

**Protocol between West Yorkshire Police
and Leeds Children & Young People's
Social Care for Referral and Notification of
Incidents of Domestic Violence**

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1 Purpose

This protocol forms an agreement between West Yorkshire Police and Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care.

It lays out the procedure for informing Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care of any domestic violence incidents that come to the attention of West Yorkshire Police within the Leeds area.

It will show the criteria West Yorkshire Police use when identifying a referral or notification.

The aim is to increase the effectiveness of passing information concerning incidents of domestic violence distinguishing

- (a) **Referrals** that need immediate Section 47 enquiries by Children and Young People's Social Care and
- (b) **Notifications** of incidents which do not need immediate response, but allow Children and Young People's Social Care to build a picture of potential risk.

An e-mail system will be used to ensure that there is a clear audit trail of all information sent by the Police.

2 Definitions

For the purpose of this protocol the following definitions are used:

Domestic Violence: Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender.

(This is the ACPO national definition of domestic violence. Incidents which would otherwise be considered as ones of domestic violence between people under that age will be recorded by West Yorkshire Police as child protection concerns and will be notified or referred to Children and Young People's Social Care in accordance with this protocol.)

cjsm.net (Criminal Justice System e-Mail) ensures the security of all emails leaving the police e-mail system. This 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.

Referral is when the risk to a child is judged to be high and action is needed to assess and prevent further risk to a child

Notification is when the risk to the child may not need immediate action but information sharing is warranted to build a picture of potential risk.

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

3 Scope

This Protocol will cover the exchange of information between Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care following Police attendance at any incident of domestic violence within the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board area where children are present or members of the household.

4 Confidentiality

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

5 Police Referral Process

The Police will inform Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care of all domestic violence incidents where children are present or are members of the household.

The criteria to distinguish between referral and notification to Children and Young People's Social Care following a domestic violence incident is as follows.

Referral

- When a child is used as a shield;
- Where the victim is a pregnant woman;
- Where the victim is assessed as high risk through SPECSS+ (Separation, Pregnancy, Escalation, Cultural Awareness, Stalking, Sexual Assault) assessment and there is a child in the household;
- When a child is injured;
- When a child has called the police;
- When a case is referred to MARAC and children are member of the household;
- When it is the third incident of domestic violence in a 12 month period;
- Where a child under 1 year of age is present in the household;
- Where professional judgement is that there are other risks of significant harm to a child.

The Police will include within their referral email the reason why the case is a referral ie which particular criteria has been met.

Notifications

All other domestic violence incidents where there are children present or members of the household but the above criteria are not met.

6 Secure E-mail

The police will send referrals to the Local Authority Call Centre at the following e-mail address:

General.enquiries@leeds.gov.uk.cjism.net

The police will send notifications to Children and Young People's Social Care Child Protection Section at the following e-mail address:

dvnotifications@leeds.gov.uk.cjism.net

These e-mail boxes are to be used solely for the purpose of notification and referral of domestic violence incidents.

Children and Young People's Social Care will designate appropriate personnel allowed access to these e-mail boxes.

Children and Young people's Social Care will notify the appropriate Police Unit of the outcome of all referrals using the following e-mail addresses:

North West: aa.safeguarding@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk

North East: ba.safeguarding@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk:

City and Holbeck: ca.safeguarding@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk

7 Response to Referrals

All referrals will be promptly passed to the CYPSC Team Manager based at the Call Centre and, if appropriate, passed to the Children and Young People's Social Care Assessment Team on duty, or, if an active case, passed to the Team Manger of the Social worker involved.

The Team Manager of the Assessment Team on duty or the social Worker may contact the referring Domestic Violence Co-ordinator for clarification of information and strategy discussion.

All referrals will then be dealt with in line with West Yorkshire Leeds Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures and Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care Section 47 Procedures.

8 Response to Notifications

All notifications will be dealt with by administrative staff at the Children and Young People's Social Care Child Protection Section and will be linked to any previous notifications received and any other information held regarding the child or family.

This information will be passed to a manager within the Section. The manager may initiate a referral if it is his/her professional judgement that the current notification plus other information held at the Child Protection Section warrants this.

Where a notification refers to a case that is active to any Children and Young People's Social Care team, this information will always be shared with the responsible social worker.