



South Yorkshire

**POLICE**

## **Domestic Abuse Action Plan for South Yorkshire 2018/2019**

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## Foreword



The Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire has set a clear priority to protect vulnerable people. Victims of domestic abuse are by definition vulnerable and as an organisation we will do everything we can to protect them from harm.

This will be achieved by collaborating in effective partnerships, sharing intelligence and ensuring that we take collective action to prevent people from becoming victims. Where people are the victim of crime, we will deliver the highest level of victim led service, seeking at all times to ensure the future safety of that person.

This action plan builds on the force's existing delivery plans and sets out how we will deliver on the recommendations set out in the 2017 HMICFRS report on the police response to domestic abuse. It reflects our determination to be outstanding in this critical area of business.

**Tim Forber**  
**Assistant Chief Constable (Crime)**

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## Introduction

Domestic abuse is a complex issue and has a significant impact on people's lives. It is estimated that one incident of domestic abuse is reported to the police every 30 seconds.

Domestic abuse is a high priority for South Yorkshire Police and we are absolutely committed to providing protection and support for victims in conjunction with our partners, as well as a swift and effective response to all reports of domestic abuse. In order to do this we continue to seek ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the service we provide.

Domestic abuse is any incident 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. This can include the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

People experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age or disability. It can and does happen to anyone, irrespective of their background or social standing.

## Continuous Improvement

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) regularly undertake inspections of police forces to identify areas for improvement both nationally and locally, this includes particular focus on how forces respond to Domestic Abuse.

Since 2014, three reports have been produced by the HMICFRS relating to domestic abuse:

- Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse, HMIC, 2014.
- Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse, HMIC, 2015.
- A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse, HMICFRS, 2017

Since the initial report, South Yorkshire Police have had an action plan to address areas for development.

The action plan covers several broad areas within the police response to domestic abuse. These areas are defined as:

- Leadership and Governance
- Initial Contact
- First Response
- Investigation
- Managing Victims and Offenders
- Learning

The action plan also references specific responses to honour based abuse and forced marriage.

South Yorkshire Police has made significant steps in consolidating performance within these areas and addressing the specific points within the action plan.

The actions, highlighted within this plan, have been assigned to specialist senior officers

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who have responsibility for ensuring that the action is completed at the earliest opportunity. Progress is monitored by senior leaders in the organisation.

This continued work will enable South Yorkshire Police to provide a strengthened approach to an issue that is a clear priority for South Yorkshire.

## Our plans for the future

### Leadership and Governance

The Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire has set clear priorities for the force that include protecting vulnerable people in society. Every officer and member of staff working at South Yorkshire Police therefore recognises the importance of providing an efficient, effective response to domestic abuse.

An effective response to domestic abuse also requires the support of partnership agencies, including the local authority, social care, health, support groups, education and many more, with whom the Force is committed to working alongside to safeguard victims.

Victims' feedback will also form part of the force's continued review and scrutiny of the services offered, in a bid to ensure that our response is appropriate to the challenges we face.

Action	Lead
South Yorkshire Police understands the extent of the risk relating to domestic abuse	Senior responsible officer

### Initial Contact

When an individual reports an incident of domestic abuse, how that report is handled in the first instance is crucially important. We want victims to have confidence to come forward and report domestic abuse, knowing their call will be handled sensitively and appropriately. Processes are in place to ensure that officers attending incidents of domestic abuse have the information they need to support the victim and respond appropriately to any identified risk.

Action	Lead
Arrangements are in place to ensure that background and intelligence checks are carried out and passed to attending officers to ensure they have sufficient information to assess the incident Force systems and procedures enable officers to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, the force assesses and grades risk, and the nature of the victim's vulnerability, and responds to this at the first point of contact	Communications Manager

### First Response

South Yorkshire Police is committed to providing an effective initial response to reports of domestic abuse incidents, as we are all too aware that in certain cases, every second counts. The risk assessment training undertaken at our communications centre was also given to enquiry desk and any frontline staff or officers that may encounter victims of domestic abuse.

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We will continue to improve our information sharing and referrals processes with partner agencies to ensure that intelligence about victims and perpetrators is managed appropriately and effectively to safeguard anyone at risk.

The force will continue to work closely with victims and partners to ensure we deliver an excellent service. A lot of attention is given by officers to any children involved in domestic abuse cases, something which is crucially important.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Appropriate safety planning and referrals are made for children linked to domestic abuse incidents. There is effective information sharing between partners and initiatives such as Operation Encompass are used.	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People
Force's use the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour-Based Violence risk identification, assessment and management model (DASH). Ensure that these assessments are of sufficient quality to ensure appropriate risk assessment and involve supervision.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
Officers need clear supervision and direction to ensure that all opportunities for an early arrest are taken.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
Officers and staff assess risk and vulnerabilities at the initial response and throughout the victim's experience. Officers and staff take account of this and undertake immediate and longer-term safeguarding actions.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse

### **Investigation**

South Yorkshire Police has specialist officers trained in the investigation of domestic abuse.

Our officers are trained to collect and preserve evidence, to build the strongest possible case to pursue a prosecution, and we have a specialist team who have access to a range of agencies to provide support and protection for victims and anyone else at risk.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Forces need to ensure that there are clear standards and expectations, with effective supervision, for building the best possible case for the victims of domestic abuse; this should include appropriate support to victims. Cases should be appropriately allocated to specialist officers.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
Forces need to ensure that they are making effective use of powers, for example Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. Where orders or bail conditions are breached, forces need to ensure that there are appropriately robust processes in place to take action.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse

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Forces have monitoring processes, supported by accurate data, to ensure that they are taking positive action such as arrest, and are making effective use of powers.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
Forces to monitor referral and prosecution data and work closely with the CPS to understand whether improvement is required, and, if so, to effect change.	Force Lead for Criminal Justice

### Managing Victims and Offenders

Safeguarding and protecting victims of domestic abuse is our absolute priority in dealing with cases of this nature. We recognise, however, that our plan needs to hold perpetrators of this crime to account and challenge their behaviour whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the victims, giving them the confidence to move on from abusive situations.

Research has shown that some perpetrators can be effectively managed by a range of intervention techniques and with the support of a range of agencies, which we are hoping to build on in the future with our partners.

Action	Lead
Relevant staff understand their role in supporting victims and managing perpetrators (neighbourhood teams).	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
Neighbourhood teams are aware of victims (and their safety plans) and perpetrators on their beats from the problem profile and are tasked effectively by specialist teams.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
There are effective information sharing protocols in place for non-MARAC	Information Compliance Officer
The force works with external organisations to exchange information and safeguard victims and contributes to the effectiveness of the MARAC.	Force Performance and Governance
The force has a problem profile for domestic abuse, which influences the way in which staff deal with domestic abuse. Local staff are aware of victims and perpetrators on their areas and are tasked effectively.	Force Lead for Domestic Abuse
Perpetrators are referred to and part of integrated offender management.	Force Lead for Offender Management
Serial perpetrators identified and managed.	Force Lead for Offender Management
Offenders who pose a serious risk of harm are identified and steps are taken to address the risk they pose.	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People

### Learning

South Yorkshire Police is committed to the continuous improvement of its response to domestic abuse. The force continues to learn lessons from previous tragedies within the county and across the country, to build upon its knowledge base and adapt its services in line with national legislation and guidance.

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<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Call handling staff have received training in DA, Stalking, Harassment, and coercive control and this training remains current.	Communications Manager
First response/neighbourhood teams, investigators and domestic abuse specialists have received training particularly in relation to coercive and controlling behaviour.	Crime Training

### **Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage**

Honour based abuse and forced marriage incidents often fall within the definition of domestic abuse and therefore this action plan includes actions, which specifically relate to these areas.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Consider mapping existing support networks across the county, their referral mechanisms and the support available locally.	Force lead for HBA
Future problem profiles to consider the characteristics of both victims and perpetrators of HBV, FM and FGM.	Director of Intelligence
Consultation with Audit and Governance Unit to conduct a thematic audit, ensuring consistent and correct application of the MO 'Motive - Honour Based Abuse to all offences committed within a HBA / FM context.	Audit and Governance Unit
Consultation with Performance Management Unit to discuss the requirement for a performance framework.	Performance Manager