



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Warwickshire Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We inspected all police forces in England and Wales, interviewing senior and operational leads in forces, holding focus groups with frontline staff and partners, and carrying out visits to police stations (which were unannounced) to test the reality of each force's approach with frontline officers. 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 Warwickshire Police and at the end of the report we set out some recommendations. These recommendations should be considered in conjunction with the recommendations for all forces made in the national report.⁶ A glossary of frequently used terms also appears at the end of the report.

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

Domestic abuse in Warwickshire⁷

Calls for assistance



In Warwickshire, domestic abuse accounts for 5% of calls to the police for assistance. The force was unable to provide the number of these calls that were from repeat victims.

Crime

4%

Domestic abuse accounts for 4% of all recorded crime.

Assault with intent

18%

Warwickshire recorded 191 assaults with intent to cause serious harm, of these 34 were domestic abuse related. This is 18% of all assaults with intent to cause serious harm recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Assault with injury

30%

The force also recorded 2,377 assaults with injury, of these 702 were domestic abuse related. This is 30% of all assaults with injury recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

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

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

Harassment

17%

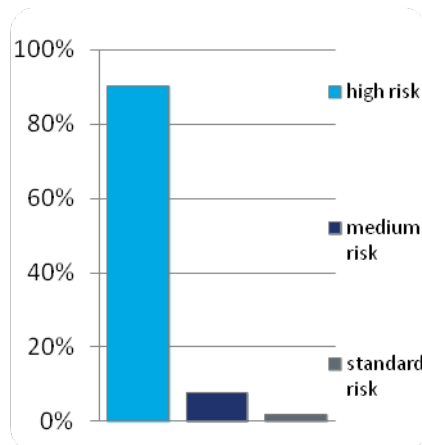
The force recorded 380 harassment offences, of these 65 were domestic abuse related. This is 17% of all harassment offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Sexual offences

5%

The force also recorded 522 sexual offences, of these 27 were domestic abuse related. This is 5% of all sexual offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Risk levels



On 22 October 2013 Warwickshire had 249 active domestic abuse cases; 90% were high risk, 8% were medium risk, and 2% were standard risk.

Arrests



For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded, there were 63 arrests in Warwickshire. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

Outcomes



Warwickshire recorded 1,281 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes, 19% resulted in a charge, 16% resulted in a caution and, 4% had an out of court disposal, for example, a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Executive summary

HMIC found that Warwickshire Police provides a good service to victims of domestic abuse. The public in Warwickshire can have confidence that the force is working well with partners to tackle domestic abuse and keep victims safe. Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the force and staff demonstrate a high level of commitment and understanding throughout the organisation. However, there is still some room for improvement and this report outlines areas where the force could further strengthen its response.

Identifying victims

Victims of domestic abuse are identified generally by the force through calls to the force operations and communication centre (OCC). Staff in the OCC are trained to question callers about the likely threat, harm and risk to the victim or anyone else who may be present at the incident. Staff access the force intelligence systems and provide information to the attending officer, preparing them for the situation they will find themselves managing. The databases are not integrated, so operators need to access different systems to find the relevant information. The OCC operators usually send a uniformed officer immediately or within an hour, dependent on the circumstances reported. The domestic abuse incident log will not be closed until the sergeant has reviewed the action taken and endorsed the log. Domestic abuse incidents are flagged for the specialist staff so, if a risk assessment was required but not submitted, it could be identified. However, there is no robust quality assurance process in relation to the actions of the call taker and the service provided.

Keeping victims safe

Domestic abuse is a priority for the police and crime commissioner (PCC) and the force. The policies and practices for officers and staff who respond to domestic abuse incidents have recently been reviewed. A joint policy is being developed relating to Warwickshire and West Mercia Police because the two forces are delivering their services in a formal alliance. They are doing this to improve efficiency and meet current and future funding challenges. The forces are making the best use of economies of scale but delivering their services locally. The assistant chief constable (ACC) protective services maintains a regular oversight of the activities of both forces to ensure that the quality of service to victims of domestic abuse is maintained and improved.

Officers and staff have received training in the use of the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment. This risk assessment must be completed for each victim of domestic abuse. The compliance and quality assurance of the initial attendance and risk assessment process is the subject

of robust scrutiny. When a crime has been committed, officers are required to gather the available evidence at the earliest opportunity. However, they are hampered by not having access to visual recording devices – in particular, the body-worn cameras. The attending officer is not always the officer who investigates the crime, but the crimes are locally allocated to the person with the appropriate skill and knowledge to conduct an effective investigation.

Management of risk

The force provides an enhanced service to the victims of domestic abuse who are assessed as being at the greatest risk of harm. The force has one harm assessment unit (HAU) that has dedicated specialist staff to assess the risk to victims of domestic abuse and provide support to those at the highest risk of harm. The unit also ensures that information is exchanged with partner agencies and the appropriate referrals are made with regard to children who may be in need of support or at risk of harm.

There are generally good relationships between the police and partner agencies. The force is actively engaged in the three local multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), where multi-agency support for victims assessed as high risk is provided. There is good support from the independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) who have access to local police stations and support victims in the specialist courts. There is good evidence to show that the force works with partners to reduce the risk of harm to victims. There is a Warwickshire domestic abuse strategy that provides direction and focus for all the partner agencies to work together to reduce the harm caused.

Organisational effectiveness for keeping people safe

The force is continually seeking to improve the service to domestic abuse victims, and the new head of protecting vulnerable people (PVP) is reviewing the current practices and effectiveness of the PVP teams. However, the force does not assess the nature and scope of domestic abuse to improve their understanding of the impact in their communities. The force recognises the need to focus on those perpetrators who cause repeated harm and are looking at ways to identify 'serial perpetrators' and to manage them in a similar way to persistent offenders of other types of crime.

There is no effective performance or management information being used to establish what methods and resources are helping to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse. The force has invested in specialist staff but would benefit from understanding whether this approach is more effective.

Findings

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

Victims of domestic abuse are identified generally by the force through calls to the force operations and communication centre (OCC). Staff in the OCC are trained to question callers about the likely threat, harm and risk to the victim or anyone else who may be present at the incident. Staff access the force intelligence systems and provide information to the attending officer, preparing them for the situation they will find themselves managing. The databases are not integrated, so operators need to access different systems to find the relevant information. The OCC operators usually send a uniformed officer immediately or within an hour, dependent on the circumstances reported. The domestic abuse incident log will not be closed until the sergeant has reviewed the action taken and endorsed the log. Domestic abuse incidents are flagged for the specialist staff so, if a risk assessment was required but not submitted, it could be identified. However, there is no robust quality assurance process in relation to the actions of the call taker and the service provided.

Victims of domestic abuse are identified by Warwickshire Police through calls to the OCC, attendance at stations or by other agencies, such as health and children's services or at a MARAC. Most incidents and crimes are reported through the OCC. Within the OCC, there are 'call handlers' and 'controllers'. Initial assessments from the circumstances reported are made by the call handler against a generic risk assessment based on the likely threat, harm and risk to a victim. The force generally sends a response to every report of domestic abuse, immediately or within one hour. There are occasions when an appointment will be made and it is usually at the victim's request. The call handlers need first to be satisfied that this will not put the victim at risk.

The force has a procedure and checklist that call handlers should follow when responding to reports of domestic abuse. This includes the location and identity of the caller; the location of the suspect; whether the victim or any children have been injured; the severity of any injury and whether medical assistance is required; and whether any children are present and safe. Extensive guidance and question sets are available to call handlers for domestic abuse, harassment and stalking. However, it is not mandatory to use the question sets and they are used inconsistently.

There is an agreed force definition of 'repeat' victim domestic abuse, which is a second incident in a 12-month period. A 'vulnerable' victim is not specifically

defined, but staff in the OCC ask the caller questions to assess their needs and identify whether they are vulnerable. All staff understand the force definition of a repeat victim and identified that, when responding to a repeat or vulnerable victim, it influenced the way they responded and the service they provided. Call handlers have access to force databases to identify previous incidents relating to victims, and there is a specific public protection database (CATS) that contains all previously reported domestic abuse incidents with the risk assessment information.

The CATS system and the other force databases are not integrated. This means that the call handlers can carry out checks on the systems, which include intelligence, incident logs and crime investigations, but it is left to their discretion which systems are checked. This information is used to help them assess the risk to a caller at the first point of contact. They inform the attending officers so they can effectively manage the incident they are responding to. Officers feel they are generally provided with good quality intelligence when attending incidents. The call handlers and controllers also have access to an intelligence team within the OCC that is available at all times. The intelligence staff can abstract intelligence from databases that have restricted access and conduct more in-depth research.

The training of staff who have contact with victims of domestic abuse is inconsistent. Most staff have received training relating to the DASH risk assessment process but some indicated they would benefit from more up to date training that was relevant to their role. The staff HMIC spoke to had a good understanding of the complexities of domestic abuse.

'Live time' supervision takes place in the OCC, but it is the responsibility of the individual call handlers and controllers to highlight more serious incidents to their supervisor. An incident log is not finalised until the attending officers' sergeant has updated it, which takes place after they have reviewed the action taken and assessment of risk to the victim. If an officer attends an incident of domestic abuse and does not complete a risk assessment, the log will be tagged for the attention of the harm assessment unit (HAU). While every domestic abuse incident is reviewed by a uniformed sergeant, the initial response by the call handler is not reviewed.

The force does not have a robust process for assessing the quality of service to the caller or the initial action taken in the control room. Supervisors are expected to retrospectively check the work of call handlers, but there is no standard way of recording results or set number of calls to review. As a result, the force does not know whether it is consistently dealing empathetically with victims or correctly assessing their risk and delivering an appropriate service.

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

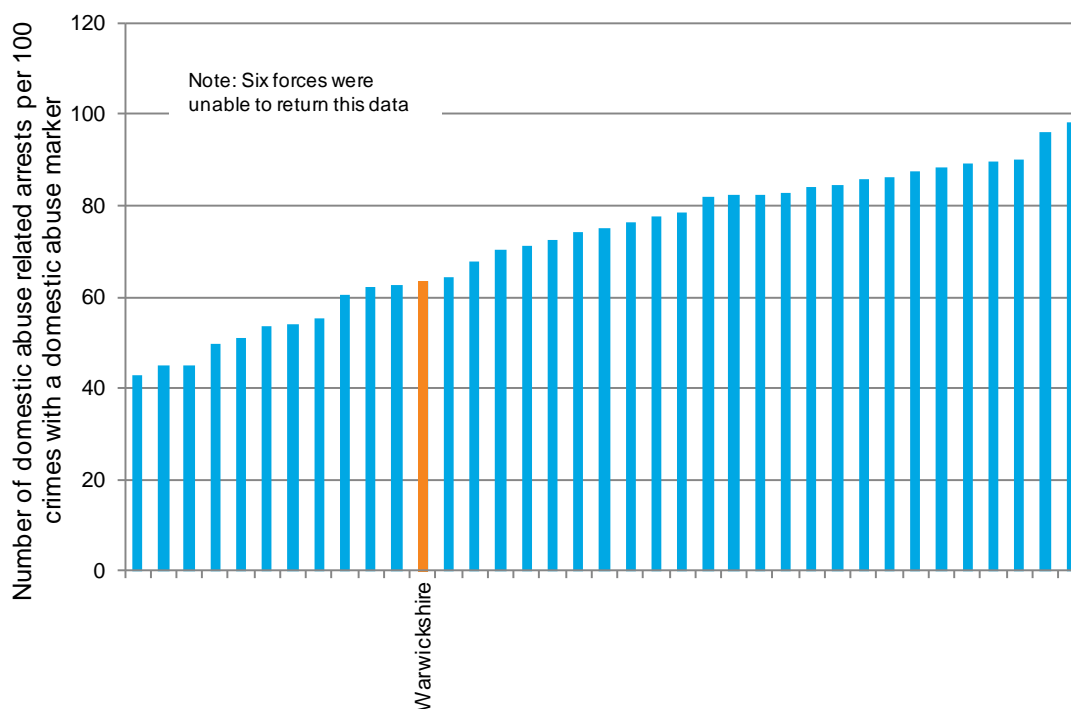
Domestic abuse is a priority for the police and crime commissioner (PCC) and the force. The policies and practices for officers and staff who respond to domestic abuse incidents have recently been reviewed. A joint policy is being developed relating to Warwickshire and West Mercia Police because the two forces are delivering their services in a formal alliance. They are doing this to improve efficiency and meet current and future funding challenges. The forces are making the best use of economies of scale but delivering their services locally. The assistant chief constable (ACC) protective services maintains a regular oversight of the activities of both forces to ensure that the quality of service to victims of domestic abuse is maintained and improved.

Officers and staff have received training in the use of the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment. This risk assessment must be completed for each victim of domestic abuse. The compliance and quality assurance of the initial attendance and risk assessment process is the subject of robust scrutiny. When a crime has been committed, officers are required to gather the available evidence at the earliest opportunity. However, they are hampered by not having access to visual recording devices – in particular, the body-worn cameras. The attending officer is not always the officer who investigates the crime, but the crimes are locally allocated to the person with the appropriate skill and knowledge to conduct an effective investigation.

For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded, there were 63 arrests in Warwickshire. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.⁸

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

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



Source: HMIC data collection

Domestic abuse is a priority for the force and it forms part of the force strategic assessment. At the time of the inspection, a new policy was still in draft form ready for implementation. The policy relates to the police response by both Warwickshire and West Mercia Police because both forces are delivering their services jointly in a formal alliance. The forces are sharing some of their managers but still delivering their services locally. The protective services assistant chief constable (ACC) maintains a regular oversight of the activities of both forces to ensure the quality of service to victims of domestic abuse is maintained and improved. The ACC is also leading on the development of a new force domestic abuse strategy that is awaiting implementation. The strategy focuses on four strands: prevention; provision of service; partnership working and criminal justice outcomes.

HMIC found that officers and staff placed importance on providing a good quality service to victims of domestic abuse. They were not able to identify it as a specific force priority through any performance reporting mechanism as other

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

areas of business, but through the daily tasking and briefing process it was clear it was important.

Most domestic abuse incidents reported to the police are attended by uniformed patrol officers in the first instance. The patrol officers cover a 24/7 shift pattern and respond to calls that require immediate service from the police. The officers are expected to talk with the person who made the call and to the victims of domestic abuse on their own, if they were not the caller, to establish the facts. Warwickshire Police has a policy of taking positive action in all domestic abuse incidents. When a crime has occurred, HMIC found that most officers understand this to mean arresting the perpetrator.

It is the responsibility of the attending officer to gather available evidence for the investigation. This includes taking a written statement from the victim, noting any injuries or signs of a disturbance, having them photographed and preserving forensic evidence. Officers do not have sufficient access to working body worn cameras or other means of taking photographs to capture the evidence on every occasion. This means that vital evidence may be lost, which will affect any subsequent criminal prosecution.

Attending officers are also required to assess the risk of harm to the victim and use the DASH risk assessment that is used by most police forces and approved by the Association of Chief Police Officers. Officers have all been trained in the use of the DASH; however, officers and staff have received different levels of domestic abuse training, which means that there is an inconsistent level of understanding and knowledge across the force.

The DASH risk assessment tool is a series of questions that officers ask victims of domestic abuse and the answers are then entered onto an electronic database. The answers provided, along with the officers' professional judgement, are the basis for the risk level of victims. This relates to the likely level of risk of harm and will be defined as high, medium or standard. Officers generally check the force databases to establish if there is any other information that can assist with their investigation after they have spoken with the victims. Their sergeants review the risk assessment and the details of the incident; they can alter the grade and provide further safeguarding guidance to reduce the risk of harm. The incident log that has been created in the OCC will not be closed unless the sergeant has checked it and recorded their supervision.

The force takes into consideration the protection of children when responding to reports of domestic abuse and has adopted some new practices to ensure their welfare is considered. The OCC staff ask whether children are present when a domestic abuse incident is reported. The operators sometimes support attending officers by making enquiries with the local authority as to whether

there are concerns about the welfare of a child. The checking of children who are present when officers respond to reports of domestic abuse is routine practice across the force. The children's details are recorded and forwarded to the specialist HAU along with the details of the incident and the DASH risk assessment.

The attending officer establishes whether the incident reported amounts to a crime. The most common reports are physical assaults, which are classified as crimes and would initiate a police investigation. Officers are required to collect evidence to establish whether there is sufficient to prosecute the perpetrator of any crime. The allocation of crime investigations is carried out at a local level and, in general terms, crimes where the injury to the victim is serious or where the offending behaviour of the perpetrator warrants a more skilled investigation are managed by detectives. There are also detectives in the HAU who should investigate the crimes that are associated with the victims graded as 'high' following the risk assessment process. This means that the most serious and high-risk crimes are investigated by officers and staff with the appropriate skills.

Every domestic abuse incident is reviewed in the HAU, this provides consistent quality assurance of the thresholds applied across the force. Audits are conducted regarding the compliance and quality of DASH risk assessments, and these are reviewed by managers.

The force holds daily management meetings when incidents and crimes of note are discussed and resources prioritised according to demand. Domestic abuse incidents feature in this meeting if they relate to a high-risk victim or where the perpetrator has not yet been arrested. The chair of the meeting allocates tasks that are tracked to ensure they are carried out.

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

The force provides an enhanced service to the victims of domestic abuse who are assessed as being at the greatest risk of harm. The force has one harm assessment unit (HAU) that has dedicated specialist staff to assess the risk to victims of domestic abuse and provide support to those at the highest risk of harm. The unit also ensures that information is exchanged with partner agencies and the appropriate referrals are made with regard to children who may be in need of support or at risk of harm.

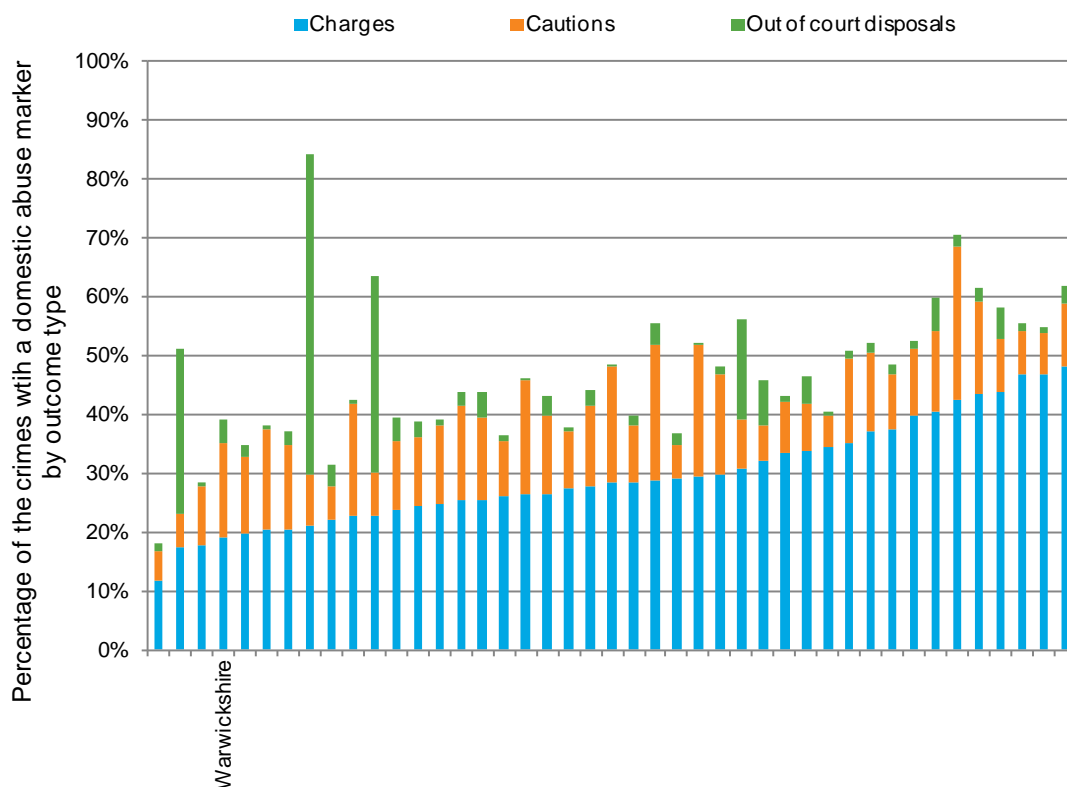
There are generally good relationships between the police and partner agencies. The force is actively engaged in the three local multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), where multi-agency support for victims assessed as high risk is provided. There is good support from the independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) who have access to local police stations

and support victims in the specialist courts. There is good evidence to show that the force works with partners to reduce the risk of harm to victims. There is a Warwickshire domestic abuse strategy that provides direction and focus for all the partner agencies to work together to reduce the harm caused.

Warwickshire recorded 1,281 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013¹⁰. Of these crimes 19 percent resulted in a charge, 16 percent resulted in a caution and 4 percent had an out of court disposal, for example, a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

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

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

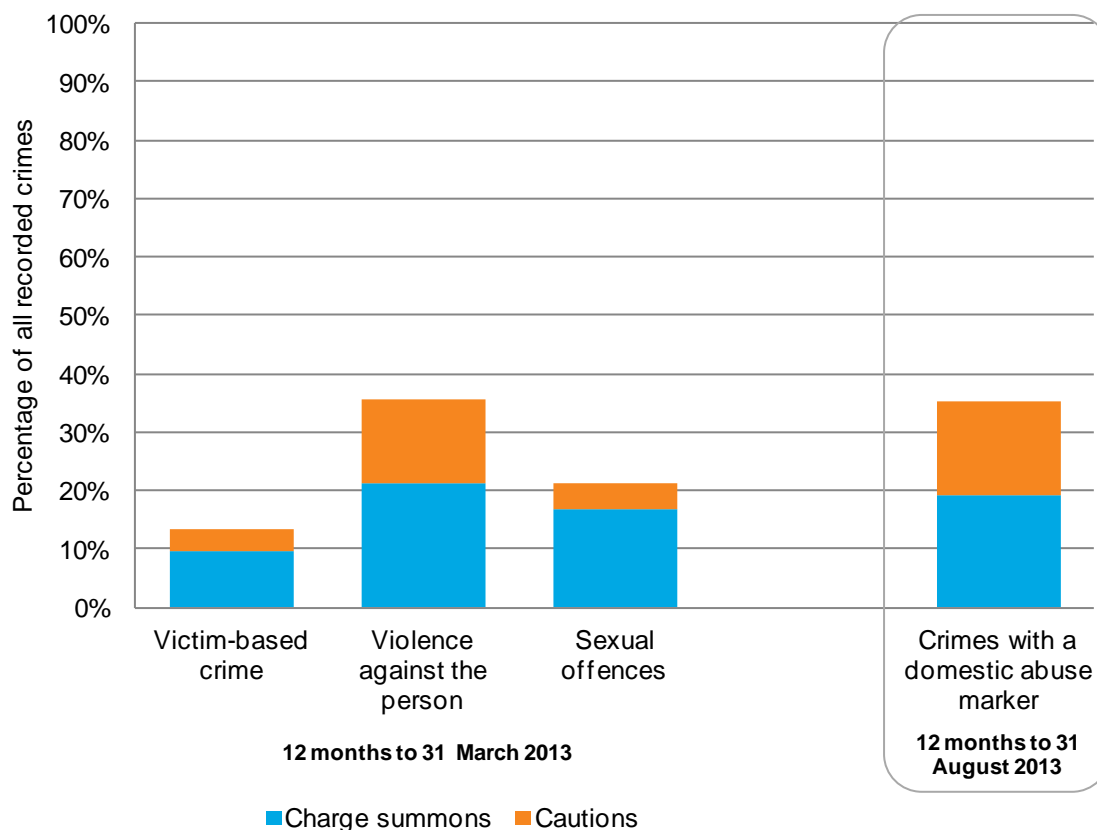


Source: HMIC data collection

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

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

The force has a HAU, managed by a PVP business co-ordinator. It has specialist domestic abuse reduction managers (DARMS). The role of the HAU is to manage and re-assess risks relating to vulnerable people of all ages, it provides a central referral process for the force. The unit reviews every DASH risk assessment and ensures that there has been an appropriate response to the risks identified. It creates a log on CATS and sends letters to both victims and perpetrators signposting both to support services, unless it is not appropriate based on their professional judgement. The staff then exchange information between internal departments and external partner agencies.

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

The CATS is a database that is used for PVP cases. The harm reduction plans relating to high risk victims are maintained on CATS. They are regularly reviewed and, when risk is mitigated, the risk level is reduced. The entries on CATS are recorded in chronological order and include information from other agencies and intelligence updates. CATS is not accessible to everyone in the force because there is information that would require sensitive handling. If feasible to sanitise, the safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs) would benefit from access to some of the information. This would mean that they could use the information about victims and perpetrators to make victims safer in their area.

Incidents that relate to a victim assessed as high-risk are allocated to domestic abuse risk managers (DARMS) who are responsible for preparing bespoke harm reduction plans for each victim. The high-risk victims are referred to a MARAC and offered the support of an IDVA. There are good working relationships between the police and the IDVAs, enhanced by their working in some of the police stations when required.

The force has good working relationships with partner agencies and the police are fully engaged in a number of domestic abuse related meetings. There is an overarching governance meeting for the five MARACs that ensure consistency and a good quality service to victims. There is good engagement at the MARACs where representatives from agencies meet and work together to reduce the risk of harm to individual victims. The MARACs are held on a monthly basis, cases are discussed in the absence of the victim and all agencies exchange information and agree on activities to protect and support them. The IDVAs attend the MARACs and are generally the key individuals who provide the best support for the victim.

Victims who are assessed as medium and standard risk are allocated to the SNTs. The harm assessment unit are responsible for the continual assessment of risk as new information is received, internally and externally, and work with the SNTs to ensure that risk is managed appropriately. The SNTs attend vulnerable people meetings, which are multi-agency meetings where vulnerable people are discussed at a local level and solutions and support are identified to safeguard them from harm. Families in which domestic abuse takes place are discussed in these meetings.

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

The force is continually seeking to improve the service to domestic abuse victims, and the new head of protecting vulnerable people (PVP) is reviewing the current practices and effectiveness of the PVP teams. However, the force does not assess the nature and scope of domestic abuse to improve their understanding of the impact in their communities. The force recognises the need to focus on those perpetrators who cause repeated harm and are looking at ways to identify 'serial perpetrators' and to manage them in a similar way to persistent offenders of other types of crime.

There is no effective performance or management information being used to establish what methods and resources are helping to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse. The force has invested in specialist staff but would benefit from understanding whether this approach is more effective.

After arrest, perpetrators are interviewed and either released from custody or remanded to appear at court. The risk to the victim is reviewed to ensure the safeguarding measures in place are sufficient. It is the responsibility of the investigating officer to inform the victim what is happening to the perpetrator and to consider any additional safeguarding measures. The IDVAs are actively involved in the domestic abuse court cases and there are specialist domestic violence courts to effectively manage domestic abuse cases. When possible, the IDVAs keep victims informed of court results. In the event of weekend court appearances, detectives will attend the court if a remand in custody is applied for and then update the victim of the outcome from the court.

When perpetrators are released from prison, the supervisors in the domestic abuse units should be informed through the prison information process, however the reliability of this process is not known and the information is sometimes received from different sources. Where the information is received in the DAU the victim is informed and the risk is reassessed.

Perpetrators who abuse more than one unconnected victim, moving from relationship to relationship, are known as serial perpetrators. Forces should know who their serial perpetrators are so that they can actively try to reduce the harm they cause. The force has not developed a programme to identify and manage their serial perpetrators. There is an integrated offender management team in Warwickshire but they are focused on offenders who are committing serious acquisitive crime and do not include violent offenders.

The force does not have a current domestic abuse profile to understand the extent of domestic abuse across the force. An analytical profile detailing victim, offender and location profiling would assist the force and partners in identifying specific people or areas to focus on, and the most appropriate resources to deal with the problem.

The force is considering trialling work to look at the demand linked to same victim/multiple offender and same offender/multiple victim combinations to see where the opportunities are for early intervention, but this is in the very early stages. The force has commissioned some work to look at the seasonal aspects of domestic abuse and the likely impact of the World Cup, which demonstrates that they are trying to gain a greater understanding of the impact of domestic abuse and put some preventative tactics in place.

The force is not driven by performance targets but there is a desire to understand whether resources and tactics are making a positive difference and serving the needs of the community. Domestic abuse is featured in the force strategic assessment but there is no current associated framework or performance measures to help managers focus the activities of their staff. The head of PVP is new in post and is developing a meaningful suite of measures that should be in place by April 2014. This should help to ensure that domestic abuse activities are focused on delivering a good service to victims.

The alliance has set up a governance and oversight panel that is chaired by the ACC and reviews all domestic homicide reviews and serious case reviews. The intention is that the force learns from these cases and keeps staff informed to improve their effectiveness and change practices if necessary. This appears to be in the early stages of development. HMIC found that staff had not received any recent information relating to 'lessons learned'.

Recommendations

As a result of this inspection, HMIC has developed recommendations that 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 implement a robust quality assurance process that provides systematic audits of domestic abuse calls in the OCC.
2. The force should conduct a training needs analysis to establish what domestic abuse training is required across the force, and develops a timed implementation plan.
3. The force should consider options to provide officers with effective mobile equipment to capture early photographic evidence at domestic abuse incidents.
4. The force should consider increasing the access to the public protection CATS database for staff who are likely to have contact with victims of domestic abuse.
5. The force should commission a comprehensive domestic abuse problem profile at a force level.
6. The force should develop a programme to identify and manage serial perpetrators of domestic abuse.

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.