

What is Operation Encompass and what does it do?

Operation Encompass is a joint-agency procedure to provide, by next day notification, appropriate support for Children and Young Persons who have experienced domestic abuse in their household.

What is domestic abuse?

The Government: definition

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 include, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant 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 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.

Partnership working

Operation Encompass is the implementation of key partnerships working between the Metropolitan Police, the local authority and designated safeguarding leads in the school.

Working together to safeguard children, The Metropolitan Police will notify specially briefed Encompass designated safeguarding leads within schools about any domestic abuse incident where the child or young person has been present, to allow the school to take appropriate steps to support their pupil during what could be an emotionally difficult day. Encompass designated safeguarding leads within the schools are then able to accommodate the school day to lessen the impact and support the child if they need it. In its simplest form, the child or young person is given some leeway, comfort and support. This can make a huge difference to children and young people in allowing them to have a safe space.

Information shared

The information shared will be only that which is necessary to safeguard children and Young people under 18 years, including:

- Date and time of incident
- Notification that there has been a Domestic incident the day before.

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 is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children's wellbeing support after a domestic incident.

This knowledge, given to schools/educational establishments through Operation Encompass, allows the provision of next day notification to provide immediate silent observation and awareness. Any further needs identified will be processed via the schools standard pastoral care process.

Section 11(2) of the Children's Act 2004 requires Local Authorities and the Police to safeguard and promote the welfare of 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 data may be lawfully shared.

What will be disclosed?

Details that the child / Young Person has been present when a domestic incident occurred involving their parents AND the police were called. Operation Encompass is designed as a notification to enable silent support.

How will it be disclosed and when?

This information will be sent to the school's designated safeguarding leads via a secure system the following morning after the incident.

The Encompass designated safeguarding leads must be level 3 child protection trained and have full knowledge of the scheme. They must ensure that all teaching staff understand the confidential nature of any information passed to them and that this information must be treated in the same way as any other Child protection information given by other partners such as Social Care.

Full details should be available in the school's prospectus and on the school's website.