

# Merseyside Multi-Agency Protocol

## Operation Encompass

Knowsley Safeguarding Children Board



St. Helens  
**Safeguarding**  
Children Board



# Merseyside Joint-Agency Operation Encompass Protocol

## Operation Encompass

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## **Introduction**

This protocol sets out a joint-agency procedure to provide, by early intervention, appropriate support for children and young people 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 encompass, 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 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: 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.

Operation Encompass is the implementation of key partnership working between Merseyside Police and designated school staff (Key Adults). Operation Encompass works through information sharing between Police and a named Key Adult in the school.

Working together to safeguard children, Merseyside Police will inform specially trained Key Adults within schools about any domestic abuse incident where the child or young person has been present to allow that school to take appropriate steps to support their pupil during what could be an emotionally difficult day. Key adults within the schools are then able to accommodate the school day to lessen the impact and to support the child if they need it. In its simplest form, they are given some leeway, comfort and support. This can make a huge difference to children and allows them to have a safe space.

A database of all Key Adults will be established and shared with police. Communication briefings will be sent out to Councillors, School Governors and all parents regarding Operation Encompass. The aims and principles of Operation Encompass will be disseminated to police officers across the Force.

The information shared will be only that which is required to safeguard children including:

- date and time of incident
- brief circumstances
- police action if appropriate

## 2. **Aims**

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 practitioners guidelines and is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children`s well-being is of paramount importance.

By sharing this information under Operation Encompass it is hoped that children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse will have access to responsive emotional health and wellbeing support after a domestic abuse incident. Schools will receive information when:

- Police have been called out to a domestic abuse incident
- The child is present in the household at the time of the incident
- The child is of school age

This knowledge, given to schools through Operation Encompass, allows the provision of immediate early intervention through silent or overt support dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child (Appendix 1).

## 3. **Legal Requirements**

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

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. It must take into account any duty of confidentiality owed. A public interest in disclosure must outweigh an individual`s right to privacy.

### [Information Sharing - Guide for Practitioners and Managers 2009](#)

It is recognised that the handling of such confidential, sensitive and often raw information needs to be dealt with in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the child or young person. To address this, "Key Adults" will be identified in each school (a person with Child Protection training, usually the Designated Child

Protection Officer (DCPO) /Head Teacher. The Operation Encompass logs will then be stored within the child protection files.

The Key Adult will be the person available each day to receive the details of the incident and assess the type of support needed for the child. Merseyside Police will hold a database of all Key Adults in the Merseyside area.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities Police**

##### **What will be disclosed?**

Details collated with respect to the child or young person will include their name, age, date of birth, home address and school attended. The school will be told the time/date/location of the incident, the parties involved in the incident (including their relationship to the child), and the child's involvement in the incident.

##### **How will it be disclosed and when?**

This information will be disseminated from either the Family Crime Investigation Unit (FCIU) or Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to named Key Adults within the schools via a telephone conversation. A log will be kept by the FCIU on an excel spreadsheet detailing log number/school/Key Adult/date of referral.

##### **Process**

The records of all police callouts to domestic incidents will be searched to ascertain if a child or young person was present. By using the Vulnerable Person Referral Form (VPRF1) the school will be identified. This will lead to the Key Adult being identified from the database and the relevant information being shared to safeguard the child or young person (Appendix 2).

Incidents occurring on Friday, Saturday or Sunday will be reported to the school on Monday morning. There is currently no provision to report incidents occurring during the school holiday periods, as the aim of Operation Encompass is to provide support in the period immediately following the incident.

A disclosure will be made in respect of all children aged between 4-18 years. Police will maintain a record of the log number, school, the name of the Key Adult to whom it has been disseminated and the date of dissemination.

The Police National Decision Making Model has been utilised for the setting up and development of the project. This supports a review process for the Key Adults within the school to monitor and manage interventions (Appendix 3).

#### **5. Schools' Responsibility**

It is the schools' responsibility to ensure the Police database of trained Key Adults is up to date. They must also ensure that there is a sufficiently trained deputy to receive the information in their absence (Appendix 4). An email address is essential and any changes to the key adult database must be forwarded to the relevant FCIU as soon as practicable. Schools must also make certain that there is an open phone line or appropriate mobile number as a contact for the FCIU / MASH staff to utilise.

Schools must record the information that they receive from the police on an incident form, which must be retained and stored utilising the current process used to store child protection paperwork within the school (Appendix 5). Schools need to be aware

that in the event of any domestic homicide or serious case review the documents may be required for disclosure purposes.

All state and independent schools, academies and alternative education providers (AEP) will participate in Operation Encompass.

**6. Cross Border Considerations**

Where a child or young person is educated in a neighbouring borough, which is part of the Merseyside Police area, information will be shared across geographical boundaries. Incidents occurring in other force areas or children accommodated in schools outside the Merseyside area are not covered by this protocol.

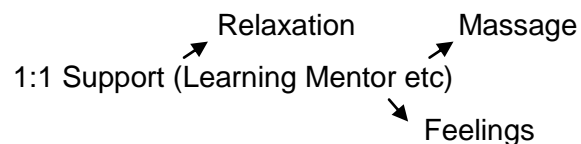
Overt Support

Physical needs      Breakfast    Lunch      Uniform

Time out arrangements

Contact parent – offer support:

- Chatting
- Signpost support



Working elsewhere / different activity

Not working at all - help

Further Support Planning:

- Relax Kids
- Massage
- Gender Conflict Activities

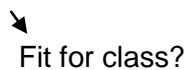
Circle Time      Named Person / People

Buddy

Make changes to school routine

Let child know you are aware but nobody else

Assessment of health / emotional



Referrals to other agencies

Silent Support

Knowing who they can talk to

Lenience to 'school rules' - toys

Different expectations:

- Behaviour
- Work

Systems for spare uniform etc

Inform class teacher / TA

Contingent touch

Checking collection arrangements (end of school day )

Worry Box

Cuddly Toy / Comforter

'Show your face'

Quiet word

Having a staff presence as a form of support through the day

**Process**

VPRF1 completed at scene of domestic incident by attending Officers.



Details of all children who reside at the address entered on VPRF1. Details are to include, name, date of birth and school attended. (If the child is of school age).



Information regarding whether the child witnessed the incident to be included in free text on VPRF1.



VPRF1 scanned onto computer and e-mailed to BCU FCIU. Hard copy to be placed in internal envelope and sent to FCIU / MASH. These actions MUST be completed before the end of the tour of duty.



VPRF1 received and reviewed by FCIU admin staff.



Contact made to relevant school. Details of children contained in VPRF1 passed to Key Adult for dissemination.



Excel spreadsheet maintained by FCIU detailing log number, school, Key Adult to whom disseminated and date of dissemination.

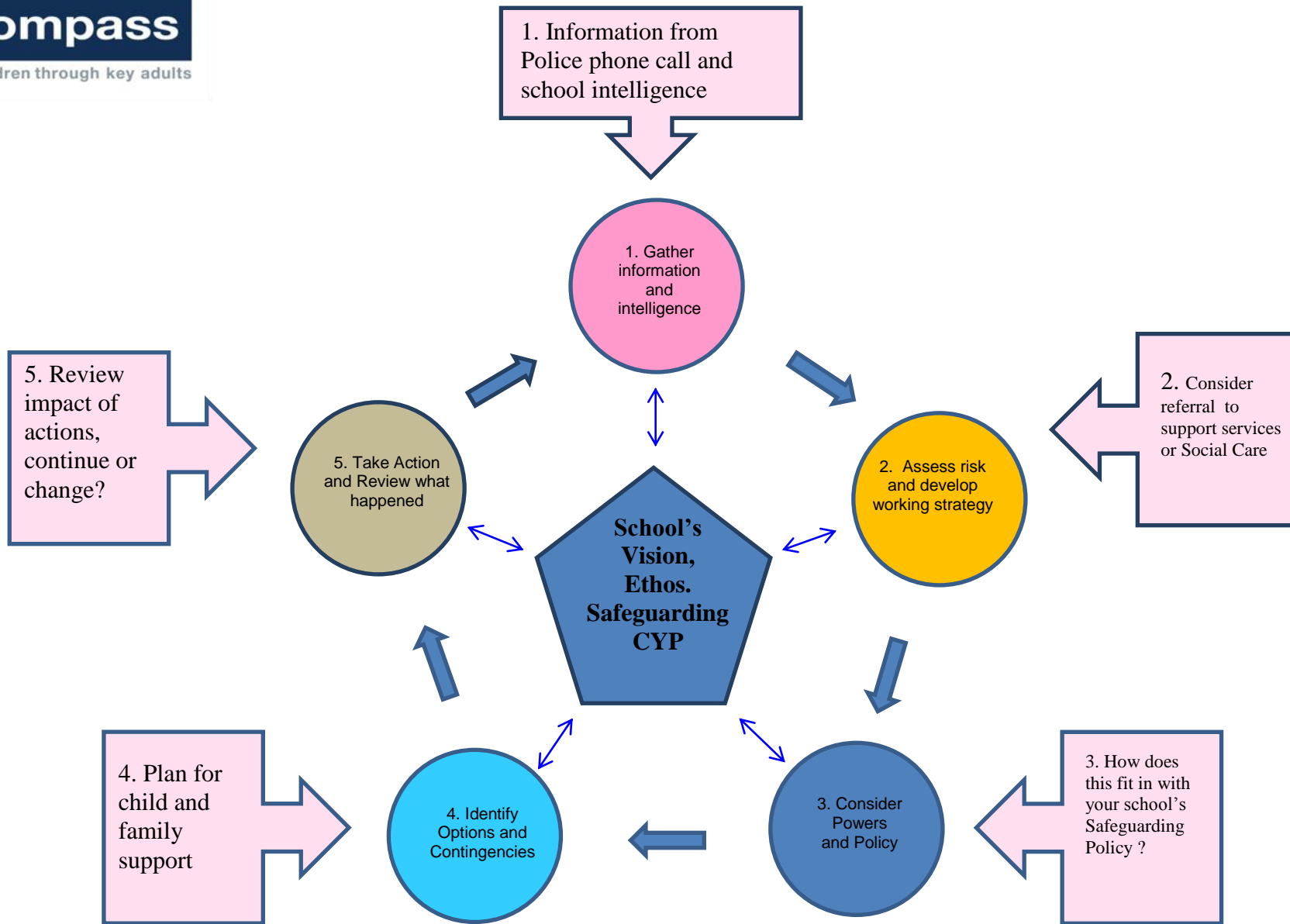


Key Adult to record information received in school child protection file



School to provide overt/ silent support for child





Operation Encompass Key Adult Responsibilities

Name:                                  School:                                  Designation:

Responsibility	Achieved
<p>The Key Adult must have attended the training and be part of the SLT with Child Protection responsibility.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Key Adult must give up to date contact numbers to the police Family Crime Investigation Unit (FCIU) or Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) with an indication of the time from which he/she is available to take the Operation Encompass call.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Operation Encompass file and record of calls must be kept in the same way as other Child Protection paperwork, in a secure and locked cabinet/drawer.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Key Adult can identify a person (trained in Child protection, preferably a Designated Child Protection Officer) who can deputise in his/her absence but must have taken them through the Police National Decision Making Model and confidentiality aspects of Operation Encompass prior to them being able to take a call. Once this has happened then the FCIU / VPU should be informed of the identity of that Deputy.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Key Adult 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.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>Office staff must be informed that when an Operation Encompass call comes in then the Key Adult must be sought immediately.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Key Adult must inform parents that the school is part of Operation Encompass, using the basic template given to each school which can be amended to the school's individual requirements.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Key Adult must inform the Governing Body that the school is part of Operation Encompass and the Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding should have a working knowledge of the project.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	
<p>The Key Adult should consider including information about Operation Encompass in the school's prospectus, thus ensuring that all new parents are informed of involvement.</p>	
<p>The Key Adult should consider whether the information about Operation Encompass should form part of the school website.</p>	

Police Reference Number		Date	
Child's name and date of birth			
Date and time of incident			
Circumstances of incident			
Additional school information including other Operation Encompass calls			
Actions taken and Impact			

## Key Adult Training. Preparing for the Encompass Call **Checklist**

**Operation Encompass aims to give your school a call before 09:00hrs on the first school morning after police have attended a domestic violence incident where children are present.** The checklist and prompts allow the Key Adult(s) in each school to prepare for an Encompass call.

1. Information from Police phone call and school intelligence

Who is the Key Adult(s) that will receive the call?  
If the Key Adult is not available before 09:00 who is the deputy?  
What is the contact number? A mobile can be better because it shows a missed Encompass call.  
How will you record the information? (Information sheet template provided) Where is it kept?  
If the main school number is used, office staff need to be briefed to understand the importance of an encompass call.  
Does the Key Adult have access to Child Protection records?

Check child protection records, check with class teacher for recent concerns. Brief Class teacher on Encompass call received and Key Adult's decision about type of support to provide.  
Initial Support ideas: breakfast, uniform, meet and greet, silent support, homework, scripts, quiet space, peer support, helping children talk, what to say if they disclose.  
If CP concerns call Social Care out of hours (before 09:00)

Inform parents of school's participation in Operation Encompass (letter provided) "as part of the project, school will be notified by police if they attend..." "When this happens we will ..." include the information in safeguarding policy, prospectus, school web site, Encompass website.  
Staff training, role in signposting and parent self-referral,  
Tell pupils of the school's involvement, website, newsletters etc

2. Consider referral to support services or Social Care as ideas

3. How does this fit in with your school's Safeguarding Policy?

4. Plan for child and family support

Consider CAF or Early Help Assessment  
File completed information sheet in CP records  
Following initial support consider school based pastoral support, signposting to other agencies

5. Review impact of actions, continue or change?

School's Internal monitoring arrangements  
Check on child and update incident log  
Consultation with pupils and parent

Be prepared to come across situations and contexts which you could not have planned for.

Signatories to the Joint-Agency Operation Encompass Protocol

**Liverpool Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

**Signed**

**Name Howard Cooper**

**Title: Chair Liverpool LSCB**

**Wirral Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

**Signed**

**Name Bernard Walker**

**Title: Chair Wirral LSCB**

**St Helens Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

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**Name Howard Cooper**

**Title: Chair St Helens LSCB**

**Knowsley Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

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**Name Audrey Williamson**

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