

Appendix Six: Supplementary Note on Domestic Abuse

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 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. This definition includes so called Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage (FM), and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.

By these means the perpetrators deplete the victim's self-worth, isolating them from others with the perpetrators exercising psychological and emotional control. Intimate partner violence which disproportionately affects women includes physical and/or sexual violence, intimidation, isolation and the micro management of everyday life.

Financial abuse is a significant problem for people who are in abusive domestic arrangements. Control of money can sabotage efforts to gain independence through employment. This is usually linked to coercive and controlling behaviour.

All domestic abuse falls under the remit of the Police Service including cases involving 16 – 17 year olds. Where an offence has been committed officers should arrest the suspect where there are reasonable grounds to suspect their involvement in the alleged crime and the conditions under Section 24 of PACE are met. The exercise of arrest powers will be subject to a test of necessity based around the nature and circumstances of the offence and the interests of the criminal justice system. An arrest will only be justified if the constable believes it is necessary for any of the reasons set out in Section 24(5). Failure to arrest in appropriate circumstances may result in a neglect of duty or other failure in standards. Officers must fully justify any decisions not to arrest and clearly document their decision. This challenges and holds perpetrators to account for their actions. However, positive action also requires enhanced levels of victim care. The police strategy is that the safety of victims is paramount, particularly where children are involved and referral to independent advocates is part of police procedures.

Positive outcomes for those affected by domestic abuse are achieved in many ways including:

- Successful prosecution;
- Reducing cases of repeat victimization;
- Prevention through other means such as the Sanctuary scheme, civil remedies, re-housing and
- Pro-active operations and referrals to support agencies.