Freedom of Information request ref 01/FOI/26/4222
We received your request on the 19/06/2026

Request

You asked us:

We would like to narrow our request to:

Force Domestic Abuse investigation procedure – we believe that there will be a single force procedure which is an overarching procedure. Most other forces have provided us with a copy of such a procedure. We do not request any other documents or guidance relating to domestic abuse beyond the single central investigation procedure.

Force Harassment and Stalking procedure – our request is for the single force procedure as set out above for domestic abuse.

We do not request anything else within our earlier request.

We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Our response:

Please see the attached documents which were provided by the Public protection and Vulnerability team.

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

Domestic Abuse Policy and Guidance

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Purpose of the Policy

To provide British Transport Police (BTP) officers and Police Staff with national guidance and an operational framework to promote a consistent, victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led approach when investigating Domestic Abuse. In order to improve service delivery and customer confidence, this guidance is to be used in conjunction with Statutory and national guidance and is underpinned by the overarching Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. The VAWG Strategy provides an overarching framework for crimes that are identified as being primarily, but not exclusively, committed by men, against women and girls. Though the majority of reported victims and survivors of Domestic abuse are women, it is recognised that some victims and survivors will be men, non-binary, or identify in a different way; and some perpetrators will be women, non-binary, or identify in a different way. This policy has been written with the objective of being applied and adhered to consistently to ALL victims and survivors, irrespective of sex or gender.

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Who does this policy apply to

This policy applies to all Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers, Police Staff and Special Constables; collectively termed 'employees'. This includes those who are on part time, fixed term, or permanent contracts, as well as those on secondment. This policy is applicable in England, Scotland and Wales.

The policy is relevant to all staff in England, Wales and Scotland engaged in the management and investigation of Domestic Abuse incidents and crimes. There are identified strategic objectives which include:

- To protect all adults and children who use the railway network who are at risk of Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Harassment, Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation or Modern Slavery.
- To effectively respond to and investigate all reports of domestic abuse.
- To take positive action against offenders, so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system.
- To adopt a multi-agency approach to preventing and reducing domestic abuse incidents.
- To ensure that action taken at all stages of the policing response should result in the effective protection of the victims and any children.

Principles

England and Wales

Domestic Abuse: Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and, are, or have been, personally connected to each other, regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can involve, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional
- violent

- threatening
- controlling
- coercive behaviour.

'Personal connection' means the individuals concerned:

- are due to be, are currently, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- are, or have been, parents (or had a parental relationship) to the same child
- are relatives.

Relatives refer to:

a) the father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandson or granddaughter of that person or of that person's spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner, or,

b) the brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin (whether of the full blood or of the half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) of that person or of that person's spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner.

It includes, in relation to a person who is cohabiting or has cohabited with another person, any person who would fall within a) or b) if the parties were married to each other or were civil partners of each other.

CPS policy is to treat cases as Domestic Abuse ***regardless of the age of the victim or complainant.***

Incidents that involve one or both parties being under 16, which in all other respects would fit the Domestic Abuse definition, should be progressed as Domestic Abuse and be subject of the Domestic Abuse risk assessment (DARA).

This guidance also includes information regarding:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Honour Based Abuse (HBA)
- Forced Marriage (FM)
- Stalking or Harassment
- Coercive Control

For more information on controlling or coercive behaviour see the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) section detailing Coercive Control which provides a description and examples.

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Scotland

The Scottish Domestic Abuse definition includes children as perpetrators and victims:

"any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere including online."

A child in Scotland is anyone under 16 years of age or those who are 16/17 under a supervision order.

Procedure

Manual of Guidance

End of Policy

Monitoring and Review

This guidance is owned by Detective Chief Superintendent (DCS), Crime and Public Protection.

The policy will be reviewed once in every 3 years, or when legislative, organisational, operational or technical changes dictate.

Policy Sponsor	ACC, Public Contact and Specialist Crime
Policy Owner	DCS, Head of Crime and Public Protection
Policy Author	DI, Safeguarding

Version	Date	Reason for Amendments	Amended by (job title)
1.0	07/05/2015	Policy drafted	Safeguarding Team
1.1	20/05/2015	Policy Reviewed and Signed Off	Safeguarding Team
1.2	27/05/2015	Policy Published on Policy Portal	Policy Team
1.3	11/04/2016	Policy Reviewed and updated in line with GSC Scheme	Policy Team/Safeguarding

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1.4	20/02/2017	Guidance reviewed and refreshed by Safeguarding and approved by Head of Safeguarding	Safeguarding Team Inspector and Head of Safeguarding
1.5	21/02/2017	Policy Team review and minor amendments	Policy Team
1.6	28/03/2017	Further amendments prior to consultation	Inspector Safeguarding Team
1.7	01/06/2017	Amendments following consultation feedback	Inspector Safeguarding Team
1.8	14/08/17	Addendum to 3.7 in line with IPCC recommendations	D/Inspector Safeguarding team
1.9	02/10/17	Removal of guidance relating to PIN	D/Inspector Safeguarding team
1.10	12/12/2017	Updated Metadata	Policy team
2.0	06/12/2019	Policy reviewed to reflect changes from Safeguarding Hub to Vulnerability Unit. Removal of references to ACPO, inclusion of Scottish definition and addition guidance documents.	D/Inspector Vulnerability Unit
2.0	11/07/2020	Addition of TecSOS guidance. Final review, formatting and commissioning of hyperlinks.	D/Inspector Vulnerability Unit
2.1	21/09/2024	Three-year review. The policy and guidance has been updated to reflect changes in: i. The family members that constitute a 'relative' in the national guidance. ii. The implementation of the DASH SVR to replace the DASH submission via Niche Intelligence report. iii. Updated DASH SVR guidance. iv. Updated Statutory guidance for dealing with Forced Marriage. v. The deployment of TecSafe application to replace the TecSOS device.	T/Detective Inspector – Public Protection and Vulnerability Unit

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		New EIA and policy justification forms completed on new templates.	
2.2	21/05/26	Policy and Manual of Guidance have been updated to reflect: i. Change from using DASH risk assessment to DARA ii. Updated process for tecSafe deployment	Detective Inspector – Public Protection & Vulnerability Unit

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Domestic Abuse

Manual of Guidance

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Manual of Guidance

1. Knowledge /Definitions

1.1. Domestic Abuse: Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and, are, or have been, personally connected to each other, regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can involve, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional
- violent
- threatening
- controlling
- coercive behaviour.

'Personal connection' means the individuals concerned:

- are due to be, are currently, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- are, or have been, parents (or had a parental relationship) to the same child
- are relatives.

Relatives refer to:

a) the father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandson or granddaughter of that person or of that person's spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner, or,

b) the brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin (whether of the full blood or of the half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) of that person or of that person's spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner.

It includes, in relation to a person who is cohabiting or has cohabited with another person, any person who would fall within a) or b) if the parties were married to each other or were civil partners of each other.

1.2. Controlling Behaviour: 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.

1.3. Coercive Behaviour: 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.

1.4. Refuge: As part of the effective protection of victims and children the police should consider the use of refuges, which are places of safety open to victims of Domestic Abuse. The location of refuges and outreach services can be obtained via force control rooms. Helpline numbers and details of support agencies can be obtained from the Public Protection and Vulnerability Unit, and in the DA Guidance for first responders. Upon request officers should facilitate a victim to use one of the national helplines.

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1.5. Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA):

The DARA is completed via a Safeguarding Vulnerability Referral (SVR) and comprises of a check list of risk identification questions that first responders are required to ask the victim. You will need to consider:

1. Who is at risk.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. How the risk factors interact with each other.
4. The victim's perception of risk.

The answers provided will assist with assessing the risk posed towards the victim at that point in time, and will influence the Safeguarding response. Risk identification and assessment is not a predictive process and there is no existing accurate procedure to calculate or foresee which cases will result in homicide or further assault and harm.

Common factors in the background of offenders of domestic abuse can be found on the Approved Professional Practice (APP) Domestic Abuse Guidance 'Understanding risk and vulnerability in the context of domestic abuse'

1.6. Vulnerable: A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of, or protect themselves or others from harm, exploitation, victimisation, abuse or neglect. (College of Policing accepted definition).

1.7. Serious Harm: means 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.

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1.8. Honour-Based Abuse (HBA): Honour Based Abuse is defined as 'an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/ or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community's code of behaviour'. If an officer deems a victim is subject to HBA the victim should clearly be marked as high risk on the DARA SVR.

1.9. Stalking or Harassment: Amendments to Protection of Harassment Act 1997 introduced new legislation that prohibits a person from **pursuing a course of conduct that amounts to stalking**. Although stalking is not specifically defined in the 2A offence, it outlines that stalking is where an individual is fixated or obsessed with another and exhibits behaviour that is unwanted and repeated. This can be summarised by the mnemonic FOUR.

- **F**ixated
- **O**bsessive
- **U**nwanted
- **R**epeated

Harassment is not defined in any act; however it can take many forms including malicious telephone calls or e mails. A DASH referral is required for all reported incidents of stalking and harassment. See the APP Guidance which provides practical advice to First Responders and Investigators.

1.10. Stalking Protection Orders (SPO): The Stalking Protection Act 2019 introduces SPOs to promptly restrict the behaviours of stalking perpetrators. It is available to Police Forces in England and Wales including BTP, and applications can rely on evidence of stalking behaviours that occurred anywhere in the UK or abroad including that which occurred prior to the legislation coming into force, although there must be a connect to the jurisdiction in



which the order is being sought.

1.11. Forced Marriage (FM): A forced marriage is defined as 'a marriage in which one or both parties do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it'. Duress can include:

- Physical,
- Psychological,
- Financial,
- Sexual or
- Emotional pressure.

There are 2 offences relating to Forced Marriage, which are contained within S121(1) and S122(1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and applies equally to male and female victims, and in Scotland. See Statutory Guidance for dealing with Forced Marriage.

1.12. Forced Marriage Prevention Orders (FMPO): Forced Marriage Protection Orders were introduced in November 2008 under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007. An application for a FMPO can be made by anyone acting on behalf of the victim(s). This can include the Police, Local authority or the victim themselves. The FMPO can serve to protect a person from being forced into a marriage or from any attempt to be forced into a marriage or a person who has been forced into a marriage. FMOs can be accessed via the Home Office website.

1.13. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): FGM is the mutilation of female genitalia and is illegal in the United Kingdom. Legislation is contained within Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (or Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 for offences prior to the implementation of FGM Act 2003)

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1.14. Modern Slavery: This generally includes offences where a person sexually or criminally exploits another, including holding another person in slavery, domestic servitude or forced/compulsory labour. Legislation is contained within Modern Slavery Act 2015. Further guidance contained within the Modern Slavery First Responders Guide.

1.15. Positive Intervention: In all domestic abuse cases, officers should take positive action to effectively manage the situation and mitigate risk. This means that where there are grounds for arrest, it will normally be necessary to exercise that power; however this is not a mandatory arrest instruction, but guidance to safeguard the victim from further harm. The decision to arrest lies with the officer at the scene based on all of the circumstances. Code G of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984 outlines reasons when an arrest is necessary **(See *Appendix A*).**

Officers in Scotland: will follow protocols agreed with COPFS which presume a policy of positive action. Where it is established or suspected that a crime has been committed then the suspect should be arrested - Section 1 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. For the vast majority of cases, the expectation is that an interview should be conducted in order to complete a thorough enquiry and secure all available evidence. However, where it is clear that a strong sufficiency of evidence to charge has already been obtained, officers should consider the necessity and proportionality of interviewing the suspect. Such considerations need to be taken in the context of the statutory duty under Section 50 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 not to detain a person in custody unreasonably or unnecessarily.

1.16. MARAC: Potentially high risk cases will require a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) involving a wide range of agencies to mitigate the future risk to the victim. All MARAC referrals will be made by the BTP Vulnerability Unit direct to the local police force.

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1.17. Civil Powers: There are a range of civil powers available to protect victims, some of which contain a power of arrest should an offender breach an injunction or a court order. Such orders or injunctions can be particularly useful in cases where criminal proceedings are not pursued or when protection via the criminal justice system ceases. The National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) offers a free and confidential service to assist victims with obtaining an injunction. See https://www.ncdv.org.uk/ for further details.

1.18. DVPN Notice: A Domestic Violence Protection Notice should be sought if it is deemed that the victim of domestic abuse is at serious risk and requires protection via court issued conditions. A DVPN needs to be authorised by a geographical Home Office Police force Superintendent with a court appearance for the perpetrator within 48 hours (not including weekends) of service.

1.19. DVPO: A Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) can be made by a court, but only after a DVPN has been issued and the matter has been reviewed at the designated court. There are strict instructions surrounding the application process, so guidance should be sought.

1.20. Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (or The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland): Commonly known as Clare's Law; this relates to data being able to be disclosed to victims about their new partner under strict conditions. There are two entry points into the scheme:

- **'Right to Ask'** – Where a person makes a request to Police for information about another person
- **'Right to Know'** – Where Police initiate disclosure to safeguard the new partner of a repeat perpetrator.

All requests of this nature should be referred to the local police force. For further information see the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme Guidance.

2. First Contact Centre and Control Room Responsibilities

2.1. Ensure that all reports of potential Domestic Abuse are identified and open an incident log on Control Works. Those taking reports should be careful not to make assumptions regarding the victim / perpetrator gender, sexual orientation or relationship / marital status. **It takes enormous courage to come forward and ask for help, therefore our response is critical to the victim's confidence**. The First Contact Centre is responsible for flagging and the completion of a risk assessment (THRIVE) template on Control Works.

2.2. Ensure that initial actions prioritise the safety of the victim and grade the necessary response according to the specific circumstances. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, all domestic abuse cases should be treated as an immediate response.

2.3. In violent or high-risk cases, the control room supervisor should be advised so that a review/monitoring process can take place. The safety of the victim is BTP's responsibility until such stage as ownership is taken over by the Home Office Police Force for where the victim usually resides.

2.4. Where possible ensure that the victim remains on the phone to record any background noise to support any subsequent investigation.

Staff should refer to refer to the Domestic Abuse Guidance for Call Handlers.

3. Initial Officer Response

3.1. Victims(s): Victims of Domestic Abuse are automatically entitled to Enhanced Entitlements under the Victims Code of Practice (VCoP). Unless victims choose to opt out, then VCoP principles must be followed. For further details see the Victims Code of Practice.

Early contact with victims of Domestic Abuse is vital to obtain important information, safeguard and provide reassurance that the police are there to offer support tailored to their



requirements. This is essential because there is a proven link between delayed police contact and victim disengagement within the criminal justice process. When responding to a report of Domestic Abuse, officers should:

- Separate and speak privately to all parties – be sure the victim cannot be seen or overheard.
- Assess the need for medical assistance and gain medical consent.
- Obtain intelligence checks to inform risk/safety requirements i.e. civil injunctions, restraining orders, DVPN/Os & firearms licence or access to weapons.
- Obtain & record initial accounts/admissions.
- Victims may fear for their safety and not want to engage. Explain what you do and why you take certain actions. Reassure them and listen to their concerns.
- Ask appropriate questions to establish any course of conduct, identify and assess risk (DARA SVR).
- Give reassurance to the victim and children at the scene; be clear about what you can and cannot do. Do not make promises.
- Ensure the victim feels believed and reassure them that it was the right decision to seek help.
- Obtain a victim statement where a crime is committed or suspected; The minimum standard of a victim statement for domestic abuse MUST be adhered to.

Ensure the APP Checklist for conducting the victim interview is also used as guidance.

3.2. Officers should refer to refer to the Domestic abuse Guidance for First Responders.

3.3. The initial officer should ensure that investigative statements from all potential witnesses and initial victims account are taken at the earliest opportunity.

3.4. A mandatory DARA SVR is required to be completed **before the end of duty** and submitted

to BTP Vulnerability Unit. Consideration must be given to a Video Recorded Interview (VRI) where appropriate to obtain best evidence.

3.5. If the victim is deemed to be **high risk**, the Investigating officer will need to advise the local police control room for where the victim resides, who will be responsible for implementing appropriate safeguarding measures i.e. flagging their address to treat all calls as urgent.

3.6. Officers should spend a sufficient amount of time with the victim to preserve all evidence, including photographing any injuries, and if necessary, arranging a medical examination.

3.7. Officers should ensure that all potential CCTV evidence including any body-worn video evidence is identified and secured.

3.8. It is sometimes unavoidable and essential for officers to seize mobile phones as evidence for an investigation into a criminal offence. However, this can leave the individual without a means of making emergency communication. The IOPC recommends that in circumstances where personal mobile phones are seized, officers put arrangements in place so that individuals who may be at a risk of harm and may require to call the emergency services, are not left without a means of making emergency communication. Furthermore, officers should be made aware that that this should be an integral consideration in their safeguarding plans.

3.9. Complete all appropriate Intelligence checks to ascertain if the offender has any warning markers, relevant intelligence or access to any firearms. Should the offender have lawful to firearms or shotguns, the investigating officer must liaise with the relevant territorial police force which issued the shot gun or firearms licence, to ensure that they are fully aware of the circumstances of BTP's investigation. BTP will provide all relevant information, which will enable the relevant territorial Police to make a decision whether licence(s) will be revoked and shot guns / firearms removed. The revoking of licences and removal of weapons is the



responsibility of the relevant territorial police force.

Should there be information or intelligence that the offender has unlawful possession / access to firearms or shotguns, liaison will be required with the relevant territorial police force/ firearms unit. Before arrest / premises search a risk assessment will be required.

3.10. Children: Officers must complete a Safeguarding Vulnerability Referral (SVR) if children are present, witness, or are connected to the Domestic Abuse.

- Ensure that children are seen and spoken to alone at ALL domestic incidents where a child is present.
- Even where it appears the child is already aware of the incident, first response officers should only ask sufficient questions to establish; the safety of the child, crime scene location, suspect identity and location and to ensure the preservation of evidence.
- They should record all questions and answers for the preparation of any subsequent interview.
- It is important to allow the child to answer without interruption.
- Officers do not need parental consent to speak with the child but, if it is refused, officers should record all requests for consent to interview and should consult and involve children's social care departments as appropriate.
- Officers must record their observations of a child's behaviour and demeanour so that a better assessment can be made of the child's needs.
- If the children do have any evidence to provide or are witnesses to an offence then a Video recorded interview (VRI) should be considered; however, simply checking on their welfare does not amount to a VRI, so officers should not be concerned about doing this.
- Exposure to domestic violence and abuse is a safeguarding issue and children who are not present should be identified and their details also recorded in an SVR.

For full, detailed guidance refer to APP - Duties in relation to Safeguarding Children

3.11. A dedicated CID Investigator will be assigned to investigate all crimes of Domestic Abuse regardless of the BTP risk grading in accordance with the Force Crime Assessment and Allocation Policy.

3.12. A language service should be used for any non-English speaking victims; family members should not be used to facilitate communication.

3.13. As part of the evidential package, officers should consider applying for Special Measures by submitting an MG2 form.

3.14. Officers in Scotland should consider the needs of all witnesses in prospective court proceedings and include such observations in the initial police report, or by subsequent Subject Sheet to COPFS.

A full checklist of officer actions can be found on the APP Domestic Abuse Checklist.

4. Risk Assessment Grading DASH SVR: Completion of DARA SVR is a tool to assist investigation and safeguarding; NOT a tick box exercise. Accurate completion of DASH forms can and do save lives.

4.1. 'Serious harm' means 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.

4.2. High Risk: If the initial officer responding or investigating officer deems that there are indicators of risk of serious harm, the victim should be graded as **high risk**. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact could be serious. This will be dependent on the officer's view and judgment of the full circumstances. This category should be used for all



honour-based violence or forced marriage offences.

4.3. Medium Risk: There are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm is unlikely to do so unless there is a change of circumstances such as loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown or alcohol/drug misuse.

4.4. Standard Risk: Current evidence does not indicate likelihood of serious harm.

5. Supervisors Responsibilities:

5.1. Domestic Abuse is a **priority crime** and supervisors must ensure that positive action is taken against the offender, and that all immediate and necessary steps are taken to protect/safeguard the victim and those associated who could also be at risk i.e children present or connected.

Supervisors will ensure that the investigation is expeditious, thorough and that any hand over package is comprehensive and contains all relevant information and documentation. CID will investigate all Domestic Abuse reports.

5.2. Prior to the submission of a DARA SVR, a supervisor must quality assure the DARA submission (in person or remotely) with the submitting officer.

5.3. If the victim is deemed **high risk,** ensure the officer has recorded full details of the immediate actions taken to protect the victim and confirm that the local Territorial Police control room/ Public Protection Unit has been advised.

5.4. In Scotland, where a suspect is released from court on bail, the Duty Officer will ensure that within 24 hours the victim is informed of that fact, and of the specific bail conditions imposed by the court.

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6. **Investigations: A victim-centred approach must be adopted when conducting Domestic Abuse investigations. Officers should seek to gather evidence at the earliest opportunity with a view to proactively prosecuting perpetrators and safeguarding victims.**

6.1. Victim Statements: Asking the victim if they want to make a 'formal allegation' is NOT appropriate and is irrelevant as to whether a thorough statement should be taken.

- Domestic Abuse (DA) victims are likely to be a vulnerable/intimidated witness, this means that special measures can be applied to support a victim in providing evidence. Please see the APP Special Measures guidance.
- In complex investigations a visually recorded interview (VRI) may be required and you must seek supervisor guidance prior to completing this and comply with victims code as the victim is entitled to a choice in terms of how their evidence is presented; see the Code of Practice for Victims.
- Officers completing a VRI should be VRI trained.
- In less complex cases, an interview can be completed at the time and a statement taken. This does not need to be visually recorded, but an officer should ask open questions and take thorough notes. (The notes must be retained as unused material).
- The onus is placed on the police to be proactive in identifying offences, gathering evidence and safeguarding victims.
- The investigation should be victim-centred. It is not the responsibility of the victim to supply the evidence, and in many cases victims have been conditioned by perpetrators not to disclose information or engage with police. **Many will simply be too scared to support any police action.**

The following **MUST** be recorded in **ALL** Domestic Abuse statements**:**

- The nature and duration of the relationship including the history between the victim and perpetrator, such as violence fear of violence and psychological abuse (include hearsay).
- Describe how they were assaulted in as much detail as the victim is able to provide (e.g. punched to the left cheek by his right fist). Understand that trauma and shock of an assault can render these details difficult for the victim to recall. Use body maps and ensure you detail the injuries including shape, size and depth.

  Consider asking about any previous/older injuries which may still be present but do not relate to that particular incident. Think wider than what is in front of you – show professional curiosity.
- Record the emotions of the victim and why they feel that way. What has the perpetrator physically or emotionally done to make them feel like this?
- Identify any coercive control which is a complex pattern of abuse using power and psychological control over another e.g. financial control, verbal abuse, and forced social isolation. These incidents may vary in seriousness and be repeated over time. It is widely recognised that domestic violence is often underpinned by a pattern of such behaviour; see APP - Coercive Control explained.
- Include how the victim felt after the assault (physically and emotionally).
- Were children present?
- Note medical or mental health backgrounds of the victim and perpetrator.
- Record the lead up to the incident including any alcohol or drug consumption to ensure the investigation is context-led.

Ensure the Checklist for conducting the victim interview is also used as guidance.

6.2. Victim Personal Statement (VPS): The VPS is a statement written in the victim's own words. It gives victims of crime an opportunity to tell criminal justice agencies and the courts about how a crime has affected their lives. The VPS is optional. No pressure should be put on victims to make one if they don't want to. However, it is important that the victim understands the

benefits of making one.

6.3. Reluctant Victims/Witnesses (Withdraw): There are many reasons why victims will not support a prosecution and officers must not rush into taking a withdrawal statement from a victim until they are absolutely satisfied that they have done everything they can to support the victim through the investigation and Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Victims should be encouraged to speak with an Outreach worker or support agency before making any final decision around withdrawal. These specialists will be able to talk the victim through the various support packages that are available to them as well help them to reach a safe, informed decision that is not only right for them but also their wider family.

Before agreeing to take a withdrawal statement officers must be satisfied that any imposed bail conditions have not been breached and/or that the victim has not experienced any pressure to withdraw either from the suspect or third parties.

If a withdrawal statement has to be taken the following details MUST be recorded:

- Reasons for not proceeding with a complaint, withdrawing or amending a statement.
- If the victim has been put under pressure or been subjected to threats or intimidation to not give a statement or withdraw statement; and by whom.
- Has the matter been discussed with anyone else (friends, family, solicitor or community adviser).
- Confirmation that support services have been offered and their thoughts on this.
- Have any civil proceedings been instigated or are likely to be instigated.
- Their thoughts on a DVPN/DVPO.
- The impact of the incident on the victim's life and that of other witnesses or people affected if the case continues e.g. children.

Officers and staff are to ensure they are familiar with the guidance around taking good

quality and comprehensive withdrawal statements as outlined in APP - Withdrawal

All statements/withdrawal statements will be expected to reflect this as a minimum standard.

6.4. Victim Safety and Support: At every contact we have with the victim, the risk to them MUST be re-assessed.

- All contact should be documented on the OEL to ensure strict adherence to the Victim's Code of Practice and the initial victim contract.
- The guidance within the APP section Victim Safety and Support should be followed in line with these local processes.
- At every contact with the victim, we seek to offer support and reassurance and guidance on how partner agencies may assist.
- When a perpetrator is charged, the officer in the case (OIC) updates the victim in person or by telephone and maintains regular contact as agreed with the victim; ensuring that updates are provided at each court hearing or significant event in the prosecution process.
- If released from custody without a charge, then the victim is to be updated prior to the release and any safeguarding measures required must be discussed.
- Current guidance under the victim code of practice, places duties on the OIC to fulfil all contact prior to charge. The victim is offered the choice of whether they want the OIC to maintain contact, or whether Witness Care in the Criminal Justice Department should continue contact through the judicial process.
- When a prosecution is brought, consistent liaison with the CPS and the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) is maintained by the OIC throughout the Criminal Justice process (if appropriate). IDVAs are based on teams owned by Territorial police forces.
- OICs will communicate personally with the victim upon conclusion of the investigation or prosecution to confirm that all support, risk management and referrals

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required/available are complete.

7. Charging and Bail

7.1. All charging and Out of Court Resolution decisions **MUST include** a joint CPS and NPCC Domestic Violence Checklist.

Matters deemed appropriate for a charging decision (including conditional cautions), **MUST** be referred to the CPS. The investigating officer should make appropriate representations to remand offenders in custody wherever possible, or alternatively apply for robust bail conditions to minimise the risk of further harm and safeguard the victim.

7.2. The victim must be immediately advised in relation to any charging or bail decisions.

7.3. A repeat victim is classified as having **two incidents recorded within the previous 12 month period.** Recorded incidents are not exclusive to BTP jurisdiction.

8. Other Considerations

8.1. Domestic Abuse reports may be referred by the Vulnerability Unit to the local BTP area Detective Inspector to review with suggestions for any further victim safety management actions that should be considered.

8.2. **TecSafe Deployment:** The TecSafe Application can be deployed to victims or witness who are at risk of, or in fear of violence or intimidation for range of offences including Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime, stalking, witness intimidation. The application is intended to supplement existing personal safety plans, but **not** to replace them.

TecSafe must be deployed by a suitable trained officer. For more information or to deploy the TecSafe application, please email Tecsafe@btp.police.uk

8.3. Local Neighbourhood teams can be used to carry out high visibility reassurance patrols if a victim works on or frequents the railway.

8.4. Senior Duty Officers (SDO) or on call Senior CID are available 24/7 for officers to contact to obtain specialist advice/guidance.

9. Crime Recording

9.1. All Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment, Honour-Based Violence / Abuse, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Modern Slavery crimes should be flagged by the Crime Management Unit as Domestic Abuse and will be consistent with National Crime Recording Standards. Regardless of gender, it is the presumption that all victims of Domestic Abuse crimes will be classified as being vulnerable and intimidated and that investigation will be allocated to a dedicated investigator from CID.

10. Vulnerability Unit

10.1. The Vulnerability Unit will receive all DARA SVR submitted. The Vulnerability Unit is responsible for undertaking all necessary research functions, to enable an informed referral decision to be made. Details of all DARA SVR submissions will be stored centrally to provide additional oversight and monitoring of Domestic Abuse incidents. A vulnerability coordinator within the unit will decide whether to refer cases to the local police force MARAC. In addition, the risk assessment grading will be quality assured and the details may also be sent to the local area BTP Detective Inspector to action any post-incident management. The Vulnerability Unit will liaise with relevant territorial Police force(s) to verify information sharing and to ensure that they accept responsibility for ongoing victim risk management.

11. Monitoring and Compliance

11.1. The Detective Superintendent for Public Protection and Vulnerability is responsible for reviewing this guidance and updating where necessary.

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Additional Information

Associated Policies/ Documents

College of Policing APP on Domestic Abuse

APP Domestic Abuse Checklist

APP Stalking or harassment

Stalking Poster

Stalking Presentation

Forced Marriage Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance

Forced Marriage Prevention Orders

Clare's Law (Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme) Guidance

BTP Operational Guidance Documents

- Domestic Abuse Guidance for Call Handlers
- Domestic abuse Guidance for First Responders
- Domestic Abuse Guidance for Investigators

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Key contacts and Support Agencies

- National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 200 247
- All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline – 0808 80 10 800
- Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline – 0800 027 1234
- Scottish Women's Aid – 0131 226 6606
- Victim Support – 0808 1689 111
- Mankind initiative – 01823 334244
- National Centre for Domestic Violence – 0800 970 2070
- Rights of Women – 0207 251 6577
- Victim Support Scotland – 0800 160 1985
- Galop (Supporting LGBT+ experiencing abuse or violence) https://galop.org.uk/get-help/helplines/ - 0800 999 5428
- Karma Nirvana (Supporting anyone affected by Honour Based Abuse) https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/helpline/ - 0800 5999 247

Acronyms/ Abbreviations

APP	Authorised Police Practice
BTP	British Transport Police
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CJS	Criminal Justice System
COPFS	Crown Officer and Procurator Fiscal Service
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH	Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment
DVPN	Domestic Violence Protection Notice
DVPO	Domestic Violence Protection Order
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FM	Forced Marriage
FMPO	Forced Marriage Prevention Order
HBA	Honour Based Abuse
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Conduct
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NCDV	National Centre for Domestic Violence
NPCC	National Police Chief's Council
OIC	Officer in the Case
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act
SDO	Senior Duty Officer
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SVR	Safeguarding Vulnerability Referral
THRIVE	Threat, Risk, Harm, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement
TSSA	Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
VCOP	Victims Code of Practice

VPS	Victim Personal Statement
VRI	Video Recorded Interview

Appendices

Appendix A: S.24 PACE and code G Necessity Test for arrest of Domestic Abuse suspects - Guidance

The following is guidance intended to assist and should be treated as such, and does not infringe upon the discretion of officers. (Any previous guidance should be disregarded)

It is important that you strongly consider the arrest of the suspected perpetrator as the Force takes seriously its duty to protect victims of Domestic Abuse.

The Force will protect victims of domestic abuse at an early stage- the nature of Domestic Abuse usually involves vulnerable victims who cannot defend themselves and they are often repeatedly abused. It is particularly important that all Domestic Abuse investigations are effective.

It is the responsibility of the police to thoroughly identify and collate all evidence of Domestic Abuse and not to rely solely on the co-operation of the alleged victim.

The absence of a victim statement, or the likelihood of a victim to attend or not attend court, is only part of the overall circumstances. These should not usually be the sole reasons to refuse to arrest.

A person reasonably suspected of having committed, or who is committing or is about to commit an offence, may be arrested because it is necessary for a reason under section 24 of PACE 1984:

(a) to enable the name of the person in question to be ascertained (in the case where the constable does not know, and cannot readily ascertain, the person's name, or has reasonable grounds for doubting whether a name given by the person as his / her name is his / her real name);

(b) correspondingly as regards the person's address;

(c) to prevent the person:

(i) causing physical injury to himself or any other person;

(ii) suffering physical injury;

(iii) causing loss of or damage to property;

(iv) committing an offence against public decency (subject to subsection);

or (v) causing an unlawful obstruction of the highway;

Or

(d) to protect a child or other vulnerable person from the person in question;

(e) to allow the prompt and effective investigation of the offence or of the conduct of the person in question;

(f) to prevent any prosecution for the offence from being hindered by the disappearance of the person in question.

If you are in doubt then please seek the guidance of your supervisor or Duty Inspector.

Appendix B – BTP's Internal Domestic Abuse Guidance

Domestic abuse involving BTP officers, special constables and police staff

As an employer of a large number of people, we need to recognise that there may be both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse within the organisation. Police officers, special constables and police staff who commit domestic abuse related offences should not be seen or treated differently from any other perpetrator and should be investigated and held accountable through the Criminal Justice System.

Victim

If you are a victim, **we encourage you to report the matter to a supervisor**.

BTP understands that disclosing such information may be difficult; however it is important that you receive the relevant support both at work and also in your home environment in order to

protect you from further incidents of harm. It is also important that we support and protect any other vulnerable people who you may live with such as children.

Our main concern is about your protection and welfare. You should also consider making use of the support services offered by:

- Care First and Occupational Health Unit
- Police Federation, TSSA or the Superintendent's Association or one of the other staff associations if appropriate.

Perpetrators

Domestic abuse perpetrated by BTP staff will not be tolerated. If you are found guilty of any domestic related criminal offence, misconduct or disciplinary procedures, your job may be at risk. Our policy seeks to ensure a thorough, impartial, confidential investigation, while preserving the integrity of individuals and the force.

Serving Police Officer, Special Constable or member of Police Staff

If you receive a complaint of a domestic abuse incident involving a serving BTP police officer, special constable or a member of police staff, you should at once refer the information to the Duty Officer. This officer will then be responsible for informing the Senior Duty Officer. If you know a member of staff who is a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse, then you are duty bound to report any criminal offences that have been disclosed to you or that you become aware of.

BTP understands that disclosing information that may have been given to you in confidence by a colleague and friend may be difficult. However, you must take into account the welfare of that individual and the welfare of individuals around them such as children, whose lives you have a duty to protect.

You should inform an inspector or above of any incidents that give you cause for concern about another's welfare, and by doing so you may prevent serious harm to that person or even homicide.

BTP will make every effort to ensure that your actions in disclosing this information do not impact on you negatively, and that there are no repercussions from your actions in the workplace.

Senior Duty Officer

You will, in all cases, safeguard the integrity of the incident and any subsequent criminal investigation and ensure, wherever possible, that the suspect does not know officers involved in the investigation of a case personally by taking into consideration:

- The location of residence;
- The place of work; and
- Whether the officer or staff member concerned has previously worked for a substantial period of time on the investigating sub-division.

Where criminal behaviour is suspected and the offence location is on BTP jurisdiction, appoint an investigating officer of at least Detective Inspector rank, who will lead the criminal investigation.

It will remain this officer's responsibility to secure and preserve evidence, direct and monitor the progress and outcome of the investigation, and inform, no later than the next working day, in writing:

- A member of the alleged perpetrators senior management team;
- The Duty Officer, Professional Standards Department; and
- The Head of the Safeguarding Hub.

Outside BTP Jurisdiction

Where notification of a domestic abuse incident involving BTP employees occurs which is outside the BTP Jurisdiction the Duty Officer / Senior Duty Officer must inform, no later than the next day:

- A member of the alleged perpetrators senior management team;
- The Duty Officer, Professional Standards Department; and



• The Head of the Central Safeguarding Hub.

Early notification of the Duty Officer and Professional Standards Department must always be made where the perpetrator is either a police officer or special constable, particularly if an arrest has been made, to ensure that any subsequent interview also covers potential misconduct matters. A written report can follow where deemed necessary.

All Parties Involved Must:

• Recognise that these are very sensitive issues and sometimes difficult areas to investigate, but ensure that serving police officers, special constables and police staff are treated with integrity;
• Liaise with the relevant Territorial police force(s) to for them to make provision of support to the victim and the victim's family ensuring the provision of safety and child protection;
• If the victim is a serving police officer, special constable or member of police staff, consideration must also be given to current and previous working circumstances and confidentiality; and
• Ensure that the contents of the Control Works incident log comply with this policy and that they are restricted. **Control Works logs must be accessed for policing purposes only, officers are reminded that unauthorised access may be audited**.

Where non-criminal domestic abuse behaviour is alleged, the relevant line manager will advise the Vulnerability Unit **no later** than the next working day**.**

Investigating Officer (Detective Inspector)

• Ensure that the arresting sub-division is applying the Force Domestic Abuse Guidance.
• Seek support and advice from the Vulnerability Unit where appropriate.
• Assume responsibility for co-ordinating and conducting the criminal investigation.
• Record a crime in accordance with the National Crime Recording Standards.
• Obtain all relevant antecedent family history through the Territorial Police forces' Public Protection Investigation Unit.



- Consider risk factors relating to the suspect.
- Consider risk factors relating to the victim and any children.
- Conduct thorough risk assessment process with victim using the DARA SVR risk assessment process.
- Ensure that the DARA and Enhanced risk assessment are incorporated into suspect interview.
- Consider public protection issues and community impact assessment.
- Consider media strategy in liaison with the Press Office.
- Make contact with the Duty Officer and Professional Standards Department.
- Keep the victim fully informed about the progress of criminal and internal investigation and misconduct processes.
- Keep the perpetrator fully informed of the progress of the criminal investigation.

End of Appendices