

Operation Encompass

This protocol sets out a joint-agency procedure to provide, by early intervention, appropriate support for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in their household.

The definition of domestic violence and abuse;

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional

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.

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.

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so-called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Domestic abuse is a safeguarding children issue; statistics show that in 90% of cases children are present in a household during a domestic abuse incident. Often the following day children are ill-prepared to deal with the school day.

Operation Encompass is the implementation of key partnership working between Police and designated school staff (Key Adults). Operation Encompass works through information sharing between Police and a named Key Adult in the school.

Working together to safeguard children, the Police will inform specially trained Key Adults within schools about any domestic abuse incident where the child or young person has been present to allow that school to take appropriate steps to support their pupil during what could be an emotionally difficult day.

Key Adults within the schools are able to support the child so as to lessen the impact and to support the child if they need it. In its simplest form, they are given comfort and support. This can make a huge difference to children and allows them to have a safe space.

The information shared will be only that which is required to safeguard children including:

- date and time of incident
- brief circumstances
- police action if appropriate

This Protocol does not replace or supersede existing protocols, or singularly address child welfare. The Protocol should always be followed in conjunction with the current safeguarding procedures and practitioners guidelines and is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children's well-being is of paramount importance.

By sharing this information under Operation Encompass it is hoped that children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse will have access to responsive emotional health and wellbeing support after an incident.

Schools will receive information when:

- Police have been called out to a domestic abuse incident
- The child is present in the household at the time of the incident
- The child is of school age

This knowledge, given to schools through Operation Encompass, allows the provision of immediate early intervention through silent or overt support dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

Section 11(2) of the Children Act, 2004 requires Local Authorities and the Police to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. This enactment provides conditions under schedule 2 (5b) and schedule 3 (7(1) (b) of the Data Protection Act 1998 by which personal and sensitive personal data may be lawfully shared.

Personal data shared must be proportionate, necessary but not excessive, and must be balanced with the consideration of privacy rights under the Human Rights Act. It must take into account any duty of confidentiality owed. A public interest in disclosure must outweigh an individual's right to privacy.

It is recognised that the handling of such **confidential, sensitive dynamic and often raw** information needs to be dealt with in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the child or young person. To address this, "**Key Adults**" will be identified in each school (a person with Child Protection training, usually the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) /Head Teacher.

Operation Encompass logs will then be stored within the child protection files.

The Key Adult will be the person available each day to receive the details of the incident and assess the type of support needed for the child. It is recommended that the Police will hold a database of all Key Adults in their Police area.

Details collated with respect to the child or young person will include their **name, age, date of birth, home address and school attended**. The school will be told the time/ date/location of the incident, the parties involved in the incident (including their relationship to the child), and the child's involvement in the incident.

This information from the police will be disseminated to named Key Adults within the schools via a telephone conversation.

A log should be kept by the police detailing log number, school, Key Adult, date of referral. The records of all police callouts to domestic incidents will be searched to ascertain if a child or young person was present. This will lead to the Key Adult being identified from the database and the relevant information being shared to safeguard the child or young person. Incidents occurring on Friday, Saturday or Sunday will be reported to the school on Monday morning. There is currently no provision to report incidents occurring during the school holiday periods, as the aim of Operation Encompass is to provide support in the period immediately following the incident.

A disclosure will be made in respect of all children aged between **4-18 years (or younger if the child is attending a nursery or the force is supporting children in all Early Years' settings)** . Police will maintain a record of the log number, school, the name of the Key Adult to whom it has been disseminated and the date of dissemination.

Schools must record the information that they receive from the police on an incident form, which must be retained and stored utilising the current process used to store child protection

paperwork within the school.

Schools need to be aware that in the event of any domestic homicide or serious case review the documents may be required for disclosure purposes.

Where a child or young person is educated in a neighbouring borough, which is part of the same Police area, information will be shared across geographical boundaries. Incidents occurring in other force areas or children accommodated in schools outside the Force area are not covered by this protocol.