



HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE

Response Date:22/08/2024

2024/751 - Domestic Abuse Policy

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

The latest Domestic Abuse Policy used by Police Officers who respond to cases of Domestic Abuse. I am specifically interested in the Operational Policy used by police Officers when dealing with cases of domestic abuse. The purpose of this request is based upon research that I am carrying out.

Please find attached.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 20/08/2024



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NORTH WALES
POLICE**

DOMESTIC ABUSE PRACTICE GUIDE

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PRACTICE GUIDE

Version No	Date	Author	Changes
0.1		Mike Taggart	Transferred to new corporate template.
0.2		Neil Coppack	Updated and addition of DA In Workplace Guidance link.
1.0	06/03/23	DCI Sophie Change	Final agreed version
1.1	09/01/2024	Kerry Sidney	Updated hyperlinks for CCB guidance, VCOP guidance and Stalking or Harassment APP.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance is required to ensure Domestic Abuse (DA) related incidents are correctly identified and investigated with the overarching aim of reducing risk to those most in danger.

It supports the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice – Domestic Abuse Module on Domestic Abuse related crimes and incidents.

The approach of North Wales Police to incidents of Domestic Abuse will be one of risk management. Our aim will be to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide, increasing the safety, health and wellbeing of victims, as well as any children.

This objective is over-arching in that even where a victim does not wish to pursue a criminal prosecution, we will use all appropriate preventative options to reduce risk and safeguard the victim and wider family as necessary.

This guidance will ensure our aim to keep people safe is met and the correct safety measures are adopted to suit the needs of the individual.

The priorities of North Wales Police in responding to Domestic Abuse are

- To protect the lives of adults and children who are at risk as a result of domestic abuse.
- To investigate all reports of domestic abuse.
- To facilitate effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system and other routes as appropriate.
- To adopt a proactive, multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing domestic abuse.

This practice guide and its supporting documents provide direction and clarity on how the Force deals with domestic abuse while incorporating the phased implementation of the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**.

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

This guidance should be used by **all** Police Officers and Police Staff dealing with any incidents of Domestic Abuse; links to relevant subject areas are included at the end of this document.

3. DOMESTIC ABUSE DEFINITION

Definition of domestic abuse S.1 Domestic Abuse Act 2021

*Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—
A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.*

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following: -

- *physical or sexual abuse.*
- *violent or threatening behaviour.*
- **controlling or coercive behaviour.**
- *economic abuse.*
- *psychological, emotional or other abuse.*

The definition includes so called 'honour' based violence (HBV), female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM). Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

i) **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.'

ii) **Coercive behaviour** is defined as:

'an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.' E.g.:

- Isolating victim from friends and family
- Controlling victim's money
- Repeatedly putting victim down
- Humiliating, degrading and dehumanising victim

Controlling & Coercive Behaviour (CCB) is a core part of domestic violence. As such the extension does not represent a fundamental change in the definition. However, it does highlight the importance of recognising coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

iii) **Personally connected** is defined as:

Two people are "personally connected" to each other if any of the following apply –

- they are, or have been, married to each other;
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child.
 - "child" means a person under the age of 18 years;
- They are relatives.

iv) **Children as victims of domestic abuse**

Where the behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is domestic abuse.

A victim of domestic abuse includes a child who—

- sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
- is related to A or B.

The definition does not in any way supersede or replace statutory safeguarding requirements under the Children's Act 1989, however the following more commonly occurring scenarios will also fall within the new definition and will be subject of domestic abuse procedures:

- An assault between siblings aged 16 and 17 years.
- A parental assault on a 16/17-year-old child.
- A 16/17-year-old child assault on a parent or other 16+ year's family member.

Further guidance is available - Controlling and Coercive Behaviour statutory Guidance Framework

4. LOCAL PROCEDURES

When dealing with Domestic Abuse incidents officers must:

- Provide all victims, who come into direct contact with police as a result of them or a third party reporting incidents of domestic abuse, with a Domestic Abuse 'Z Card'. Z Cards provide basic information on how victims of Domestic Abuse can access support from agencies. Z Cards are available in English & Welsh.
- When a victim is assessed as '**High Risk**' based on the Domestic Abuse risk assessment or in the officer's professional judgement then this must be brought to the immediate attention of the JCC.
- Once notified of a High Risk domestic related crime by the officer at the scene, the JCC will contact the Patrol Inspector.
- Investigation ownership will be dependent on the Crime Allocation Triage (CAT) outcome.
- The initial attending officer will remain responsible for taking positive action. Often this means making an arrest provided the grounds exist and it is a necessary and proportionate response. *Officers must be able to justify the decision not to arrest in those circumstances.* In some situations, other positive approaches may be more appropriate. Domestic abuse can occur where the conduct does not amount to a criminal offence and a criminal justice outcome is not possible.
- Priorities for attending officers include
 - Ensuring immediate safety
 - Building rapport
 - Carrying out a thorough initial investigation (golden hour principles)
 - Identifying risk (i.e., suspect a serial offender)
 - Initiating initial safety planning, including:
 - Taking positive action
 - Target hardening
 - Civil orders such as - DVPN/O, SPO, DVDS, CPN/O, Restraining or Non-molestation Order applications.
 - Ensuring a thorough handover takes place, where applicable.
 - Submission of an EOEL:6 / CID 16 to enable appropriate safeguarding and information sharing with partners.
- The approved North Wales Police Risk Assessment model is DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking & Harassment & Honour Based Violence). DASH questions are embedded in the EOEL:6 referral document on RMS. *North Wales Police will be implementing the new DARA risk assessment, endorsed by the College of Policing in 2023.*
 - The first 12 questions on DASH relate to CCB which will assist officers to identify S.76 Serious Crime Act 2015 offences.
 - If a victim responds 'Yes' to **any** of the first 12 DASH questions, officers **MUST** consider CCB offences further and initiate investigation.
 - All answers provided by the victim to the DASH questions must be recorded.
 - When victims refuse to answer DASH questions the submitting officer must use their professional judgement based on their observations, knowledge of the victim/family (including previous interaction with the family and/or RMS interrogation) must be

documented in the DASH in order to assess the current risk posed, identify all potential offences and take positive action.

- Question 5 of DASH
 - ***Does the Perpetrator constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you?*** If a victim responds 'Yes' – officers **MUST** complete the Stalking Screening Tool and ensure any additional offences of harassment or stalking are recorded and investigated appropriately. Applying for an SPO (Stalking Prevention Order) must be considered and the officer's considerations for or against documented in the OEL.
- All EOEL:6 entries must be completed prior to the end of the officers' shift and shared with the Central Referral Unit (CRU) via RMS task to: **'PVPU CENTRAL REFERRAL UNIT – CID 16 SUBMISSIONS & 3RD PARTY REFERRALS'**.
- Up-to-date details of schools attended by children linked to any incident must be recorded in order to fulfil the requirements of Operation Encompass, which is an initiative to **safeguard and support children and young people involved in a domestic abuse incidents**. Following an incident at home, children will often arrive at school distressed, upset and unprepared for the day. North Wales Police Officers are required to obtain details of any children associated with the incident of domestic abuse, be they present or not and include it within the EOEL:6. This information is then shared with the children's school.
- **Prior** to closing an incident the attending officer must relay the DASH RA score to the JCC for input onto the ICAD Event. *North Wales Police will be implementing the new DARA risk assessment, endorsed by the College of Policing in 2023.*
- NWP Employees involved in Domestic Abuse, as a perpetrator or victim, will be subject to DA Workplace Guidance process.

5. INITIAL RESPONSE

First Response – Everything you need to know in relation to responding to and attending an incident of Domestic Abuse.

Communications operators / control room staff guidance – Information specific to staff and Officers working within the JCC.

Officers at Scene guidance - Information specific to officers attending the scene.

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Arrest and Positive Action

Investigative Development

DVPN and DVPO

Victim Safety and Support

Post arrest management of Suspect and Casefile

Honour Based Abuse including Forced Marriage

Female Genital Mutilation

Stalking and Harassment

Rape and Sexual Offences

Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

CPS DA Prosecutors Guidance

HMIC – Review of policing DA during the pandemic 2021

HMIC – Everyone’s Business: Improving the police response to DA

7. PVPU SHAREPOINT

PVPU SharePoint site is a centralised point of information and guidance for all aspects of vulnerability – [click on below images](#):



When accessing the site, clicking the Domestic Abuse Tab below provides information and guidance for safeguarding and investigation around Domestic Abuse.

