



Hertfordshire Constabulary's approach to tackling domestic abuse

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-353-5

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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 Hertfordshire 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 Police Act 1996 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 Hertfordshire⁷

Calls for assistance



In Hertfordshire, domestic abuse accounts for 7% of calls to the police for assistance. The force was unable to provide the number of these calls that were from repeat victims.

Crime

7%

Domestic abuse accounts for 7% of all recorded crime.

Assault with intent

18%

Hertfordshire recorded 108 assaults with intent to cause serious harm, of these 19 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

37%

The force also recorded 3,875 assaults with injury, of these 1,448 were domestic abuse related. This is 37% 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

60%

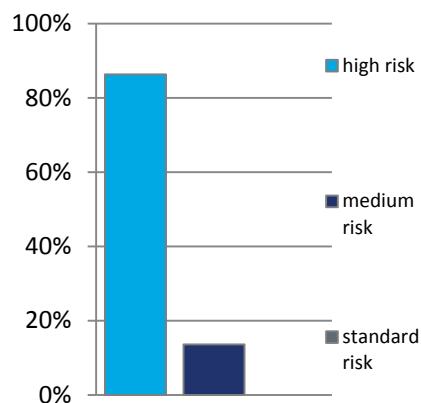
The force recorded 700 harassment offences, of these 420 were domestic abuse related. This is 60% of all harassment offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Sexual offences

9%

The force also recorded 749 sexual offences, of these 65 were domestic abuse related. This is 9% of all sexual offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Risk levels



On 29 October 2013 Hertfordshire had 44 active domestic abuse cases; 86% were high risk, 14% were medium risk, and 0% were standard risk.

Arrests



For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded, there were 76 arrests in Hertfordshire. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

Outcomes



Hertfordshire recorded 3,737 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes, 28% resulted in a charge, 20% 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 police and crime commissioner (PCC) and the chief constable of Hertfordshire Constabulary. Staff throughout the organisation take their role in keeping victims and their children safe very seriously.

Victims who are assessed as high risk (of serious harm or murder) receive support and safety planning from specialist officers. However, there is a disjointed approach to victim care and contact for medium and standard risk cases. This means that these victims may not get the level of service from police that they need and the risk posed to them may be missed.

The force has invested in enhanced domestic abuse training for a large number of staff but these staff are seldom used to deal with incidents of domestic abuse or asked for advice. This is a missed opportunity to deliver an improved service to victims.

There are some good examples of the force working in partnership with other agencies and the voluntary sector, for example the Sunflower Centres, to provide support for victims of domestic abuse. The multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) are regarded as well run and are well attended by all agencies.

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

Identifying victims

There are good systems in place to identify victims of domestic abuse when calls are received in the force control room (FCR). Within the FCR, staff are trained to question callers to establish the nature of the call, and the level of risk to the victim and other people involved in the incident. Officers are sent to all incidents that are identified as domestic abuse.

FCR staff research police databases to gather available information about a caller, the victim, the alleged perpetrator, the family or the address. This is to help officers attending build a picture of the threat of harm and risk to the victim and other people involved, for example a child. However, this information is often not passed to attending officers which means they have an incomplete understanding of the threat of harm to a victim or their children as they arrive at the scene.

Although the force is able to identify callers that are repeat victims through its systems, common sense is also applied by all staff. Where it is apparent that a caller has been subject to domestic abuse before, but they have not reported it to the police or other agency, they are recognised as a repeat victim.

Keeping victims safe

Domestic abuse is a priority for Hertfordshire Constabulary. Officers have received domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment training. The force has given enhanced training to domestic violence emergency response officers (DVEROs) some of whom are response officers. However, they are seldom used or asked for advice.

A good deal of thought is given to the safety of the victim and children at incidents of domestic abuse, where they have been assessed as high risk of serious harm or murder and measures are put in place to protect them. However, there is some confusion over who deals with those victims who have been assessed as being at a standard or medium risk.

Investigations are generally allocated to staff based on the seriousness of a crime, rather than the level of risk to a victim, which means that particularly with low level criminality, inexperienced officers could be asked to deal with a higher risk case, which is not ideal.

Victims who are assessed as high risk are supported by the domestic violence officers (DVOs) based within the force's harm reduction unit (HRU). Ownership of cases moves through the organisation, with different officers and departments being responsible for the case and victim safety at every stage. This can mean that victims may get a disjointed response from the police, particularly in respect of being contacted about their case. They may not be contacted at all, as officers could think it is someone else's responsibility, or they may be contacted by a number of different people, which can also be a concern.

It is unclear who is responsible for dealing with the victims of domestic abuse throughout the investigation and criminal justice process. Uniformed officers do not really understand what the specialist teams do. This can mean victims may be contacted by too many people, too frequently, and often asking questions that the victim has answered before. This slightly fragmented approach could cause victims to lose confidence in how the police are dealing with their case, which in turn could lead to victims deciding that they no longer wish to support the police investigation.

Management of risk

All cases assessed as high risk using the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment are referred to the specialist domestic violence officers (DVOs) for further assessment and contact with the victim; however those that are standard risk and medium risk are not automatically referred. All cases are examined by the business support unit (BSU) within the harm reduction unit (HRU) to ensure appropriate action has been taken.

Where there are victims who have been assessed as standard or medium risk but have suffered domestic abuse before these will be referred to the DVOs for further review and contact, if appropriate. However, there is some concern that there is a lack of understanding across the force about who is responsible for victim care, particularly in standard and medium risk cases.

The force multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) are regarded as working well, and there are good relationships with partners, which means that information is exchanged promptly, and safety plans put in place to reduce risk. There are also good examples of joint working with partners such as the Sunflower Centres.

Organisational effectiveness for keeping people safe

Staff and officers have a good level of understanding about domestic abuse across the force and there are appropriate systems in place to review risk and safeguard victims, although there is still room for improvement.

The police and crime commissioner and the chief constable are keen to improve services for domestic abuse victims and they are working with partners to do this.

Domestic abuse performance, strategy and delivery of services are discussed at a number of police and multi-agency meetings. The force does not yet seek the views of victims about the service it provides.

It is not always clear who is responsible for updating victims when perpetrators are released from custody and who would re-assess their risk as a result of this. This could result in a victim being contacted by a number of people or not contacted at all and the force and partner agencies being unaware of increased risk. The Domestic Abuse Reduction Team (DART) identifies the perpetrators who are assessed as presenting the greatest risk to victims and provides information on them for staff. However local officers did not routinely receive this information.

The force does not have a clear process to make sure any learning from domestic abuse incidents is understood and action taken to improve.

Findings

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

There are good systems in place to identify victims of domestic abuse when calls are received in the force control room (FCR). Within the FCR, staff are trained to question callers to establish the nature of the call, and the level of risk to the victim and other people involved in the incident. Officers are sent to all incidents that are identified as domestic abuse.

FCR staff research police databases to gather available information about a caller, the victim, the alleged perpetrator, the family or the address. This is to help officers attending build a picture of the threat of harm and risk to the victim and other people involved, for example a child. However, this information is often not passed to attending officers which means they have an incomplete understanding of the threat of harm to a victim or their children as they arrive at the scene.

Although the force is able to identify callers that are repeat victims through its systems, common sense is also applied by all staff. Where it is apparent that a caller has been subject to domestic abuse before, but they have not reported it to the police or other agency, they are recognised as a repeat victim.

Most incidents of domestic abuse are notified to the police via the force control room (FCR). HMIC found that staff working in the FCR have a good understanding of what constitutes domestic abuse. Staff must complete a number of actions to ensure they obtain sufficient detail to assess risk accurately, for example, whether there are children at the address. There is a set of questions that call handlers follow to determine if the incident is domestic abuse. The call taker will try to gain as much information as possible from the caller and develop an understanding of the level of risk presented. HMIC listened to a small sample of calls and found in all cases the call handlers asked questions which established whether the caller or any other person, for example a child, was at immediate risk of harm. This enables the force to identify and start to manage risk at the first point of contact. The risk assessment is recorded in the incident log.

When a call is received by the FCR, the command and control system (called STORM) automatically identifies whether there has been a previous call from that telephone number or the address that is given. The call taker is then able to review those previous calls. The automatic identification of previous calls only goes back March 2013, when the STORM system was installed. However, the previous command and control system is researched also to establish whether

there have been earlier calls from the address or telephone number. Having a record of the previous history is important for the call taker, as it means they are in possession of information that can help to inform them of what initial actions need to be taken, to keep a victim safe, and which can also be passed to attending officers. Staff within the FCR are confident and empathetic when dealing with callers who were experiencing domestic abuse.

Other police systems are also checked to establish whether there is any information available which will help FCR staff and officers who attend the incident to establish the levels of risk the caller faces. The systems hold information such as previous calls to the address; information about the caller and the alleged perpetrator; information held relating to children in the house, who may also be at risk; and any actions that may have been taken in the past, for example court proceedings or the involvement of other agencies. There is an intelligence team within the FCR to do these checks. They review all incident logs as the call taker is dealing with the call. As they do not handle the call directly, they are able to gather information relating to the incident being reported, and pass this to the call taker, and it could then be passed to attending officers. However, in the majority of the incident logs reviewed by HMIC (80 percent) there was no record of these checks having been done. This means that information which would help attending officers assess risk is not being passed to them, leaving them with an incomplete picture of the risk a victim may be experiencing.

If a person attends a police station front counter to report a domestic abuse incident the station reception officers (SROs) will create a 'STORM incident log' for the FCR containing as many details as they are able to get from the person. The SROs will also research systems to make sure that as much information as possible is available. FCR staff will send officers to deal with the incident using this information.

There is a requirement that police attend all reported incidents of domestic abuse. However, the decision on how quickly responding officers have to attend is based on the FCRs assessment of threat, harm and risk faced by the victim. The force has an automatic vehicle location system (AVLS), which allows the call taker to locate the nearest available vehicle to the incident and send it to that incident. The FCR will always try to deploy more than one officer to incidents of domestic abuse. This is to enable the separation of parties at the scene to ensure each is able to give their account of what has happened.

Officers and staff (in the FCR and across the force) have received training on domestic abuse. This includes the completion of the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment process which must be completed at every domestic abuse incident. All FCR staff received initial domestic abuse

training when they joined the force. FCR staff also have access to an online directory called Quicksilver which provides a database of protocols for a wide range of issues including domestic abuse. Further guidance is available to all officers and staff from the force *Domestic Abuse Procedure* document and there are other documents and advice on the force's internal website. Coercive control is recognised by staff as a form of domestic abuse. There has also been some guidance and procedures provided to staff which explains so-called honour-based violence (HBV) and how to deal with it. This is positive and means that staff dealing with calls from victims of domestic abuse are likely to recognise a full range of abuse rather than just physical abuse.

The force has about 333 domestic violence emergency response officers (DVEROs). These are frontline officers who have received a higher level of domestic abuse awareness training. These officers should be sent to domestic abuse incidents when they are available. However, as they will also be sent to other incidents they will not always be available or be the nearest person to attend a domestic abuse incident. The FCR does not have a list of these officers, nor are they able to automatically identify officers who are DVERO trained. Officers and staff indicated that they do not know who the DVEROs are. This means that there is a large pool of specialist expertise which could be adding value when attending and investigating incidents of domestic abuse (which includes the safeguarding of victims), which is not being used to help make victims safer.

Repeat victimisation is defined by the force as more than one incident in the previous 12 months. Staff seen during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding that any case where the victim has reported domestic abuse to the police, or another agency, or where the victim states they have been subjected to abuse in the past is a 'repeat case' and this will influence any risk assessment that is made.

Where incidents of domestic abuse are identified as being high risk prior to police arrival, these are reviewed and monitored in 'real time' by the FCR supervisors and the inspector to ensure that immediate and appropriate action is taken. When the incident has been dealt with a FCR supervisor checks the incident log to make sure all necessary action, for example the arrest of a perpetrator and the safety of the victim, has been taken. The incident will only be closed once a supervisor is satisfied that all actions needed have been completed. The FCR supervisors listen to calls, and feedback to call handlers, about how they dealt with incidents to aid their development.

Frontline supervisors (usually sergeants) are also made aware of high risk domestic abuse incidents which they will monitor and oversee. They will provide support and advice to attending officers. Supervisors have not been given any

specific training to do this; however such scrutiny means that the incidents are more likely to be dealt with properly at an early stage.

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

Domestic abuse is a priority for Hertfordshire Constabulary. Officers have received domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment training. The force has given enhanced training to domestic violence emergency response officers (DVEROs) some of whom are response officers. However, they are seldom used or asked for advice.

A good deal of thought is given to the safety of the victim and children at incidents of domestic abuse, where they have been assessed as high risk of serious harm or murder and measures are put in place to protect them. However, there is some confusion over who deals with those victims who have been assessed as being at a standard or medium risk.

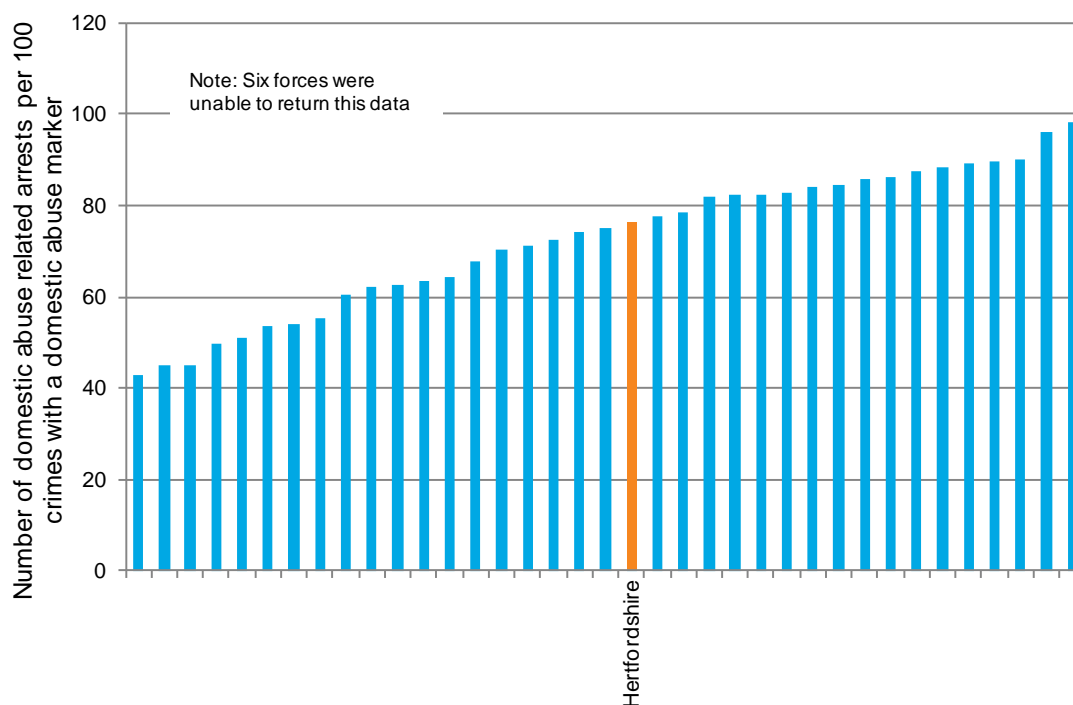
Investigations are generally allocated to staff based on the seriousness of a crime, rather than the level of risk to a victim, which means that particularly with low level criminality, inexperienced officers could be asked to deal with a higher risk case, which is not ideal.

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It is unclear who is responsible for dealing with the victims of domestic abuse throughout the investigation and criminal justice process. Uniformed officers do not really understand what the specialist teams do. This can mean victims may be contacted by too many people, too frequently, and often asking questions that the victim has answered before. This slightly fragmented approach could cause victims to lose confidence in how the police are dealing with their case, which in turn could lead to victims deciding that they no longer wish to support the police investigation.

For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 76 arrests in Hertfordshire. 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

Domestic abuse is a priority for the force. The police and crime commissioner (PCC) has set the force a target to reduce incidents of domestic abuse. This is reflected in the force’s operational policing plan which includes *‘tackling of domestic violence and the reduction of repeat victimisation’* as one of the force’s objectives. HMIC found that officers and staff across the force are clear that tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the force. They understand the importance of their role in properly assessing threat, harm and risk at each incident they attend.

The force works with partner agencies such as the health service and social care at both a strategic and operational level to deal with violence against, women, girls, men and boys. There is a structure of meetings in place, for example the PCC’s Community Safety Board and the Domestic Violence Strategic Programme Board which ensures the necessary programmes of work to improve police and partnership response to domestic abuse are delivered. The PCC, force and partners recognise the importance of these programmes

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

and ensure that the appropriate level of representation and support is given to the meetings. This is the case at the majority of meetings.

The organisational structure of the force splits the responsibility for the domestic violence policy and strategy and the operational delivery of the force response to domestic abuse incidents between two chief officers. This is not a barrier to delivery. The benefits of this approach are that the responsibility for strategic and partnership development is given the focus it needs and operational delivery is not diluted as the focus is firmly on dealing with the incident, managing the investigation and victim care.

Staff and officers attending domestic abuse incidents have received training which gives them an understanding of domestic abuse and how to assess risk to victims. More recently there has been some additional guidance sent out to officers detailing the new definition of domestic abuse and explaining coercive control, stalking, harassment and so-called honour-based violence. Officers and staff display a good understanding of coercive control, stalking and harassment. They know they should use professional judgement when dealing with these cases to ensure appropriate safeguards were provided for victims.

The county community safety unit (CCSU) is working to raise awareness of domestic abuse amongst officers, staff and professionals in partner agencies. This work will help to improve multi-agency working, and access to appropriate services for victims of domestic abuse. For example this work includes:

- the forced marriage guidance and investigation pack;
- so-called honour-based violence checklist and guidance;
- the introduction of a harassment diary for victims to complete;
- improvements to the DASH risk assessment booklet to ensure it is fit for purpose;
- the multi-agency gypsy, roma and traveller working group; and
- work to engage with faith community representatives.

Officers attending incidents of domestic abuse fill out the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment to establish the level of risk of harm to a victim. It has 27 questions that must be asked in order to assess accurately the risk. Officers understand why they are asking the questions. This is important and means that officers are able to form a better understanding of the risk posed to victims. In addition to the assessed level of risk identified through the question set, officers are able to increase the level of risk using their own professional judgement, should they feel that a victim is at greater risk than

the paper-based assessment has indicated. This is good practice. Officers cannot reduce the assessed risk based on their own judgement. Those attending incidents have a good understanding of how they need to establish any threat, harm and risk to victims and that their role is to do whatever they are able to reduce this.

Officers attending a domestic abuse incident where children have been present in the past or where children have been identified as being at risk are informed of this by the control room. This helps them establish the current level of risk and take any action necessary to protect the children. Within Hertfordshire there is a target advice service (TAS) which is run by Hertfordshire County Council. Two members of police staff are based within the TAS. This service ensures that all police information on domestic abuse where children are involved, is passed to the appropriate agencies in a timely way.

Wherever possible, two officers are sent to incidents of domestic abuse. This means that they are able to speak to each party separately and gain an understanding of what has taken place. Officers' main priority is the safety of the victim and anyone else who may be at risk and so they must take some form of 'positive action'. Positive action does not necessarily mean arrest but can mean, for example, support for victims and witnesses or referral to social services. The action must include necessary arrangements to make the victim and other people present safe. Officers are expected to make an arrest where an offence has been committed. Officers are also expected to complete safety planning for the victim. The management of a victim's risk is the responsibility of the attending officer until, if it is a high risk case or case where the officers' professional judgement raises the level of risk, it is passed to the DVOs. Unfortunately, the DVOs work limited hours, between 8.00am and 6.00pm. This means that at night and on Bank Holidays, risk may not be well managed or overseen, as the DVOs will not be available to deal with them. This is a concern.

Immediate action taken by officers is supervised by their sergeants and inspectors. Supervisors monitor what is happening at incidents but are unable to attend every domestic abuse call.

When officers attend a domestic abuse incident and make an arrest the case is often dealt with by the case investigation team (CIT). If the offence is serious, then the local crime unit (LCU) may deal with it. The cases are not allocated for investigation based on the threat, harm and risk to the victim. This means that a case where a minor crime is committed, but the risk to a victim is high, may be dealt with by an inexperienced officer, who may not have the skills or confidence to achieve the best possible outcome for a victim.

However, victims who have been assessed as high risk are supported and managed by the DVOs, who will offer advice to the investigating officers. Staff and officers on the front line and in the specialist units would benefit from better communication between each other. There is confusion as to which team or unit is responsible for what. This means that where cases are passed between teams and units there is a danger that appropriate action may not be taken, as there may be an expectation from one team or unit that another will be completing these actions. It could also be the case that a number of different people could be taking the same or similar action, which is also concerning. Although safety planning and support of high risk victims is robust it is less so in respect of those victims who are assessed as at a standard or medium risk. This means that some victims of domestic abuse may not be receiving the level of support they need.

As cases are investigated by different teams to those giving support to victims, there are issues with victims being contacted by too many people, too frequently. This fragmented approach could make victims decide they do not want to support the police investigation any further, and they may lose confidence in the criminal justice system.

Domestic abuse investigations ought to be overseen by a supervisor. In the case of high risk cases this is by an inspector. If staff have concerns over the level of risk that has been assessed then they seek advice from their supervisor. However, there is less certainty and less clarity over who is responsible for supervising the action taken to manage the risk to the victims. This is the case in all levels of risk – standard, medium and high. This is a concern as it is essential that the safety of victims is clearly managed from the moment they contact the police.

HMIC reviewed a small number of files and found that in the majority of cases, the actions taken by officers when initially attending the scene of a domestic abuse incident helps to provide a better prospect of a successful outcome for the victim, for example by securing evidence which leads to the successful prosecution of a perpetrator. This is supported by the fact that frontline officers wear body cameras which has captured video evidence that has assisted in determining what action should be taken in a case.

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

All cases assessed as high risk using the domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment are referred to the specialist domestic violence officers (DVOs) for further assessment and contact with the victim; however those that are standard risk and medium risk are not automatically

referred. All cases are examined by the business support unit (BSU) within the harm reduction unit (HRU) to ensure appropriate action has been taken.

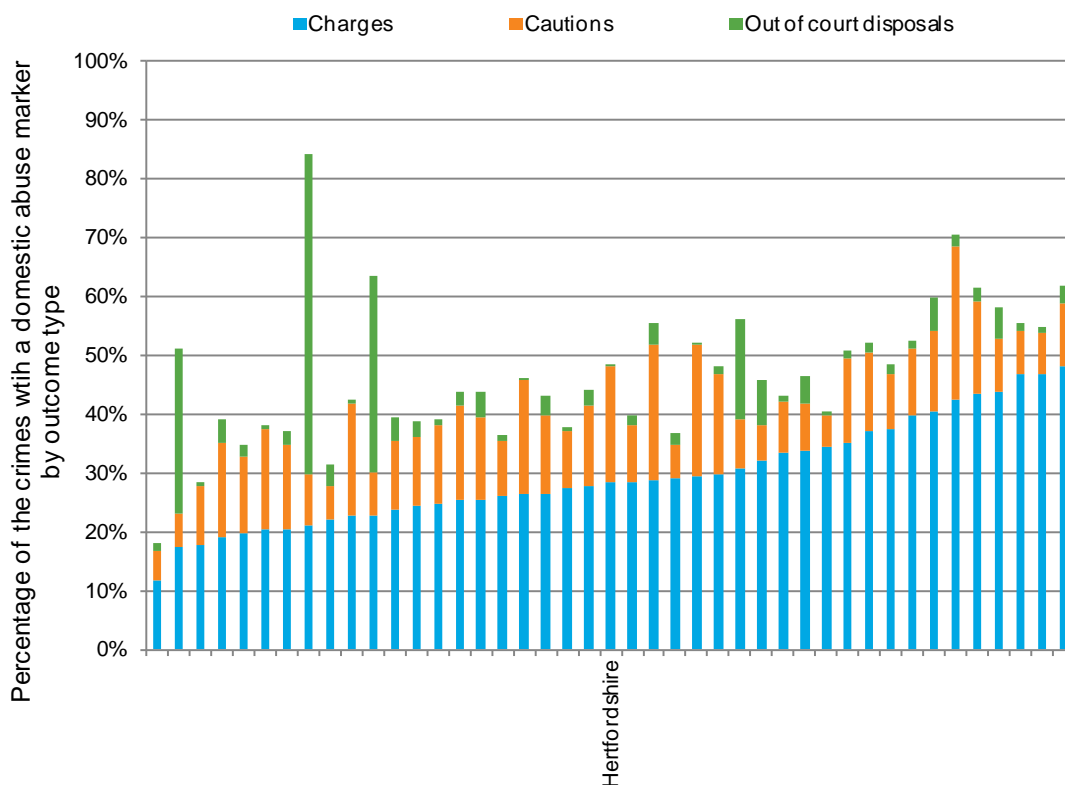
Where there are victims who have been assessed as standard or medium risk but have suffered domestic abuse before these will be referred to the DVOs for further review and contact, if appropriate. However, there is some concern that there is a lack of understanding across the force about who is responsible for victim care, particularly in standard and medium risk cases.

The force multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) are regarded as working well, and there are good relationships with partners, which means that information is exchanged promptly, and safety plans put in place to reduce risk. There are also good examples of joint working with partners such as the Sunflower Centres.

Hertfordshire recorded 3,737 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013⁹. Of these crimes 28 percent resulted in a charge, 20 percent resulted in a caution and less than 1 percent had an out-of-court disposal, for example a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

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

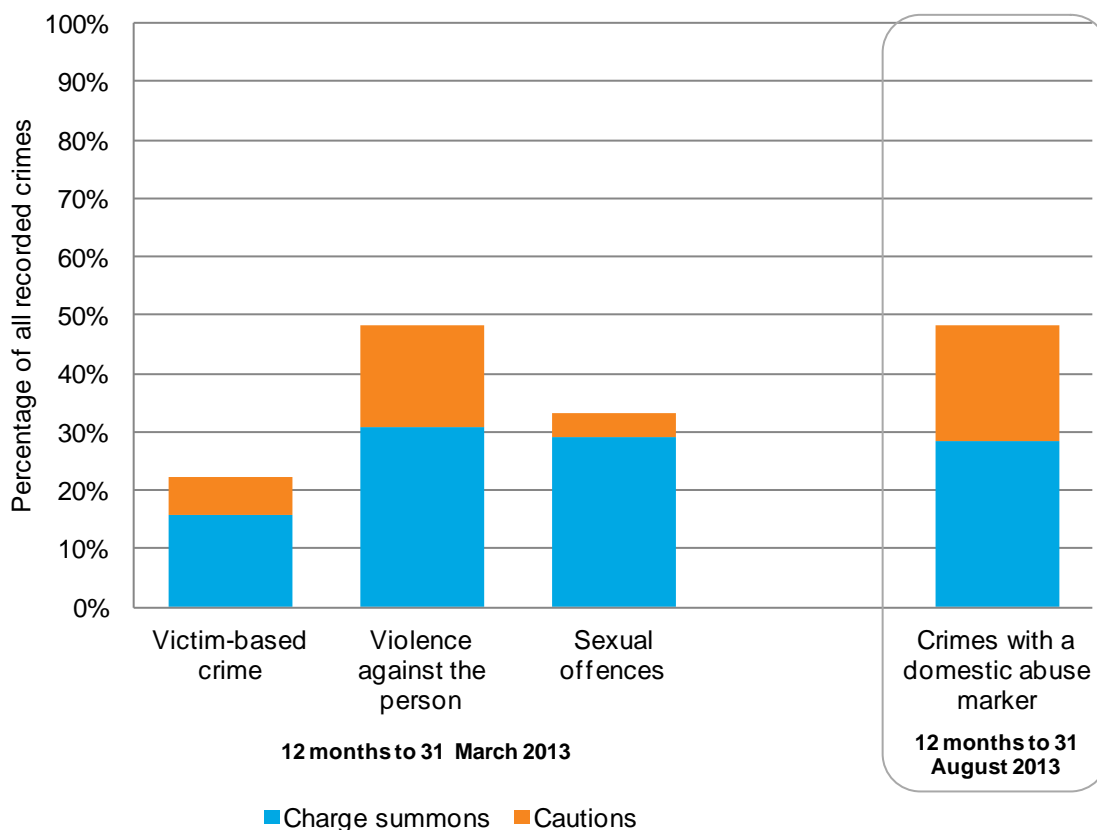


Source: HMIC data collection

Hertfordshire Constabulary charge 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 marker¹¹



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

All cases that are identified as high risk are referred to the force specialist officers called domestic violence officers (DVOs) based within the harm reduction unit (HRU) which forms part of the local policing command (LPC). They have received a similar level of training as the DVEROs, however, their level of expertise is further enhanced by the experience they gain on a daily basis when dealing with domestic abuse incidents, victims, offenders and other partners and agencies. The LPC is also responsible for frontline officers, LCUs and the crime investigation unit (CIT). Unfortunately; the inspection found that officers within these teams do not understand what the specialist teams do, and what they are responsible for. This is concerning, particularly in respect of

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

safety planning for the victims of standard and medium risk cases, as there is potential for some actions being missed.

The CIT deals with a variety of crime within the county. A large proportion of this is domestic abuse. They are supported by the DVOs and DART who advise on cases, and make sure the CIT has all information available to them, so the appropriate action can and will be taken, both in respect of the perpetrator and the victim. This knowledge will undoubtedly enhance the service they are able to provide to victims of domestic abuse, but they do not deal with all perpetrators of domestic abuse.

DVOs use additional information from partner agencies to help them develop a more complete picture of the risk a victim may be facing. This means that victims facing higher levels of risk or repeat victims should receive appropriate support and actions to reduce risk, for example help to secure their house or a mobile phone to contact the police in an emergency. All domestic abuse cases that are assessed as medium or standard risk are reviewed by the business support unit (BSU) within the harm reduction unit (HRU). If there are cases that raise further concerns or are repeat incidents the BSU will refer them to the DVOs for additional review. A repeat incident in this case is defined by the force as three or more incidents within a month. This means that domestic abuse incidents are reviewed and, when necessary, referred to the DVOs for further action to be taken. However, HMIC is concerned at the high level of repeat incidents necessary to trigger a referral to a DVO. We are further concerned that supervisors and managers within the HRU do not routinely undertake any quality assurance or dip sampling of cases to make sure the assessments were consistent and accurate.

The specialist officers should receive the training that has been developed for DVEROs. Some specialist officers have not yet had additional training; however, they were very confident and knowledgeable. A large number of the specialist officers are very experienced and have been working in the domestic abuse area for a number of years. They are responsible for providing support to victims and helping to make them safer through safety planning and partnership working.

During investigations and through partnership working the DVOs may gain a great deal of information about a victim and perpetrator. Not all information held by the DVOs or received from the MARAC is available on police systems. Only the DVOs and in some cases the FCR inspector has access to this information. This is a concern. It means that there may at times be incomplete information available to officers who are making initial decisions about risk.

There is a countywide domestic violence and abuse strategy 2012-2015. This is a joint strategy with other partners and agencies. However, as yet, there is no multi-agency high level action plan, nor any mechanism for holding partners to account for the delivery of the objectives within the strategy. This strategy is overseen by the countywide multi-agency domestic violence strategic programme board (DVSPB), which has representatives from many agencies; these include the police, Hertfordshire County Council, social services and public health. The force has concerns that the level of representation on this board is not at a sufficiently senior level to take decisions to improve services.

The force has access to six independent domestic abuse advisers (IDVAs) who are employed by the victim support service (VSS) and who provide an invaluable service to victims. They are not managed or controlled by the police. They are currently jointly funded through the police and Hertfordshire County Council. However there is some concern over future funding arrangements. The PCC is aware of the need to improve the co-ordination of funding to the VSS to improve this situation.

There are examples of good working relationships with partners including health, housing and the local authorities. This will help reduce risk to victims through working with these partners as there is a wide range of information held within each organisation which provides a more complete picture of the risk faced. The Targeted Advice Service (TAS) ensures that when children are involved or present at domestic abuse incidents the appropriate services, for example, education, are provided with timely information.

There are four multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) within the county. These meet on a monthly basis are attended by police and partner agencies. The MARACs assess any new information and ensure that every organisation takes responsibility for what they can do to reduce the risk to a victim. The Hertfordshire MARACs are regarded as well run, and have good representation from each of the agencies. This means that when high risk victim's cases are discussed they are likely to receive a good multi-agency response to reduce risk. The detective inspector within the HRU chairs each of the MARACs, and at each meeting, between 15 and 20 cases are discussed.

As well as the multi-agency working previously described, the force has developed a website with partners (www.hertssunflower.org) to support both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. There are also two Sunflower Drop-in Centres run jointly by police and other agencies. These centres provide a safe place for victims of domestic abuse to go for advice and support. The centres are in discreet locations, the details of which are only known to the victim. The role of the police and partner agencies that are at the centres is to make victims feel safer.

There is some lack of clarity about who is dealing with the victims of domestic abuse throughout the investigation and criminal justice process. The role of the DVOs and the DVEROs is unclear to many staff, who did not understand whether they would take statements or concentrate solely on victim care. The identity of the DVEROs is also not widely known within the FCR or amongst frontline officers, therefore they are not routinely being deployed to domestic abuse incidents. This means that the skill and expertise of these officers is not being made available to support other officers and the victims of domestic abuse.

Officers attending incidents are expected to produce a safety plan to reduce risk to victims. This might include re-housing the victim or perpetrator or ensuring that any call to an address is treated as an emergency, by marking police systems to show this. Safety plans are reviewed and updated by the DVOs for high risk cases and repeat standard and medium risk cases or those where the BSU feel a further assessment should be done. Any change in circumstances, for example, where a perpetrator is released from police custody should mean the risk assessment is reviewed. In such a situation, it is not certain that a safety plan would be reviewed and updated to deal with any changes in risk. It is also not clear, particularly in those cases where the DVO is not available, or that have been assessed as standard or medium risk, who has responsibility for the risk assessment review or who makes sure a victim is aware that this had happened. This is a concern.

The MARAC process in Hertfordshire is regarded as working well. HMIC has some concern about there being a single chair for all four MARACs and the individual's capacity to manage these. However, it has been agreed that a representative from a partner agency will co-chair future meetings. Both police and partner agencies including the voluntary sector, for example, Women's Aid and Refuge, refer cases into the MARACs and each is discussed, to ensure that risk is being managed by all agencies, and information is shared. Three MARACs (Central, Eastern and Western Hertfordshire) have completed the Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) self-assessment questionnaire, which has been designed to promote best practice and continuous improvement. This assessment has been reviewed by CAADA, the outcome of which will help the force understand how the process is working and where it can be improved.

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

Staff and officers have a good level of understanding about domestic abuse across the force and there are appropriate systems in place to review risk and safeguard victims, although there is still room for improvement.

The police and crime commissioner and the chief constable are keen to improve services for domestic abuse victims and they are working with partners to do this.

Domestic abuse performance, strategy and delivery of services are discussed at a number of police and multi-agency meetings. The force does not yet seek the views of victims about the service it provides.

It is not always clear who is responsible for updating victims when perpetrators are released from custody and who would re-assess their risk as a result of this. This could result in a victim being contacted by a number of people or not contacted at all and the force and partner agencies being unaware of increased risk.

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Team (DART) identifies the perpetrators who are assessed as presenting the greatest risk to victims and provides information on them for staff. However local officers did not routinely receive this information.

The force does not have a clear process to make sure any learning from domestic abuse incidents is understood and action taken to improve.

There are no arrangements in place to ensure that at key stages in the investigative process, risk is routinely reassessed and appropriate action taken to protect the victim. For example, there is no reassessment on release of a perpetrator from police custody or approaching a court date. Evidence suggests that risk is not reassessed unless there is another call from the victim, at which point, a new DASH risk assessment is completed. This is a concern.

Within the HRU is a domestic abuse reduction team (DART) which actively targets serial perpetrators. Whenever possible it will deal with serial perpetrators who are in custody for a domestic offence. If the DART is not available, they will ensure the investigating officer has access to all information relating to the perpetrators and will advise on what action can and should be taken. The DART has identified 40 perpetrators who are at the highest risk of re-offending. The team will work with the local crime units (LCU) and frontline officers to take action that will reduce this offending and the risk to victims. For

example, where a perpetrator has been arrested for an offence not linked with domestic abuse, the DART will work with the LCU to make sure that all investigative opportunities are taken. This could mean the perpetrator is not released from police custody, or if they are, they have bail conditions placed on them that reduce their opportunity to harm a victim. However, HMIC found that information on who the priority perpetrators are, and what action should be taken, is not communicated to frontline officers. Frontline officers said they would benefit from having more information about domestic abuse victims, perpetrators and locations of offences. This would help them provide a better service, particularly in respect of keeping the victim safe. By being unaware of all information, available officers felt they were just providing a 'sticking plaster' response rather than being fully equipped to give the best service possible.

It is essential that victims are updated prior to a perpetrator being released from prison and their levels of risk re-assessed in light of this. HMIC found that there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for informing a victim of this. In some cases the specialist domestic abuse witness care officers within the criminal justice department will contact the victim and provide post-court support. DVOs will also receive this information and update victims.

In other cases the officer who dealt with the case may do this, but it is not clear who is responsible. This means some victims may not be contacted before a perpetrator is released, and an understanding of their risk may not be established. This could also mean that a victim might be contacted by a number of people, which could again be an issue for them. Should a perpetrator be bailed by a court, then the victim may not be updated, as the force may not be made aware of the release in a timely way. This means that their level of risk will not be re-assessed at this critical time. The force has found that social media updates mean that victims are often aware that perpetrators have been released before they have had the opportunity to make contact. This is not acceptable.

Safer neighbourhood team (SNT) officers are not regularly made aware of the vulnerable and repeat victims of domestic abuse in their area. There is no list of high risk victims, and knowledge of them is through previous attendance at a domestic abuse incident or information from colleagues. Access to systems which contain details of domestic abuse incidents and the intelligence associated with these incidents is limited. SNT officers stated they wanted to be made aware on a regular basis of vulnerable and high risk victims in their area. Failure to involve the SNTs is a missed opportunity.

There are five domestic homicides currently under review. The Domestic Violence Strategic Programme Board owns the reviews. It is not clear how the force ensures corporate learning is acted on following a review. At the

conclusion of a court case, or if a domestic abuse case has been discontinued, the matter will be discussed at a post-trial performance management meeting. This meeting is led by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and has representation from the police and other agencies. Cases are discussed and any lessons learned are identified. The agencies present can then disseminate these further within their own organisations. It is not clear what arrangements are in place within the force to communicate these lessons to staff and to check that they have been understood and embedded into normal practice.

The PCC's police and crime plan (PCP) has an objective to '*tackle domestic violence*' with a target to '*reduce the number of domestic violence crimes*'. The success of this objective will be measured by the:

- number of recorded domestic violence crimes; and
- number of recorded repeat domestic violence victims of crime.

The force's performance with regard to domestic abuse related crimes and repeat incidents is routinely monitored. The force measures a number of numerical targets, including how many arrests are made, and how many cases are detected and perpetrators charged. While the most important measure for the force for domestic abuse is how victims feel about the service, there has been no work at this time, which gives the force a good understanding of this.

The multi-agency *Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2012–2015* is considered by the PCC's Community Safety Board. Internal auditors routinely monitor process compliance, particularly DASH risk assessment completion and compliance with the force *Domestic Abuse Procedure*. The most recent audits (October 2013) identified that the DASH risk assessment is not being fully completed. However this may be because some of the questions to be asked would not have been appropriate in the circumstances, and the officer completing used their professional judgement in omitting them.

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 change force documents and terminology from domestic violence to domestic abuse, so people inside and outside the organisation understand that it is the whole spectrum of abuse that is important, and not just violence.
2. The force should agree the draft action plan that supports the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2012–2015.
3. The force should review the training currently provided to staff including whether all operational officers should be trained as DVEROs. They should inform staff who are the specialist officers and their function.
4. The force should review the contact, officers and staff, have with victims throughout their involvement with the police, to give one single point of contact, who is able to update them and ensure that the risk assessment is reviewed at every stage.
5. The force should provide clarity about who is responsible for victim safety and updates to the victim throughout the criminal justice process.
6. The force should review the way in which information is provided to officers in respect of both victims and those perpetrators assessed as being the greatest risk to victims.
7. The force should routinely dip sample standard and medium risk incidents to confirm the quality and ensure that the correct risk assessment has been made of those incidents.
8. The force should review the overall capacity of the chair of the four MARACs, in line with their responsibilities within the harm reduction unit.
9. The force should publicise the role of the specialist team in order that all staff understand what they do and how they can help make victims safer.
10. The force should introduce a process by which learning from domestic homicide reviews can be understood and embedded in the force to improve service to victims in the future.

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.