse investigations are now being undertaken by officers from local CID teams. Partners expressed concerns about the removal of the vulnerable adult officers. HMIC shares those concerns. At the time of the inspection, local area CID

¹² Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

investigators had not received domestic abuse training or specific guidance on safeguarding of victims.

The victim safeguarding element of high risk domestic abuse cases are being retained by specialist teams. The safeguarding officers now deal with domestic abuse, vulnerable adults and child protection, therefore they understand the issues of child protection within domestic abuse situations. All high risk domestic abuse child protection cases are dealt with as a priority, within 24 hours. Where necessary, staff are asked to assist social care in conducting a joint visit.

When a responding officer first speaks with a victim of domestic abuse, they assess and record details of the risk posed to them on the DASH form. The completed assessment is submitted direct to the central referral unit (CRU) without being reviewed by the officer's supervisor. This means that there is no local supervisor quality assurance before the form is reviewed by the CRU. The CRU researches force systems for any additional information relevant to the victim or perpetrator that the responding officer may not have been aware of. They review the number of risk areas that have been ticked and apply their own grading assessment, which can see initial assessments being re-graded. All standard risk incidents are forwarded to the victim support service for contact to be made with the victim and support to be offered.

All incidents of domestic abuse are recorded. If a case is assessed as standard risk and there is no offence identified, it will still be recorded in the police database. This means if another incident is reported and a search of the database completed, details of this incident would raise a flag, allowing it to be reviewed against other available information.

CRU submits all cases assessed as high risk to the safeguarding teams and these are reviewed by a safeguarding team supervisor within 24 hours to ensure that the appropriate assessment and action have been taken. Actions include referral to appropriate agencies such as victim support service, independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) and children's social care. Each case must be reviewed by the safeguarding supervisor before it can be finalised on the crime recording system. The safeguarding team plays a vital role to support victims. This can be evidenced through an example provided by one of the officers, who explained that they had provided support to an elderly victim who had suffered abuse for 50 years before it was reported. The officer kept in contact with the victim for three months, and worked with other agencies that were able to re-house and assist her until she felt secure enough to be able to support a criminal investigation.

The CRU re-grade a significant number of medium risk cases to high risk, and concerns were raised about whether the risk grading process and manual of guidance criteria were being applied correctly. The force is carrying out a review as concerns have been raised by specialist staff about the force's ability to manage actively the volume of high risk cases. As a result, the focus may not always be on the cases posing the greatest risk to victims.

The force recognises the importance of sharing information with partners and providing a joined-up approach to safeguarding children and minimising risks to all vulnerable victims. It has recently introduced a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and this is still developing. The MASH arrangement will see police and partner agency staff working together from the same location, sharing information and agreeing a co-ordinated response to protect victims.

Police and partners already work well together to protect, reduce the risks and safeguard victims. Joint training for police and partners has been delivered. The 'Safety Net' information sharing system is in established use across the county, although it could be used more widely and frequently by some local police areas and partners. This allows information to be stored and accessed by all the agencies with appropriate information sharing agreements in place.

The independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) provision is inconsistent across the force area, resulting in different levels of service and engagement with victims. IDVAs provide essential support to victims, for example by assisting in the review of the victim's safety plan and by referring them to other support agencies. Southampton and Portsmouth have an acceptable level of IDVA support but this is not the case for the rest of the county. The force should work with partners to improve IDVA provision especially for high risk domestic abuse victims.

There is good engagement with partners at strategic and local levels. The multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process is well established with good consistent representation by the attending police officers. The purpose of the MARAC is for the police and partner agencies to co-ordinate their approaches to protect and reduce the risks for high risk victims. The force co-chairs the MARAC process, ensuring that if one chair is not able to attend, then the co-chair can still run the meeting. Partners commented positively on the police contribution to making victims safer. However, in some areas the MARACs have to consider a significant number of cases in the time set aside for the meeting. The police and other agencies need to work together to effectively manage the referral process and the volume of cases.

The force has invested in body-worn video equipment which has proved beneficial in domestic abuse cases where officers have been able to record a

victim's account of the incident when they first attend. The video evidence helps to show, for example, the extent of the victim's distress, their injuries and background evidence of the scene. Officers spoke highly of its quality and ease of use. They had confidence in using the equipment and saw its benefit for providing evidence in domestic abuse cases.

There is some limited evidence of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) taking cases to court when the victim is not willing to support the prosecution (and there are numerous reasons why this might be the case). Body-worn video or other evidence has been used to support so-called evidence-led prosecution. The force should continue to work with the CPS to identify how they can achieve the best outcomes for victims and provide clear guidance to staff about the minimum standards of evidence required to progress cases. The force is developing a vulnerability tracker which has been introduced to identify people who are at greatest risk of harm from domestic abuse. The tracker now is being used effectively in the Eastern and Western areas, but its use is still being developed in the Northern area.

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

Over the last few years the force has focused its attention on crimes such as burglary and theft. Resources have been directed to reduce and prevent those crimes from happening, and crime reduction in these areas, has been seen as the force's priority. Although domestic abuse has always been important, it has not been seen as one of the main force priorities. There is now more focus on reducing repeat incidents of domestic abuse and on better safeguarding of victims. The PCC has placed strong emphasis on how the force deals with domestic abuse and its service to victims and witnesses. This helps keep the force focused on this vitally important issue. The force performance framework has some information relating to how effective the force is at tackling domestic abuse.

The force also has established arrangements for dealing with the most dangerous offenders, although very few are domestic abuse-related. More information on serial domestic abuse perpetrators needs to be provided to local officers so that they can help to deal with them effectively and reduce the risk to victims. Local officers have some knowledge about high-risk victims in their area, but they lack information about offenders living in the local area. Neighbourhood officers are not routinely made aware of the repeat domestic abuse perpetrators, and there are no structured arrangements for dealing with those individuals or informing officers and staff about them.

The force has effective processes in place to ensure that any lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews are shared across the organisation. Steps are taken to ensure that necessary improvements are implemented.

The force has established processes for managing offenders who are released from prison or on bail, by police or the courts. The most dangerous and violent prisoners, including some domestic abuse offenders, are dealt with under the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and officers from the integrated offender management (IOM) team meet with them on release from prison. Staff focus is on the safety of the victim or others who may be at risk. Neighbourhood officers are briefed on the release of prisoners and areas of risk for any victim. The local safeguarding co-ordinator ensures that the victim is also visited and advised of the individual's release.

There are examples of good practice, in different parts of the force, where the police are engaging with communities who are typically more difficult to reach or who are reluctant to make contact. Southampton has allocated specific engagement officers to work with the Polish community to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how to report concerns. Arrangements are in place for health practitioners to assist in reporting domestic abuse to police, as some communities are less likely to come forward to the police than others.

The force's performance framework includes information on its performance in relation to domestic abuse, including the number of repeat offences, arrests and attrition rates. (Attrition means the number of the cases initially reported to police that do not proceed, perhaps because the victim decides not to take the case any further, the police or CPS decide that there is not enough evidence to proceed, or the case is taken to court and the suspect is found not guilty). The intention is to encourage reporting; encourage officers to take positive, appropriate action when called to deal with domestic abuse incident; and to improve the number of cases with successful outcomes.

There are established processes for identifying and addressing any lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews. Managers take responsibility for ensuring that recommendations are shared with staff so that lessons are learned and action is taken to reduce the risk of similar mistakes being repeated. The force should make better use of its systems to identify and manage serial perpetrators of domestic abuse. There are established arrangements to deal with the most dangerous offenders in relation to other crime types, but neighbourhood officers are not routinely made aware of the repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse in their area and there are no structured arrangements for dealing with these individuals or providing information about them to officers and staff.

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 HMIC's national report on domestic abuse.

1. The force should review the training currently provided to staff, and in particular, local investigators to ensure they have the skills to investigate and manage domestic abuse cases and can take appropriate steps to protect victims.
2. The force should review the process for submission of DASH risk assessment forms to ensure there is adequate supervision, and dip sample standard risk incidents to ensure they are being graded correctly.
3. The force should improve the quality of investigation at the scene and put in place effective supervision to ensure investigation files are of a good standard, to allow cases against perpetrators to be progressed.
4. The force should review how the force and other agencies can work together to effectively manage the MARAC referral process and the volume of cases.
5. The force should improve how it uses its systems for identifying serial domestic abuse perpetrators, and incorporate management of them into the core business of neighbourhood teams.
6. The force should work with the PCC and partner agencies to increase the numbers of IDVAs available to work with victims in the county.
7. The force should provide HMIC with a copy of the College of Policing evaluation of the DASH form pilot.

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.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-and-criminal-evidence-act-1984-pace-current-versions

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.