



**Protocol between West Yorkshire Police
Safeguarding Unit, Kirklees Children and
Young People Duty and Assessment
Service, and Health for
the referral and notification of domestic
violence incidents in Kirklees.**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This protocol has been drawn up through agreement between West Yorkshire Police: Kirklees Safeguarding Unit (WYPSU), Kirklees Children & Young People Service: Duty and Assessment Service (D&A), and Health.
- 1.2 The protocol covers the exchange of information and the thresholds of 'referral' or 'notification' between police, children's social care, and health when the police are called to incidents of domestic violence within the Kirklees area where children are present.
- 1.3 The aim is to improve the safety and well being of young people living in a household where domestic violence incidents have been reported to the police, by assessing the safety and wellbeing of children within that household allowing the identification of any potentially escalating risk factors.
- 1.4 The protocol includes the criteria used by the police when assessing a situation that requires a referral or notification.

2. Definitions of terms used in this protocol

Domestic Violence: the threat of, or actual, physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control and abuse and the imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation.

Referral: when the risk to a child within a domestic violence incident indicates immediate action is needed to assess and prevent further risk to a child.

Notification: when the risk to a child within a domestic violence incident may not need immediate action, but will be dealt with and assessed in a timely manner.

Significant Harm: is defined in the Children's Act 1989 as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

cjsm.net: (Criminal Justice System eMail) ensures the security of all emails leaving the police e-mail system. Encryption ensures that the email, if intercepted, will be unreadable. Once the email reaches its destination it will be decrypted so that the intended recipient can read it.

Care First: Electronic recording system used in Children's Social Care.

SPECCS+ / DASH: Risk identification, assessment and management tools used by the police.

MARAC: Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference. The MARAC model of intervention involves risk assessment in all reported cases of domestic

abuse to identify those at highest risk so that a multi-agency approach may be taken.

3. Confidentiality

Clarity about information sharing is essential and agencies should ensure that in sharing information they do so in line with agreed protocols.

4. Criteria to establish whether a 'referral' or a 'notification' is made

4.1 The criteria to establish whether a referral or a notification is made to D&A following a domestic violence incident attended by the police are:

Referral:

- When a child is used as a shield
- The victim is a pregnant woman
- The victim is assessed as high risk through the police SPECSS+ / DASH assessment and there is a child present
- When a child is injured
- When a child has called the police
- Where there are other risks of significant harm to a child (this can include multiple incidents or if the family is, or has been subject to a MARAC)

Notification:

- All other domestic violence incidents where there are children present but the above criteria are not met.

4.2 In any incident where there is doubt over the appropriate action to take, or when any other advice is required, guidance must be sought from a supervisor.

5 Process of sharing information and responsibilities of agencies

5.1 Responsibilities of West Yorkshire Police

5.1.1 WYPSU will inform D&A and Health of all domestic violence incidents where children are present.

5.1.2 If the police database does not hold any information on whether a child lives at the household further checks at the scene must be made.

5.1.3 Where a child is subject to a child protection plan or looked after plan the referral/notification should be directed to the allocated social worker.

5.1.4 If there is evidence, or there is reason to believe, that a child is at risk of significant harm the police will immediately follow child protection

procedures as laid out in the West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Procedures.

- 5.1.5 The police will send notifications and referrals to D&A using one of two secure email addresses especially set up for this purpose:

Email address for notifications: dv.notifications@kirklees.gov.uk.cjism.net

Email address for referrals: dv.referrals@kirklees.gov.uk.cjism.net

- 5.1.6 The police can prioritise referrals by using a “High Priority” marked e-mail.
- 5.1.7 The police will send notifications to Health by fax until a secure email system is agreed. The police will identify which children have been referred to D&A and which are notifications by highlighting this on the fax.

5.2 Responsibilities of the Duty & Assessment Service

- 5.2.1 All emails will be read on a daily basis.
- 5.2.2 All emails that are referrals will be dealt with in accordance with Safeguarding Children Procedures. A decision will be made by D&A as to whether an assessment will be undertaken.
- 5.2.3 All emails that are notifications will be read and appropriate action taken.
- 5.2.4 Repeat notifications of the same family may instigate a referral.
- 5.2.5 Checks will be done through Care First on all members of the household in all cases of referral or notification.
- 5.2.6 Identification of repeat offenders will be taken into consideration to identify “at risk” families.

5.3 Responsibilities of Health

Health professionals should respond to domestic violence in line with West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Procedures and Government guidance ‘Responding to domestic abuse: A handbook for health professionals’ (Dept of Health, Dec 2005).

6. West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Procedures

Full procedures including assessing the needs of children and managing risk in domestic violence cases can be found in the West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures (section 5, 5.17) www.proceduresonline.com/westyorksrb/

References:

DoH (2005) Responding to domestic abuse: a handbook for health professionals

Police Community Safety Unit Service Delivery Team: Domestic Violence Policy
2004

The Children Act 2002

West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Procedures
<http://www.proceduresonline.com/westyorksbc>

HM Govt (2006) Working Together to Safeguard Children

Home Office
<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence2.htm>