

# Operation Encompass

Supporting children affected by domestic abuse

“It’s every child’s right to be supported and safeguarded.”



**CLEVELAND  
POLICE**



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# What is domestic abuse?

The cross government definition (2013) of domestic violence and abuse which has been adopted by Cleveland Police and all participating agencies is:

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 encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- **Psychological**
- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Financial**
- **Emotional**

The definition also includes:

- **Forced Marriage**
- **So called 'Honour Based Violence'**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
- **Stalking and harassment**



## 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.

## 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.

**Domestic Abuse happens in all communities regardless of:**

- **Gender**
- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender transitioning and reassignment**
- **Race**
- **Religion or belief**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Marriage or civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**

When dealing with domestic abuse, it is important to recognise the differences between all protected characteristics.

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*“Witnessing domestic abuse is as harmful to a child as being directly on the receiving end of the less serious variety of physical violence, since there is no emotional refuge for a child who has one caregiver a threat and the other frightened.”*

(Building Great Britons, 2005)

## What is Operation Encompass?

Operation Encompass is a key partnership between Cleveland Police, Local Authorities and nominated safeguarding leads in educational facilities or children’s community health support.

The main purpose of the scheme is to ensure schools, colleges or nurseries are notified of domestic abuse incidents, when a child or young person they work with has been exposed to abuse, and who may then need additional support and understanding.

Operation Encompass was first implemented in 2015 in Hartlepool, and is now fully in place and well embedded across all boroughs in Cleveland. This includes state and independent nurseries, schools, academies, alternative education providers and children’s community health support services, such as school nurses and health visitors.

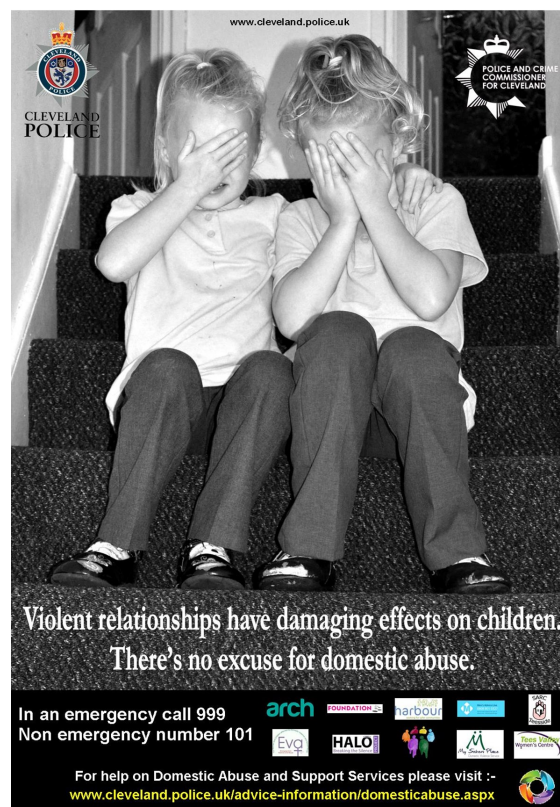
A review of the scheme in 2016 found that the response to the scheme was overwhelmingly positive, and that it is making a positive change to children and victims exposed to domestic abuse.

## Process

Each school day, an Operation Encompass support officer within Cleveland Police reviews domestic abuse incidents from the last 24 hours (or weekend).

Where it is identified that a child or young person aged 0-18 years was exposed to abuse, the officer relays the below information to the safeguarding leads within the child or young person’s school, nursery, college, or health support agency, prior to, or during the day:

- Notification that police were called out in the last 24 hours to a domestic abuse incident where a child or young person was exposed to abuse. If the incident happened over the weekend, the education facility will be informed on Monday.
- The police reference number.
- The time and date of the incident.
- Overview of circumstances surrounding the event.
- The name and date of birth of any child or young person from that educational facility or community health support service who was exposed to abuse.
- Any other relevant safeguarding information that may assist the education facility or community health support service to provide early intervention support to the child or young person affected.



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## Role of the police

Police officers who attend domestic abuse incidents are obliged to check on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the household, and must record details of that young person, including the school they attend.

This information is then recorded on police systems, as well as follow up work such as safeguarding referrals and further investigation work, where needed.



## Role of educational facilities

Every education facility or children's community health support service is statutorily responsible for nominating a safeguarding lead, with whom safeguarding information, including domestic abuse incidents, can be shared, and for providing up to date contact details for that person.

Where the nominated safeguarding lead is absent, for whatever reason, the educational facility or health support service are obliged to ensure a deputy is available.

Operation Encompass Officers should be made aware of the main and alternative points of contact within educational facilities or children's health support teams, and provided with their contact details.



# What are the benefits?

Domestic abuse is very damaging and causes significant harm in a number of ways.

Operation Encompass is one of the tools within a coordinated community response model that can be used to tackle and undo this harm.

## Benefits to schools/community health services

Domestic abuse causes problems in education, learning and development, for instance: challenging behavioural issues, absenteeism from school days or education activities, concentration and learning capacity issues, contributing to poorer learning outcomes and general academic achievement, ill health problems, heightened vulnerability, susceptibility to bullying, substance misuse, self-harm, running away, anti-social behaviour and physical injury.

All of these impacts place extensive, adverse demands on education facility/community health support resources and inhibit positive performance achievements for children; trauma responses interfere seriously with learning and skills development and overall attainment, which, in turn, affects the whole education or health support service, and particularly schools and colleges.



## Benefits to children

Operation Encompass improves the safeguarding of children and young people as a result of partnership working, shared knowledge and practice, and timeliness of referrals. The information sharing with education and community health services enables safeguarding leads to recognise vulnerability and provide silent or active support to the child or young person exposed to abuse. Even a subtle amount of support can help children or young people to recover from trauma and prosper in a safe and secure, familiar learning environment.

Children or young people are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident, or perhaps because they attempt to intervene.

Even when not directly physically injured, children or young people are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent or family member. Children or young people who are directly or indirectly exposed to abuse in the home can suffer a range of severe and lasting effects.

They are more likely to have: difficulty learning and limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behaviour, or suffer from low self-esteem and experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, anger and fear, aggressive and violent behaviours, including bullying, lack of conflict resolution skills, lack of empathy for others and poor peer relationships, poor school performance, anti-social behaviour, pregnancy, alcohol and substance misuse, self-blame, hopelessness, shame and apathy, post-traumatic stress disorder – symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, nightmares and intrusive thoughts – images of violence, insomnia, enuresis and over protectiveness of the non-abusive parent and/or siblings.



## Benefits to parents

Domestic abuse can impact on parenting capacity. Direct experience of physical, psychological and emotional abuse has profound negative effects on mental health resulting in a loss of confidence, depression, feelings of degradation, problems with sleep, isolation and increased use of medication and alcohol. These are factors that can restrict the parent's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child. Recognising that abuse is happening, and getting appropriate support in place for victim parents is essential for them and their children.



# Conclusion

Operation Encompass has had a positive affect on the lives of children across different parts of the United Kingdom. Cleveland Police, in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner and local authorities, intend taking Operation Encompass one step further. They see this as an essential tool to further safeguard vulnerable children. We are presently working to expand this initiative to include midwives, health visitors and nurseries.

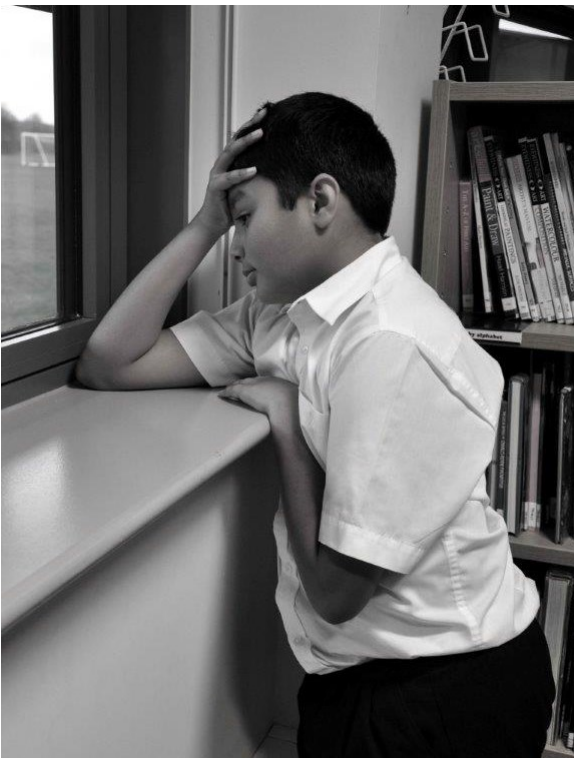
We have a member of staff with access to police systems co-located with multiagency safeguarding and support agencies in the joint Children's Hub (CHUB), operated by Hartlepool and Stockton Borough Councils and another member of staff who works in liaison with the safeguarding teams in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland. The police staff members work alongside children's services First Contact to assess incidents, gather relevant information from other co-located agencies in the hub, and to determine the safeguarding needs of children and young people. Where there are safeguarding concerns, an agreed pathway is identified to meet the needs of the child.

We have seen, all too often, the traumatic effect domestic abuse can have on families and, in particular, the children who are part of that family. As professionals we now have an opportunity to make a difference to the lives of children through the sharing of information and, by doing this, to make school a place where children feel safe and secure.



## Supporting Operation Encompass

We hope that every head teacher and nursery manager will inform parents and guardians about Operation Encompass and highlight the difference the scheme can make to children or young people exposed to abuse.



We believe that by visibly demonstrating support for Operation Encompass children and their families will understand that all agencies and organisations involved in the safeguarding of their children are there to help them.

### For more information

Please contact:

**Email: [pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk)**

**Telephone: 101 or 999 in an emergency**

**Website: <http://www.cleveland.police.uk>**

Operation  
Encompass

In an emergency call 999  
Non emergency number 101

Thank You Operation Encompass



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For help on Domestic Abuse and Support Services please visit :-

[www.cleveland.police.uk/advice-information/operationencompass.aspx](http://www.cleveland.police.uk/advice-information/operationencompass.aspx)