



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Lancashire Constabulary's approach to tackling domestic abuse

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coercive behaviour is defined as: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition includes so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

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

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

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

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

We inspected all police forces in England and Wales, interviewing senior and operational leads in forces, holding focus groups with frontline staff and partners, and carrying out visits to police stations (which were unannounced) to test the reality of each force's approach with frontline officers. Our inspection teams were supplemented by expert peers, which included public protection experts from over 15 forces and those working with victims of

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

domestic abuse in voluntary and community sector organisations.

This report details what HMIC found in Lancashire 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.

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

Domestic abuse in Lancashire⁷

Calls for assistance



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

Crime

10%

Domestic abuse accounts for 10% of all recorded crime.

Assault with intent

23%

Lancashire recorded 946 assaults with intent to cause serious harm, of these 217 were domestic abuse related. This is 23% of all assaults with intent to cause serious harm recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Assault with injury

35%

The force also recorded 9,789 assaults with injury, of these 3,452 were domestic abuse related. This is 35% 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

63%

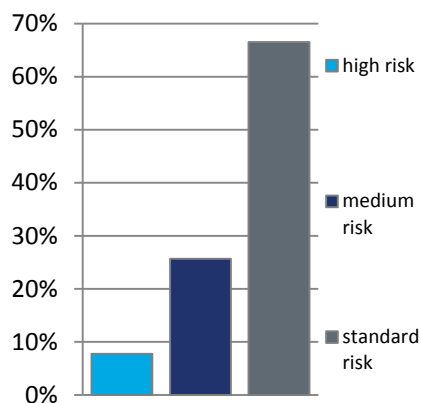
The force recorded 1,574 harassment offences, of these 992 were domestic abuse related. This is 63% of all harassment offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Sexual offences

7%

The force also recorded 1,817 sexual offences, of these 128 were domestic abuse related. This is 7% of all sexual offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Risk levels



On 31 August 2013 Lancashire had 35,603 active domestic abuse cases; 8% were high risk, 26% were medium risk, and 67% were standard risk.

Arrests



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

Outcomes



Lancashire recorded 8,841 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes, 37% resulted in a charge, 13% resulted in a caution and, 1% had an out of court disposal, for example, a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Executive summary

The public in Lancashire can have confidence that police officers and staff provide a good service to victims of domestic abuse in all areas and help to keep them safe. Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the constabulary which has invested in well-trained and specialist staff. HMIC found staff demonstrated a high level of commitment and awareness and that they work well with partners. This report outlines a number of areas where the constabulary could further strengthen its response.

Identifying victims

Victims of domestic abuse are identified by the constabulary when a call is received in the constabulary's call management centre (CMC). If a victim goes to a police station then public enquiry staff will call for officers to attend and deal with the victim. The constabulary has good IT systems which alert the call handler to repeat callers; they carry out further checks on the police databases to ensure they gather as full a picture as possible, to be able to make a decision as to the appropriate police response. There are also good systems in place to assist the dispatcher in locating and sending the nearest police officers, so that the force makes the most efficient use of its resources, and importantly, the victim gets a timely response. They also relay all relevant information to the attending officers, so that they can make an informed assessment of risk when they arrive at the scene.

CMC staff consider a repeat victim as anyone who has previously been a victim of abuse. There are no timescales attached to this. Vulnerability is not specifically defined, but control room staff use professional judgement based on the circumstances and the demeanour of the victim. Staff are well trained and question callers to collect as much relevant information as possible, so they can establish risk levels, and send officers to the incident based on this. They have a clear understanding that repeat and vulnerable victims are at greater risk.

Keeping victims safe

Domestic abuse is regarded as important and a priority for the constabulary. It is a clearly stated priority within the police and crime commissioner's (PCC's) police and crime plan. The constabulary has continued to invest in specialist staff to deal with domestic abuse throughout a period of austerity, when other departments have seen their budgets and staffing levels reduced.

There has also been considerable investment in domestic abuse training and information for staff. HMIC found that frontline staff and supervisors dealing with domestic abuse were well trained and took their responsibilities seriously. The

risk to victims of domestic abuse is assessed in all incidents and safety measures put in place to minimise the risk. There is good oversight and supervision of the initial attendance, the risk assessment and the safety planning by both first line supervisors and specialist safeguarding officers. Positive action is encouraged by the constabulary, which means in the majority of incidents, perpetrators are promptly arrested. The quality of investigations is good, officers have significantly improved their evidence gathering at scenes of domestic abuse incidents, regularly obtaining statements from victims, third-party witnesses and providing detailed officer statements. The use of body-worn video cameras is, however, inconsistent across the force.

Management of risk

The constabulary works hard to make victims safer from the first point of contact. HMIC found that there is a strong focus on safeguarding the victim as well as dealing with the offence. There are well-trained and knowledgeable specialist safeguarding officers based in the public protection units (PPUs) and police officers working alongside partners in the two multi-agency safeguarding hubs. Risk to victims is reassessed by the specialists and information shared between partner agencies to ensure that a victim, and any children involved, receive timely support from all relevant services. There is good, daily supervision of all high risk cases by the PPU sergeants. The ethos for the constabulary is to assess risk and allocate resources according to the level of risk.

The constabulary has an active and constructive role in chairing and facilitating the multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). The process is effective and well regarded by partner agencies. Information is exchanged promptly, risks assessed and co-ordinated action taken by all partners to keep victims safe.

Organisational effectiveness for keeping people safe

The constabulary has a process by which any lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews from across the nation are evaluated, and its own processes improved in line with recommendations. The major driver for the creation of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) approach was the lesson learned through a domestic homicide review that a single point for information exchange between agencies was needed.

There are robust processes in place to ensure that high risk victims are kept updated throughout the whole process. Where remand applications are made, an officer attends all court hearings, in order that they can let the victim know the outcome straightaway and address any identified risks. Managing perpetrators is in place for some prison releases, particularly for those deemed

as high risk. However, divisions only receive prison release notifications for offenders they have identified.

Domestic abuse is included when identifying troubled families and vulnerability. They form part of the troubled families' cohorts and are discussed at the daily threat, risk and harm meetings. Local officers are aware of those families and individuals.

Findings

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

Victims of domestic abuse are identified by the constabulary when a call is received in the constabulary's call management centre (CMC). If a victim goes to a police station then public enquiry staff will call for officers to attend and deal with the victim. The constabulary has good IT systems which alert the call handler to repeat callers; they carry out further checks on the police databases to ensure they gather as full a picture as possible, to be able to make a decision as to the appropriate police response. There are also good systems in place to assist the dispatcher in locating and sending the nearest police officers, so that the force makes the most efficient use of its resources, and importantly, the victim gets a timely response. They also relay all relevant information to the attending officers, so that they can make an informed assessment of risk when they arrive at the scene.

CMC staff consider a repeat victim as anyone who has previously been a victim of abuse. There are no timescales attached to this. Vulnerability is not specifically defined, but control room staff use professional judgement based on the circumstances and the demeanour of the victim. Staff are well trained and question callers to collect as much relevant information as possible, so they can establish risk levels, and send officers to the incident based on this. They have a clear understanding that repeat and vulnerable victims are at greater risk.

HMIC found that there is good and robust supervision of the identification and initial response to domestic abuse. Processes are in place to enable the force to assure the quality of this initial response to victims.

The majority of calls about domestic abuse reported to the constabulary are received in the contact management centre (CMC). The calls are dealt with by customer contact advisors (call handlers), who are trained to question the callers to ascertain the circumstances. Once the call handler opens an incident log with the callers details, the police IT system (STORM) automatically identifies if there has been any previous police involvement, they also carry out additional checks on the constabulary's other databases ('SLEUTH' and the protecting vulnerable people databases) to gather as much relevant information as possible to help in assessing the risk faced by the victim, and ensuring the right level of police response. The initial identification of victims of domestic abuse is the responsibility of the customer contact advisors who assess the urgency of the response and grade the call accordingly. Some requests for police help in domestic abuse incidents are reported in person at police

stations. Staff on the enquiry desks at stations are trained to recognise a domestic abuse incident and call for a police officer to deal with the victim.

Call handlers grade domestic abuse incidents as requiring either immediate response grade one (15 minutes), or priority grade two (one hour) if there is judged to be no immediate risk, for example if the perpetrator is no longer at the scene. The incident log is forwarded electronically to dispatchers to send police officers to the incidents. If dispatchers are unable to send someone to attend priority incidents within thirty minutes, the CMC supervisor contacts either the response sergeant or inspector to advise them of the situation.

On rare occasions, domestic abuse incidents would be graded for a scheduled attendance, for example, where the incident has occurred and there is no immediate threat of harm to the victim. The decision not to send either an immediate or priority response but to grade a scheduled attendance needs to be confirmed by the CMC supervisor.

The STORM IT system within the CMC automatically identifies previous calls from the address, which assists in identifying repeat victims. Call handlers ask questions and listen for key factors around the level of risk presented in the immediate situation. Repeat victims are defined as any previous caller to the police; there are no timescales attached to this. Vulnerability is not specifically defined; but call handlers are aware that a vulnerable victim will be at greater risk and they use their professional judgement based on the circumstances and the demeanour of the victim to determine whether there are any circumstances which make the victim particularly vulnerable.

HMIC found that staff and supervisors in the CMC understood that domestic abuse is a key priority and victims should receive a priority response. Dispatch staff use the automatic resource locator system (ARLS) to show the nearest officers within the area of the incident and the automatic vehicle locator system (AVLS) shows the nearest police vehicle. This allows them to direct the most appropriate resources to the incident. However, they were more inclined to use the resource locators for priority graded calls rather than immediate graded calls, where they were more likely to call for any available unit to attend, as they feel this provided a quicker response. CMC staff are all trained to perform both the call handler role and the dispatch role, and alternate between the two, often during the same shift.

We found that most domestic abuse calls are graded for an immediate response. If call handlers decide to downgrade a call, for example, if the perpetrator has departed, then a supervisor authorises that decision. Response sergeants are required to ensure that the appropriate action has been taken and safeguarding measures are in place for the victim before the incident can be closed.

In some instances, call handlers continue researching information after the incident log has been passed to a dispatcher, particularly for incidents that require an immediate response, and will relay the information to the officer while they are en route to the incident, to ensure the attending officers are provided with all available information in relation to the victim, and a history of previous incidents.

CMC staff received their initial training when they joined the constabulary, which included how to identify domestic abuse incidents, appropriate questions to ask and instructions on how to research the relevant databases. Due to the restructuring and changes in the CMC, some of the staff have not received formal training for some years. However, they have received various inputs relating to domestic abuse, including how to use the national decision-making model⁸ to assess the levels of threat, risk and harm for victims. Some of the updates for training have been reliant on computer-based self-learning packages which have not been wholly effective, and are not well regarded by staff.

HMIC found good supervision and oversight of the initial identification and attendance at domestic abuse incidents. CMC supervisors are required to authorise any downgrading of the response time. Response sergeants make an entry on the incident log to confirm that they have discussed the case with the attending officer and have quality assured the incident. Staff within the CMC add a closure code to ensure it is recorded as a domestic abuse incident and summarise the officer's update within the STORM IT system. This provides a summary of the incident if further calls are received.

⁸ The National Decision Model is the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) decision making tool, which has been adopted nationally for use by police forces. It provides a framework of steps to assist an officer in assessing a situation and deciding on appropriate action (including gather information, assess risk, and identify options).

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

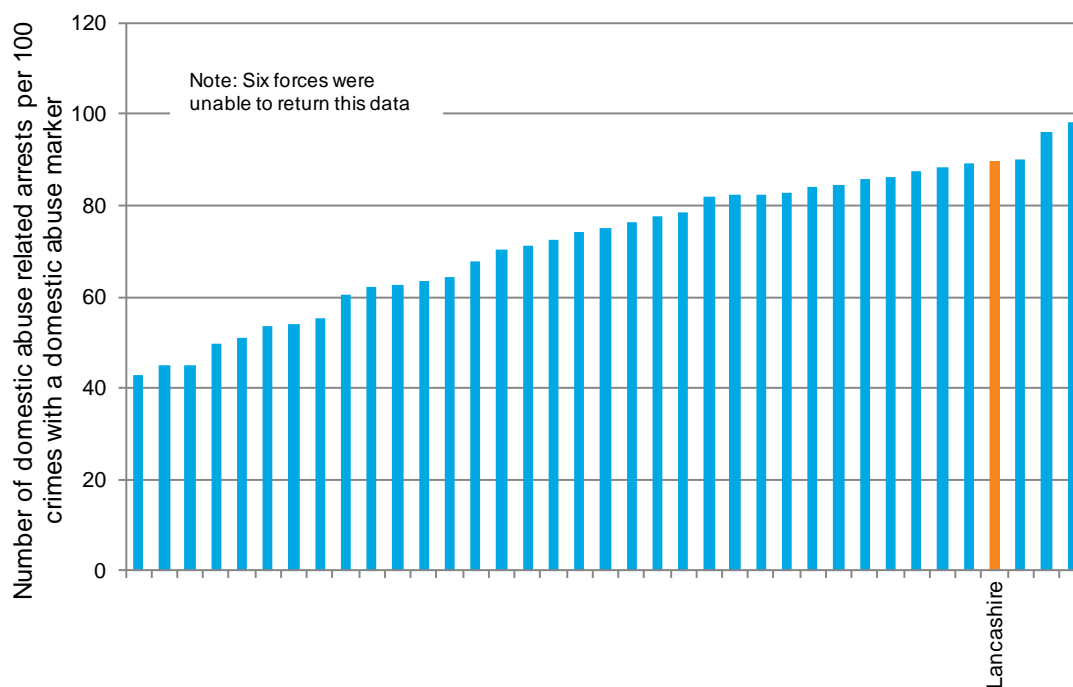
Domestic abuse is regarded as important and a priority for the constabulary. It is a clearly stated priority within the police and crime commissioner's (PCC's) police and crime plan. The constabulary has continued to invest in specialist staff to deal with domestic abuse throughout a period of austerity, when other departments have seen their budgets and staffing levels reduced.

There has also been considerable investment in domestic abuse training and information for staff. HMIC found that frontline staff and supervisors dealing with domestic abuse were well trained and took their responsibilities seriously. The risk to victims of domestic abuse is assessed in all incidents and safety measures put in place to minimise the risk. There is good oversight and supervision of the initial attendance, the risk assessment and the safety planning by both first line supervisors and specialist safeguarding officers. Positive action is encouraged by the constabulary, which means in the majority of incidents, perpetrators are promptly arrested. The quality of investigations is good, officers have significantly improved their evidence gathering at scenes of domestic abuse incidents, regularly obtaining statements from victims, third-party witnesses and providing detailed officer statements. The use of body-worn video cameras is, however, inconsistent across the force.

For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 90⁹ arrests in Lancashire for the 12 months to end of August 2013. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

⁹ 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 2013¹⁰



Source: HMIC data collection

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Lancashire Constabulary and it recognises the risks for domestic abuse victims. Domestic abuse features within the police and crime plan as a strategic priority. The chief constable has ring-fenced the public protection unit budget to provide specialist officers to deal with domestic abuse throughout a period of austerity, where other departments have seen their budgets and staffing levels reduced.

HMIC found that staff understood that domestic abuse is a priority for the constabulary and there is a clear commitment to ‘getting it right first time’ for victims. Supervisors reinforce the importance of domestic abuse at each stage of the process, from the staff within the CMC, the first response, investigation and from safeguarding. The investment in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the incorporation of domestic abuse offenders into the integrated offender management (IOM) initiatives confirmed the importance given to domestic abuse as a constabulary priority.

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

The police and crime commissioner (PCC) holds quarterly reviews regarding domestic abuse with the chief officer group which is embedded in the scrutiny and governance meetings. The PCC has stated that domestic abuse will continue to be a priority for him. Partner agencies working with the constabulary also recognise that domestic abuse is a priority, and that the constabulary has invested in resources to protect, manage and minimise the risk to victims.

Domestic abuse media campaigns have taken place across Lancashire which included 'Handle with care', a poster campaign aimed at female victims. Posters were displayed in prominent public places, such as community centres, libraries, GP surgeries, hospital waiting rooms, as well as other places where victims would have the time to stop and read them. The objective of the campaign was to increase awareness and make vulnerable victims feel safe and able to ask for help. Similarly, young people were targeted through the website 'Trust Ed', identifying behaviours that constitute domestic abuse and the impact it has upon them and their families. This included other groups such as the lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender groups in Blackpool.

HMIC found that staff and officers are well trained and have a good understanding of their role in dealing with domestic abuse. There has been considerable investment in domestic abuse training for staff. They have received regular updates by email, the force's intranet, and newsletters to ensure new learning is communicated. A briefing video outlining policies and the positive action approach has recently been seen by staff. Training in risk assessment, and understanding how to recognise and deal with the full spectrum of domestic abuse, including so-called honour-based violence and forced marriages has been provided. Sergeants' training modules and operational responsibilities include domestic abuse and safeguarding measures for victims. Newly appointed officers receive domestic abuse, coercion, harassment and stalking training as part of the initial probationer learning and development programme.

Incidents of domestic abuse are assessed using the nationally recognised domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool which is completed in all reported incidents of domestic abuse. Officers carry laminated prompt cards to assist them in undertaking the assessment with the victim; they also use their professional judgement to make the assessment. Sergeants ensure DASH risk assessments are completed after every incident and update the incident log to confirm this.

The attending officers' initial risk assessment is reassessed through a triage process by specialist staff working within the public protection units (PPUs) and the MASH to check the accuracy of the risk assessment and to ensure that any additional intelligence from partners is taken into account. The initial action by

the attending officer is determined by the level of risk they have assessed as appropriate in the circumstances. In the majority of cases where it is appropriate the perpetrators are promptly arrested to minimise the immediate risk to the victim.

The constabulary has a positive action approach for dealing with domestic abuse incidents. There is clear understanding of the need to take positive action to ensure victims are safe, and arrests are made when perpetrators are still at the scene. If perpetrators had left prior to officers attending, we found that enquiries continued until they were arrested. Officers also consider separating parties where it is appropriate to reduce the risk of further incidents. Sergeants and inspectors are made aware and take responsibility for safeguarding high risk victims. To improve the safety for victims other measures are also used, such as phones for victims, alarms, and refuges or hotels.

Where domestic abuse has been reported, the safety and welfare of children is paramount. Officers ensured that where children were present they were also spoken to and the risks posed to them were assessed. They included them on the DASH risk assessment for early referral through the MASH to children's social services. Officers and staff we spoke to during our reality testing showed a clear understanding of the importance of safeguarding children when attending domestic abuse incidents and were able to provide examples of their approach in practical terms.

All domestic abuse incidents are initially monitored and supervised by the CMC team leaders. High risk domestic abuse incidents are overseen by either response sergeants or inspectors. The incident log requires a supervisor's update before it can be closed. Ongoing investigations are subsequently supervised by the investigating officers' sergeants.

Risk assessments are monitored and supervised initially by response sergeants, and then by specialists based in the PPU and MASH. However, HMIC found that in practice the checking of the risk assessments by frontline supervisors focused on the completion of a risk assessment form, rather than the quality of the assessment and safety planning. There was a heavy reliance by frontline supervisors on the fact that PPU staff and those working in the MASH would reassess the risk. This means that any delay in the reassessment could mean that there was a delay in appropriate safeguarding measures being put in place to protect victims.

Response officers have significantly improved their evidence gathering at scenes of domestic abuse incidents, regularly obtaining disclosure statements from victims who do not wish to support a prosecution, statements from third

party witnesses and providing detailed witness statements regarding what they have observed.

The crime investigation system known as 'Caseman' allows supervisors access to officers' workloads to monitor the progress and quality of their investigations. Custody processing teams (CPT) have at least one member who is a domestic abuse specialist to provide the specialist knowledge and expertise when dealing with domestic abuse perpetrators. Investigating officers are aware of their responsibility to update victims on the progress of investigations; they do this using the victim management facility within the SLEUTH IT system. Where investigations require handing over between investigating officers or teams, a supervisor has to check and ensure that all the initial enquiries have been completed, where feasible, and the appropriate evidence obtained. Body-worn video cameras can provide an invaluable source of evidence for a domestic abuse prosecution, particularly where a victim may be unwilling to give evidence in court themselves. We found inconsistent use of body cameras across the constabulary, although they are available to officers to use. The constabulary is aware of this and is looking to address this issue.

PPU and CID officers deal with high risk domestic abuse cases. They are experienced and have good investigative abilities to progress cases to a high standard. Similarly, CPTs that deal with medium and standard risk cases have good investigation abilities and are supervised by a detective sergeant.

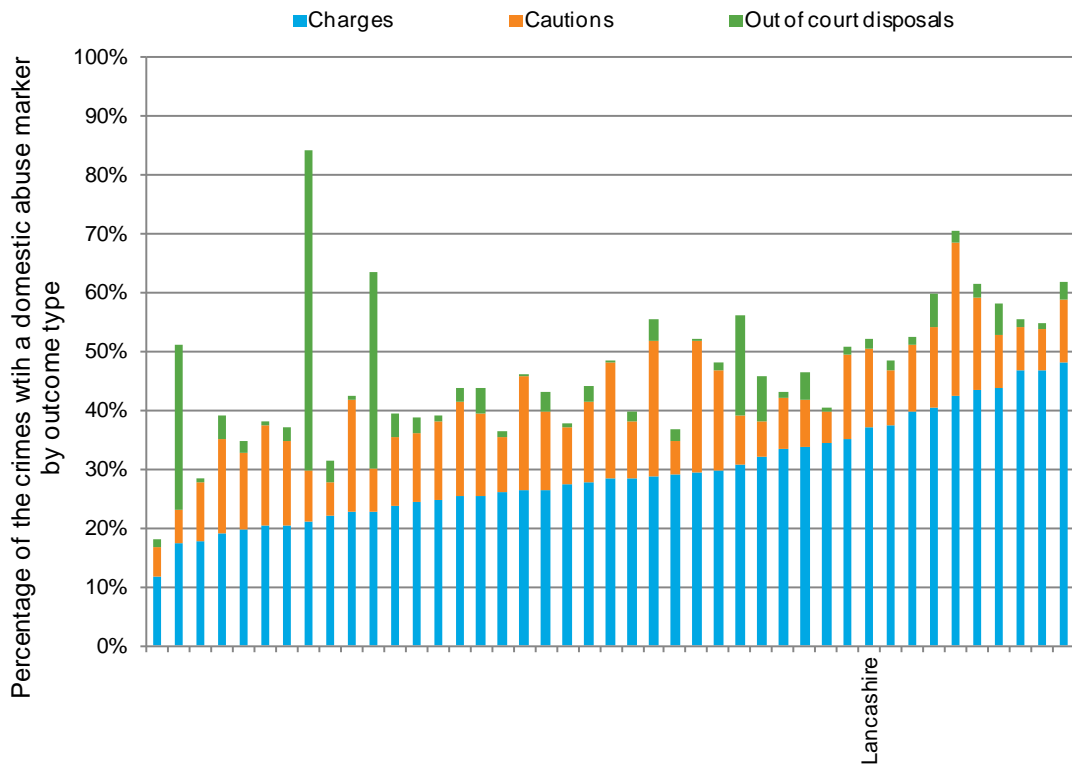
How are victims of domestic abuse made safer as a result of the police response and subsequent action?

The constabulary works hard to make victims safer from the first point of contact. HMIC found that there is a strong focus on safeguarding the victim as well as dealing with the offence. There are well-trained and knowledgeable specialist safeguarding officers based in the public protection units (PPUs) and police officers working alongside partners in the two multi-agency safeguarding hubs. Risk to victims is reassessed by the specialists and information shared between partner agencies to ensure that a victim, and any children involved, receive timely support from all relevant services. There is good, daily supervision of all high risk cases by the PPU sergeants. The ethos for the constabulary is to assess risk and allocate resources according to the level of risk.

The constabulary has an active and constructive role in chairing and facilitating the multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). The process is effective and well regarded by partner agencies. Information is exchanged promptly, risks assessed and co-ordinated action taken by all partners to keep victims safe.

Lancashire recorded 8,841 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes 37 percent resulted in a charge, 13 percent resulted in a caution and 1 percent had an out of court disposal, for example a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Figure 2: Percentage of different outcome types used for crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to 31 August 2013¹¹

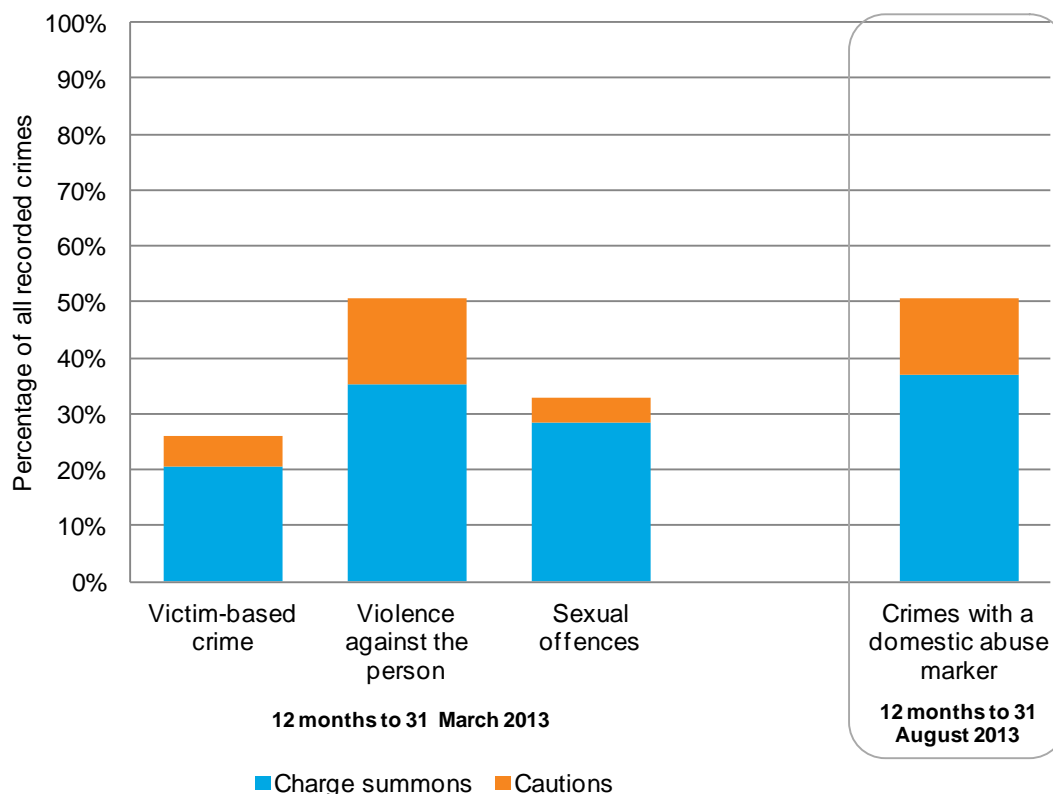


Source: HMIC data collection

Lancashire Constabulary charges a higher proportion of crimes with a domestic abuse marker than recorded victim-based crime. This may indicate that the constabulary 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

All domestic abuse victims are assessed at the scene by the initial attending officer to identify the level of risk posed to them. This initial risk assessment is subsequently reviewed and amended where necessary by staff based within the PPU and the MASH. Detective sergeants based within the PPU also review high risk cases as they come in on a daily basis.

The majority of PPU staff are trained and accredited detectives, who have received domestic abuse training. Joint training has also taken place with partner agencies. Supervisors within the MASH have received a combination of investigative and safeguarding training to fulfil their roles. During reality testing we spoke to a number of officers and staff who felt that they had received sufficient training to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

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

The constabulary works well with partners, and joint working at both a strategic level and at an operational level is highly regarded by partner agencies. The constabulary has two established MASHs with various partners included. One is pan-Lancashire and is based at Leyland. There is a separate MASH covering the borough of Blackburn with Darwen. Police and partners work together to protect, support and safeguard domestic abuse victims, including sharing information and intelligence. However, there is no single IT platform where all the data can be stored and accessed by all the agencies.

There are currently 30 independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) working across Lancashire. These trained independent domestic abuse specialists are jointly funded by the partners, and work alongside the police to protect and support high risk victims.

The integrated offender management (IOM) partnership identifies and works with serious domestic abuse offenders to prevent them from reoffending in the future. The PPU based at Blackpool is co-located with Blackpool Council's children's social care staff in council premises and information sharing with social care is excellent.

The PCC has agreed joint funding over three years up to 2016 to provide co-commissioning and an approach for working with partners to help domestic abuse victims. The PCC is committed to early interventions and the constabulary is one of three forces nationally where 'early intervention' status has been granted for working with families and children, with a focus to reduce victims.

High risk victims of domestic abuse are mainly dealt with by PPU officers. They also deal with 90-95% of perpetrators in high risk cases. The remaining 5-10% of high risk domestic abuse cases are dealt with by the custody processing teams (CPTs), which tends to be for less serious offences but where victims are assessed as high risk. Although the offender and offence is managed by the CPT staff, the responsibility for victim safeguarding remains with the specialist officers in the PPU teams.

In the vast majority of instances CPTs deal with perpetrators who are assessed as posing a medium or standard level of risk to victims. All outstanding perpetrators are discussed at the daily risk, harm and threat meeting, and response officers have responsibility for arresting domestic abuse perpetrators. The PPU detective sergeant retains oversight of the investigation and addresses the safeguarding requirements. Through this process, neighbourhood teams are made aware of who the serious domestic abuse offenders and high risk victims are, in their areas, and neighbourhood staff are routinely asked to contribute to safety plans.

The PPU's review safety plans for all domestic abuse high risk cases within twenty four hours of the incident, and make contact with the victims to update them on progress. The officers based in the MASH review and quality assure the safety plans for medium and standard risk cases which are referred to the PPU's to oversee. Safety plans are recorded by PPU staff within the Caseman recording system, and are formally reviewed at least fortnightly and the records updated by PPU supervisors. The central compliance team contacts each division to check appropriate safety plans are progressing in relation to recent highlighted incidents.

The multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process is effective and well regarded by partner agencies. Police and partner agencies, including social services, health, housing, and IDVAs, meet formally at a MARAC to share information about high risk domestic abuse victims and agree a co-ordinated set of actions to minimise the risk to victims, and support them and their children. The police in Lancashire play an active and constructive role in chairing and facilitating the MARACs. There were previously ten separate people chairing the MARAC meetings across the constabulary. All the MARACs are chaired now by one police staff member. This provides a consistent approach for victims of domestic abuse. The new process has been in place for six months.

There has been a significant increase in the number of high risk victims being referred to the MARACs. Some 42 percent of its adult cases are assessed as high risk, compared with other similar police forces, where the average is 22 percent. The rising number of referrals has been attributed to an increasingly risk averse culture. As a result, the MARAC chair has developed a 'MARAC plus' categorisation to differentiate more complex cases that need wider consideration with relevant partners. HMIC is concerned that the continually increasing caseload for the MARAC meetings may mean that the quality of the outcomes suffers and they become less effective. The workload for the chairperson is very onerous and may not be sustainable. The police and partners are due to undertake a self-assessment of the MARAC process early in 2014, using the Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) evaluation framework.

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

The constabulary has a process by which any lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews from across the nation are evaluated, and its own processes improved in line with recommendations. The major driver for the creation of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) approach was the lesson learned through a domestic homicide review that a single point for information exchange between agencies was needed.

There are robust processes in place to ensure that high risk victims are kept updated throughout the whole process. Where remand applications are made, an officer attends all court hearings, in order that they can let the victim know the outcome straightaway and address any identified risks. Managing perpetrators is in place for some prison releases, particularly for those deemed as high risk. However, divisions only receive prison release notifications for offenders they have identified.

Domestic abuse is included when identifying troubled families and vulnerability. They form part of the troubled families' cohorts and are discussed at the daily threat, risk and harm meetings. Local officers are aware of those families and individuals.

The constabulary has made good progress in tackling high risk perpetrators of domestic abuse and deals with them in a similar way to other types of serious criminal, such as serial burglars. The constabulary has identified 150 serial domestic abuse perpetrators (SDAPs); these are offenders that have committed five or more domestic abuse incidents or offences, with three or more victims. A list of SDAPs is circulated to each division by the constabulary's intelligence unit. High risk perpetrators are also identified at daily briefings within the local teams.

Where a domestic abuse perpetrator with a high risk victim is due for release from prison, the PPU will manage the process, updating the victim and reassessing the risk that the prison release presents. However, local policing divisions only receive prison release notifications for offenders they have identified. There is a reliance on the Probation Service and IOM teams to keep divisions informed when perpetrators are released from prison. This may mean that some lower risk victims may not be updated on the release of a perpetrator.

When remand applications are made, PPU staff attend court to liaise and assist prosecutors, and obtain the results from court proceedings, so that they can keep the victim updated and reassess the risk as necessary. When perpetrators are bailed from court, PPU staff advise victims and review safeguarding measures. When perpetrators are released on police bail, it is the responsibility of the officer in the case to contact and inform the victim and manage the safety plan.

Repeat victims who have historically called the police regularly, are not reviewed where there have been no further calls from them, to find out why. The constabulary accepts this may be a risk and is considering developing this area of work.

The constabulary is working with partners to identify and provide co-ordinated support to help 'troubled families' turn their lives around and give their children a better start in life. The police recognise that domestic abuse is a common feature within these families, and use it as a factor in identifying those families to include in the cohort. The families are discussed at the daily threat, risk and harm meetings where appropriate safeguarding is tasked to teams and officers.

The constabulary has a process and arrangements in place to ensure that any lessons learned through domestic homicide reviews (DHRs) are taken into account. Currently there are two review officers to ensure consistency and continuity. Lessons learned have been communicated to staff using the constabulary's Context leaflet and also through continuous personal development (CPD) events, emails and training. One of the major drivers which led to the establishment of the MASH was the findings of a DHR that a single point for information exchange between agencies was needed.

The constabulary continues to measure detection rates. It has distinguished between non-domestic and domestic incidents to provide a better picture. There remains a high rate of detection for high risk victims. A quarterly performance review of domestic abuse for the first quarter of 2013 was produced from the PPU. Among a broad range of themes monitored are incident numbers, detection rates, repeat MARACs, CPS attrition rates and harassment detections. Performance forms part of quarterly performance reviews.

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.

The constabulary should:

1. review the quality of assurance by frontline supervisors with an emphasis on checking the quality of the assessment rather than the completion of the risk assessment form.
2. review the training currently provided to all staff to ensure they understand coercive control, stalking, harassment and so-called honour-based violence.
3. review the use of body cameras to capture and record evidence of domestic abuse incidents, and assist with victimless prosecutions.
4. review the number of IDVAs, particularly in areas where there are substantial volumes of high risk domestic abuse victims.
5. review the significant increase in the number of high risk cases going to the MARACs, to ensure that they can remain effective.
6. review the workload of the MARAC chair to provide resilience for the arduous nature of her role.
7. conduct a Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) re-evaluation self-assessment process of the MARAC.
8. review the serial domestic abuse perpetrators (SDAPs) and evaluate the levels of risk the individuals pose, to assist in providing effective interventions.
9. review repeat victims where there have been no further calls from them, to find out why no further calls have been made.

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.