

Operation Encompass Communications Statement

Background:

Operation Encompass is a national initiative which enhances communication between the police and schools where a child is at risk from domestic abuse. As at April 2018 Operation Encompass was in place in 33 out of 43 police forces in England and Wales and has been recognised by the inspection bodies of both police and education.

Operation Encompass is a process used to inform schools when the police have attended an incident of domestic abuse, where domestic abuse incidents have occurred in the homes of their pupils since the previous school day.

The purpose of the information sharing is to ensure schools have more information to support the safeguarding of children. By knowing that the child has had this experience the school is in a better position to understand and be supportive of the child's needs and possible behaviours.

Operation Encompass will complement existing safeguarding procedures.

How will it work?

Schools will all have an identified key adult or adults, in most schools this will be the existing safeguarding lead. Police will share information with the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub (SSH) team, providing a list of children of school age each morning who have been affected by a domestic abuse incident the previous day. Staff from the SSH Team will identify the school the child attends and e-mail the school before 9am, and inform the Head Teacher or a Designated Safeguarding Lead that a child at their school has been affected by a domestic abuse incident. The school will be informed simply that there was an incident and the name of the child. Basic information will be given at that point. The staff in contact with those pupils will then be in an informed position to support them in a way that is appropriate for that particular child or young person, either with silent or overt support.

What is the school professional meant to do with this knowledge?

The single most critical factor in how children cope with exposure to domestic abuse is the presence of at least one loving and supportive adult in their life. Children without any support, who are isolated or lack nurturing adults in their lives, are more negatively affected by their exposure to domestic abuse. By knowing that the child has had this experience the school is in a better position to be supportive and understanding of the child's needs and possible behaviours. The Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead will share this information on a need to know basis e.g. the form teacher.

The initial approach is that the sharing of information should not, in itself, provoke a proactive response to individual children by the school/professional, but informs their response to any presenting behaviour. Some schools will have the staff and resources to reassure the child that they know. This can be a real relief to a child as it can give them a tacit permission to talk about how they feel and what has been happening to them. The key aim of this process however, is to ensure that the child is offered sensitivity and understanding following a distressing incident.

What domestic abuse resources can be accessed within the Sheffield area in order to further support children and their families?

- Sheffield Domestic Abuse Services and Helpline 0808 808 2241 (Freephone 6 days a week) www.idas.org.uk, info@idas.org.uk plus web chat facility and online referral option
- Support for perpetrators: Inspire to Change, www.inspiretochange.co.uk
- Victims of sexual abuse: Hackenthorpe Lodge Sexual Assault Referral Centre www.hackenthorpelodge.uk
- SRASAC www.sheffieldrapecrisis.org.uk
- Therapeutic Support: services listed at www.sheffielddact.org.uk/gethelp
- DA Disclosure Scheme/Clare's Law – For advice contact IDAS or SY Police

For further information about Sheffield Services www.sheffielddact.org.uk or at <http://learnsheffield.co.uk/Partnerships/Healthy-Minds?id=swr&pid=downloads>

