

Operation Encompass

The Operation Encompass Scheme within Merseyside Police aims to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within an educational setting about incidents whereby a child in their setting has been exposed to domestic abuse or hate incident. This enables the DSL to respond appropriately in order to ensure the appropriate safeguarding and support is in place within their setting. The purpose of the scheme is to share information in order to reduce the risk of harm to the child/children and to reduce the number of cases reaching crisis levels before intervention.

What is domestic abuse?

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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 sexual orientation. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

The definition includes 'honour' based violence (HBV), female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

What is a hate incident/hate crime?

Hate motivations

Nationally, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service record hate crimes and hate incidents that have either been or perceived to have been motivated by hostility or prejudice due to a person's:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion / belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity or a combination of the above

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Hate incident

'Any non-crime incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.'

Hate crime

'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.'

Operation Encompass Procedure

1. The Operation Encompass Officer will identify police safeguarding reports involving children from the last 24 hours (48 hrs from a weekend) and identify those records that constitute a domestic abuse incident or a hate crime/incident.

2. The Operation Encompass Officer will review those safeguarding reports to identify those that fall within Operation Encompass criteria, namely:

A child aged under 18 witnessed a domestic abuse incident or was present in the address where the incident occurred (even if they were believed to be asleep).

OR

The child did not witness the incident but was spoken to by police investigating the matter (so for example, the incident occurred when child was at school but the child was present when police attended to speak to parents later in the day).

OR

The child was not present when incident occurred or when police attended but it is believed that the child will notice injury to parent/s sustained during the incident or will notice damage to property caused during the domestic incident.

3. Domestic abuse safeguarding reports are risk graded (standard, medium, high) to reflect the perceived risk of serious harm being caused. The Operation Encompass Officer will prioritise the disclosure of high-risk cases, and then progress to medium and standard cases.

4. The Operation Encompass Officer will identify the educational establishment that the child/children attend. They will call the setting and ask to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, advising that they are ringing with an Operation Encompass disclosure. The disclosure will only be given to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

5. The Operation Encompass Officer will seek to confirm with the DSL that the child is registered at the educational setting and will complete checks to ensure disclosure is being given to the correct setting in order to prevent data security breach (e.g. confirmation of DOB, parent/carer details, address details). Once these checks are completed then disclosure will be given.

6. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a record of the Operation Encompass disclosure in the child's safeguarding record. The Operation Encompass Officer will also make a record of the disclosure on police system. The Operation Encompass Officer will ask the DSL to confirm whether the child is present at the setting at the time of the disclosure, whether there are any existing safeguarding concerns about that child/family and to indicate what, if any, action nursery/school/college might take (we appreciate that this might not have been decided at the time of the call).

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7. Following receipt of the disclosure, nurseries/schools/colleges should follow their safeguarding training and procedures in terms of what, if any, action they take next. However, below are some examples of actions that we often see taken by schools following an Operation Encompass disclosure:

- DSL to alert child's class teacher/key worker of the disclosure and to monitor the situation.
- A staff member whom child has a good relationship with to speak to child to check if they would like support/to talk etc.
- Phone call to parent/s to make contact and offer support (in terms of domestic abuse this could be to explore altered drop off/pick up times if it was feared a perpetrator would attend to try and approach child or parent at home time for example. Mum or dad, and often child, may have moved temporarily to an alternative address or there might be bail conditions – a telephone call to parent enables any temporary changes to be discussed).
- Referral to Early Help.
- The Operation Encompass disclosure might be the final piece of information that, added to existing concerns, prompts a single contact form into Safeguarding Hub.