**Operation Encompass – Early Years**

**Shropshire Joint Agency Protocol Domestic Abuse**

**Operation Encompass**

**(2022 – 2023)**

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**1. Vision & Overview**

[Operation Encompass](https://www.operationencompass.org/) was launched in Plymouth in 2011 to ensure early sharing of information between Police and schools and early years settings. The vision is to safeguard children and young people and directly connects the Police with schools and early years settings to secure better outcomes for children who are subject or witness to police-attended incidents of domestic abuse.

Children and young people experiencing Domestic Abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure; Domestic Abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling immediate support, making a child's day better and giving them a better tomorrow.

Rapid provision of support within the setting means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

**2. What is Domestic Abuse?**

**2.1. The Government Definition of Domestic Abuse & Violence**

*Domestic Abuse Act 2021*

Under the Act the new legal definition of domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern is defined as behaviour of a person towards another person if they are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following - physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse”

The definition also identifies children as victims of domestic abuse if they see or hear , or experience the effect of, the abuse and are related to either person as above.

**2.2. Controlling behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is 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.

**2.3. Coercive behaviour**

Coercive behaviour is 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.

Police recorded more than a quarter of a million offences flagged as domestic abuse-related from April to June 2020, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said. Around half of adults, (52%) who experienced abuse before the age of 16 years also experienced domestic abuse later in life, compared with 13% of those who did not experience abuse before the age of 16 years.

**3. Shropshire’s Operational Procedure**

A new process for managing Domestic Abuse notifications in Compass started in April 2016 and has evolved over time, current revision October 2021. Operation Encompass initiative was introduced by Shropshire in November 2019 to schools and November 2020 to early years settings.

**Current Process:**

Each day Police, health, education and social care meet to share information contained within the police incident form where concern has been determined as Level 2 or Level 3 and to share any known history and reach a joint decision as to the level of risk and the appropriate response required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

At present the Domestic Abuse Triage (DAT) is attended by:

* Children Social Care – Compass SW & COMPASS co-ordinator
* Support Officer – Police
* Specialist Public Health Nurse
* Education

There is a virtual attendance from key partner agencies who receive and respond to the EVODA spreadsheet as follows:

* Shropshire Recovery Partnership
* Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
* Shropshire Probation

Prior to DAT all agencies undertake relevant checks and include this information on the live spreadsheet, which is accessible to all DAT members. The meeting takes place virtually on MS TEAMS.

The multi-agency group decide the appropriate follow up action in line with the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership [Accessing the right service at the right time](https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/local-content/2gjN/thresholds-guidance/?b=Shropshire)

The Domestic Abuse Education Co-ordinator (Karen Flynn) is responsible for sending Operation Encompass alerts to schools. Safeguarding Officer (Charlotte Percival) sends to early years settings prior to the meeting to ensure that schools and early years settings are aware that the children may have been exposed to a domestic incident and have opportunity to raise any concerns for the child.

**4. Background to Operation Encompass in Shropshire**

Operation Encompass first launched in Shropshire in November 2019 to start the information sharing between Police and schools and extended to include early years settings in November 2020. The initial joint launch was delivered by Police and Education Countywide. There are a range of resources that settings can access to deliver updates to staff. [Operation Encompass for schools.](https://www.operationencompass.org/school-participation)

**4.1 Action for Early Years Settings**

Settings need to nominate a ‘**Key Contact’ and if possible, a ‘Deputy’** and update Charlotte Percival of any changes to staff contact details. In most circumstances the Key Contact and Deputy will be the settings Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL.

**4.2 Communication with Early Years Settings**

The information sent to the setting by Charlotte Percival in the ‘Initial Notification email’ will include the following information:

* Child/Young Person’s Name
* Child/Young Person’s Date of Birth
* Date of Incident
* The Police Reference No.

**5. Roles and Responsibilities**

**5.1. Police Administrator Roles & Responsibilities**

It is expected that all Police Officers attending Domestic Abuse incidents will record on Police systems the details of the schools and early years settings that are attended by all children involved in Domestic Abuse incidents.

The Harm Assessment Unit will produce a spreadsheet each day from Police Systems which will show the details of all DA incidents in Shropshire that have been recorded in the last 24hrs.

The daily sheet will be shared at the earliest opportunity with Shropshire Councils Education representative who will review and make appropriate referrals to settings.

Operation Encompass referrals will also be sent in relation to Children who have been reported missing to Police in the last 24hours. In this case The Police Missing Person IT system used to record and investigate such reports known as COMPACT will automatically email Shropshire Councils Education Access department with missing children notifications when they are recorded.

The Education representative will on receipt of the notification research the setting that the missing child attends and make a referral to them in the same way that it is done for reports of Domestic Abuse.

Note: **Operation Encompass operates all the year round**. Notifications will still be sent to make staff aware that a child may have been witness to a domestic abuse. There is an understanding that settings may not be available to respond to alerts during holiday periods.

**5.2. Early Years Settings Key Contact Roles and Responsibilities for Operation Encompass**

Early Years Settings participating in Operation Encompass will:

* Nominate a ‘Key Contact (DSL) and ‘Deputy Contact’ (DDSL) who will be the primary persons to receive Operation Encompass notifications
* Understand the confidential nature of any information passed to them, in the same way as any Child Protection information
* Ensure there is a record of the Operation Encompass notification and any intervention or support offered following the Operation Encompass notification. This includes decisions not to act. This information must be made on the child’s record and stored securely in the settings own safeguarding recording systems.
* It is suggested that Operation Encompass Information is stored in the same manner as Child Protection paperwork that is held by the setting.
* Be responsible for informing Parents/Carers and the Registered Person/Body that the setting is part of Operation Encompass, settings may wish to use the basic template letter in Appendix 5. Each setting can amend the letter as per the individual settings’ requirements.
* The Registered Person/Body with safeguarding responsibility must be made aware the setting is part of Operation Encompass and should have knowledge of the project, its aims and responsibilities of all staff involved.
* Settings are also highly encouraged to include in the settings prospectus and on the settings website that the setting is part of Operation Encompass, ensuring future parents/carers are informed of the involvement in the process.

**6. Change of Key Contact**

If there is a change to the: Key Contact or Deputy, settings should contact the Early Years Safeguarding Officer at: [charlotte.percival@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.percival@shropshire.gov.uk)

**7. Supporting the Children**

Settings and the key contacts are encouraged to:

* Receive the daily Operation Encompass Notifications and make professional judgements in relation to any actions/support to be given to the child
* Be the ‘champion’ for the children
* Build a relationship with the children, go at the child’s pace, be guided by them, follow their lead and develop trusting relationships
* Monitor the child at the start of the day, their emotional wellbeing and their attendance acknowledging what they have been through/witnessed and may be worried about.
* Help the child make sense of the way they are feeling or behaving
* Help the child develop coping strategies
* Co-ordinate a support package around the child

**8. Information Sharing**

The purpose of sharing information is to enable the setting to provide timely support to children and for appropriate support interventions to be made available at the earliest opportunity, following what is likely to have been a traumatic experience for the child or young person. The purpose of Operation Encompass is to share information with settings so they can support the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of children. Settings need to carefully consider and explore the reasons for any contact to family members to advise that they have received any Operation Encompass notification.

There are a range of sharing process and protocols in place that permits the sharing of information under Operation Encompass, specifically in relation to the Children’s Act 2004 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The information shared by the Police will only be ‘**proportionate information’** by this we mean information that can identify the child, the child’s name and home address. 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. Police will only share information if a public interest in disclosure outweighs an individual’s right to privacy.

It is recognised that the handling of confidential and sensitive information needs to be dealt with in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the child/young person and family. To address this, staff receiving the Operation Encompass notification must have:

* Responsibility / oversight of Safeguarding within the setting
* Have read and understood this policy including understanding of
* [Information sharing advice for practitioners](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)
* Understand the aim of Operation Encompass – to provide support to a child who may have witnessed Domestic Abuse
* Have accessed available resources.

**9. Legal Requirements**

Section 11(2) of the Children’s Act, 2004 requires Local Authorities and the Police to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of the children. This enactment provides the conditions required under schedule 2 (5b) and schedule 3 (7(1b/c)) of the Data Protection Act 1998 by which personal and sensitive personal data may be lawfully shared.

The MOPI Code of Practice requires the police to obtain specific information when attending at domestic incidents.

Also refer to [Working together to safeguard children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2).

**10. Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why can’t you share more information?**

*Answer:* The information shared must be sufficient to identify the child involved so that support can be provided by the setting to the child or young person. The sharing of additional detail about the domestic abuse incident is not always required to achieve this aim and is in most cases considered not proportionate or necessary to achieve the specified intended aim of Operation Encompass.

**What happens if the wrong setting receives notification for a child no longer at their setting or the setting do not submit information to the Local Authority**?

*Answer:* The setting needs to share information with the Local Authority in order that records can be kept up to date, it is not possible for the police to access information of what setting the child goes to without settings already being in relationship where they notify the Local Authority of this information through existing information sharing procedures. Should a setting receive information that is not relevant to them then this data will need to be **deleted immediately** and an email sent back to the Safeguarding Officer at: [charlotte.percival@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.purslow@shropshire.gov.uk) notifying us that the child is no longer in their setting.

**Should I speak to the parents?**

*Answer:* There are risks associated with contacting the parents when settings receive an encompass notification, and settings need to be certain the potential benefits outweigh these risks before doing so. A setting will not be advised who the victim and perpetrators are in an incident. The child should always be spoken to in the first instance as this is the purpose and aim of Operation Encompass, though this will usually not need setting staff to disclose to that child that they are aware of the incident highlighted via Operation Encompass. There needs to be very careful consideration by the setting to explore the reasons for family members to be advised that they have received any notification around the Domestic Abuse incident from the Police.

For the reasons explained above the Police will only share the minimum information necessary to allow the setting to monitor and support their children. For this reason, there should be no need for settings to make requests for more information. There is **no** expectation to reply to this OE alert **unless** you have **relevant** information to share within the daily Domestic Abuse Triage.

**What happens for children who go to Out of County Early Years Settings?**

Where a report is received regarding a child who resides in Shropshire but attends an ‘out of County setting’ this information will be shared where possible.

**Why can’t we know where an incident has taken place?**

Settings often ask where the incident has taken place, this is generally if a child lives or stay with parents who reside separately. As the purpose of Operation Encompass is to monitor the child’s wellbeing/provide support, it is not possible or deemed proportionate to share which parent was involved, or where the incident took place.

**Appendix 1 - Process map/notification process**

This process intends to notify school/setting where a child may *have been present or witness to a recent Domestic Abuse Incident.* This process does not replace existing child protection/safeguarding arrangements.



**Police attend a Domestic Abuse incident**

Police complete DASH assessment and compile a daily spreadsheet.

The settings Designated Safeguarding Leads receive OE notifications in the morning.

Children’s Services, Education & Health check against systems in preparation for Domestic Abuse Triage.

The settings DSL’s review information as to what is known about the child/needs of the child and discuss support requirements with appropriate staff for the child.

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Police convene daily Domestic Abuse Triage. Encrypted Email notifications are sent to settings through Operation Encompass.

Daily multi-agency Domestic Abuse Triage with Police, Children’s Services, Health and Education takes place.

Settings record information in line with safeguarding recording processes

**Appendix 2 - Types of Support that can be considered:**

* Physical Needs Food*, Equipment, clothing*
* Time out of the setting’s main environment
* 1:1 support
* Buddy
* Making changes to the settings routine
* Referral to other specialised agencies
* Ongoing support from the setting
* Knowing who they can go to for support
* Different expectations
* Informing relevant staff i.e., key person
* Allow child to keep comfort objects i.e., cuddly toys/comforters
* Checking collection arrangements
* Relaxation spaces
* Having staff around who can support
* Assess the child’s Emotional/Physical well-being

**Appendix 3 - Suggested reflections for settings around implementing Operation Encompass**

* Have you used Shropshire [Threshold document](https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Shropshire%20Downloads/Childrens%20Threshold%20Document%20-%20FINAL%20May%2021.pdf) guidance to support your decision making when you receive a notification?
* Contacting parents/carers is not a default response from the setting for Operation Encompass notifications and should not be written into the settings safeguarding procedures, this is **not** the aim of Operation Encompass.
* If you decide after ‘assessment of need’ that you will contact a parent, you must record reasons for your decision within your safeguarding recording system and be confident you have balanced the risks and safety needs before you do this.
* Have all staff in in the setting received training in relation to the effect of Domestic Abuse for children and young people to better understand their role in supporting children and families with Domestic Abuse? Please see [SSCP Training](http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk/professionals-and-volunteers/safeguarding-training/) for further training details.
* Have you thought about how you can you provide opportunities safely for families to talk to you about their concerns?
* Do you need to consult with your SENCO if the child or young person’s behaviour changes?

**Appendix 4 – Preparing for the Operation Encompass Notification/Steps to follow**

|  |  |
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| Incorporate Operation Encompass into setting safeguarding process | Operation Encompass is a process whereby the police and the council will inform a designated member of staff if a child has experienced any domestic abuse incident.  Inform all parents/carers of the setting’s participation in OE notification process (letter template provided in Appendix 5)    Include the information in safeguarding policy, prospectus, and setting website.  Staff training:   * Encompass * Domestic Abuse * setting’s role in signposting and parent self—referrals to services. |
| Identify the Key Contact / DSL email address to receive the OE notification | Check safeguarding records for existing concerns recorded.  Check with staff for recent concerns/brief setting staff on OE alert received & DSL’s decision about type of support to provide.  Put support in place – initial support ideas:   * Quiet space * Peer support * Worry boxes * Children’s online reporting systems. * Breakfast * Uniform * Meet and greet * Silent support   Brief setting staff on setting notification and DSL’s decision about type of support to be provided. |
| Additional support to be considered | Refer to [Shropshire Domestic Abuse Pathway](https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/11893/domestic-abuse-pathway.pdf) and consider referral to Early Help/ Children’s Services or other Support Services – OE Hotline /[Domestic Abuse Help and support in Shropshire](https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/22850/love-shouldnt-hurt-domestic-abuse-support-and-contacts.pdf)  Record what the setting is doing regarding the OE notification.  Record in safeguarding records.  Following initial support, consider setting based pastoral support/other support from within the setting. |
| Monitor and review | Setting’s internal monitoring arrangements  Check on child and update safeguarding records  Consultation with pupils and parent if appropriate. |

**Appendix 5 – School/setting letter to parent.**

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| place setting logo here  Enter date |  |

Dear Parent/Carer

Our school/setting is involved in a national project, which is being run locally in partnership with Shropshire Council and West Mercia Police.

Operation Encompass is a process whereby the Safeguarding Officer will inform a Designated Safeguarding Lead if a child or young person has experienced any domestic abuse incident. This will be done prior to the start of the next school/setting day. Information sharing between professional agencies allows school/setting staff to provide emotional and practical support to their children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can broadly be defined as “any incident or pattern is defined as behaviour of a person towards another person if they are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following - physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse”

Operation Encompass ensures that a member of staff, usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead, is given special training, to enable them to liaise with Safeguarding Officer in receiving and using the information that has been shared, in confidence.

The sharing of details under Operation Encompass is permitted under Statutory Safeguarding Legislation and in respect of the Crime and Disorder Act (for the prevention of crime) and doing so without the child’s or parent’s consent is permissible under both pieces of legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We want to offer the best support possible to all our children and we believe, that where necessary, this will be beneficial in helping us to achieve that goal. Please contact me or the school’s/setting’s Designated Safeguarding Lead should you wish to discuss the content of this letter.

Further information can be found at [Operation Encompass.](https://www.operationencompass.org/) Further information can be found at [Operation Encompass](https://www.operationencompass.org/) . Information, help and support can be found at [Domestic abuse: how to get help - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help)

Signed

**enter name and position**

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| --- |
| West Mercia Women’s Aid |
| westmerciawomensaid.org  0800 783 1359 |
| If you are worried or frightened by your partner or ex-partner, a family member or someone close to you, please ring our Helpline for support, advice and information about your options. |

***Who to Contact***



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| --- |
| West Mercia Police |
| 101 (non-emergency)  999 (emergency) |

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| Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) |
| www.shropsdas.org.uk  0300 303 1191 |
| The service delivers free, confidential advice and support to female and male survivors, young people and children. It is the single point of access to services. You can call if you need a listening ear, advice, access to refuge accommodation, support, advocacy, outreach support or someone to talk to. |

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| Shropshire First Point of Contact |
| Front door for Adult Social Care, Adult Safeguarding, Compass (concerns and early help for children), Family Information, Under 18 and homeless.  The First Point of Contact or ‘FPOC Team’ are part of Shropshire Council’s Customer Service Centre. The team of advisors take calls and emails from members of the public and professionals looking for support and assistance for adults in Shropshire.  We also take calls from professionals and members of the public raising safeguarding concerns over the welfare of a child or young person in Shropshire or seeking professional advice at an early help level for children and their families.  How to refer to us:   * Adults 0345 6789044 * Children 0345 6789021 |

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| National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) |
| 0800 970 2070 |
| Provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation. |

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| Shropshire Domestic Abuse Pathway |
| Refer to: [*Shropshire Domestic Abuse Pathway*](https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/11893/domestic-abuse-pathway.pdf) |

***Who to contact (cont’d)***

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| Men’s Advice Line |
| 0808 801 0327 www.mensadviceline.org.uk |
| Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse. |

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| National Stalking Helpline |
| 0808 802 030  www.stalkinghelpline.org |
| The helpline provides guidance and information to anybody who is currently or has previously been affected by harassment or stalking. The Helpline can provide guidance on the UK law, reporting offences to the police, evidence gathering, and your personal safety. |

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| National Rape Crisis Helpline |
| 0808 802 9999 (Freephone) |

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| National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline |
| 0300 999 5428  help@galop.org.uk |
| Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse. |

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| Karma Nirvana |
| 0800 5999 24  www.karmanirvana.org.uk |
| Providing support and advice around Forced Marriage (FM), Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Cultural acceptance does not mean accepting the unacceptable. One of our key principles is that we never talk to or engage with your family. Our commitment and loyalty is to you and as we understand the fears when family members become involved. |

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| Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Claire’s Law) |
| This scheme aims to provide a formal mechanism for you to make inquiries about your partner if you are worried that they may have been abusive in the past, or about someone else’s partner on their behalf. If police checks show that the partner has a record of abusive behaviour, or there is other information to indicate that you may be at risk from your partner, the police will consider sharing this information with you or the person you are worried about. The scheme aims to help you to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship and provides further help and support to assist you when making that choice. If you wish to make an application under the Scheme phone 101 (the non-emergency number for the police) and request to complete a Claire’s Law application. |

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| Paladin (National Stalking Advocacy Service) |
| 020 3866 4107  www.paladinservice.co.uk |
| Paladin assists high risk victims of stalking throughout England and Wales. |

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| ChildLine |
| 0800 555 111  www.childline.org.uk |
| ChildLine is the UK’s free, confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people. |

**Appendix 6 - Record of referral form**

**Op Encompass** Record of referral

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Today’s date |  |
| School/setting name: |  |
| Child’s name and DOB:  Date of incident: | Incident on |
| Police reference number |  |

\*\*\* Please note that schools/settings are still expected to follow the usual Shropshire Safeguarding reporting procedures via **F.P.O.C**. alongside OE notifications. \*\*\*

This form is **not** a replacement for the process outlined above.

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| Additional information: |
| There is **no** expectation to reply to this OE alert ***UNLESS*** you have *relevant* information to share within the daily Domestic Abuse Triage.  If this is the case, please email [**compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk**](mailto:compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk) with an email title of “**FAO** **Domestic Abuse Triage”** by 11am if possible.  Please **DO NOT send this** **information to the Safeguarding Officer: Charlotte Percival.** |

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| *For school/setting use* Comments for DA Triage.  Email to [compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk) |
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|  |
| Completed by Date: |