

# WILTSHIRE POLICE FORCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



## DOMESTIC ABUSE

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Wiltshire Police is committed to delivering a high quality service to all victims of domestic abuse. Investigations will be conducted thoroughly, professionally and to a high ethical standard, having due regard to issues of diversity.

We are committed to building a safer community by providing a quality of service to victims and by focusing on the prosecution of offenders.

We will achieve this within a multi-agency environment, acting as a gateway to the services provided by ourselves, external agencies and voluntary organisations.

We will maintain a corporate approach to the investigation of Domestic Abuse, whilst ensuring that the individual needs and requirements of the survivors of domestic abuse are met. All action will be in the interests of the victim and any associated child.

The Force policy for the response to Domestic Abuse remains one of 'Positive Action'. Positive action includes arrest when an offence has been committed and that officers should consider the incident as a whole and carry out a thorough investigation, which does not just rely on the evidence of the victim.

## **POLICY AIM**

- To protect the lives of both adults and children who are at risk as a result of domestic abuse;
- To thoroughly investigate all reports of domestic abuse, taking into account previous reports and the presenting situation;
- To facilitate effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system;
- To adopt a proactive multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing domestic abuse.
- To raise awareness of domestic abuse through better education and partnership work, in particular within minority communities.

## **APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all Wiltshire Police officers and staff who have their own concerns or to whom concerns are raised in relation to Domestic Abuse. This policy will impact upon all of Wiltshire's communities and our community safety partners.

## **LEGAL BASIS and DRIVING FORCE**

Domestic Violence Crime & Victims (Amendment) Act 2012  
Sexual Offences Act 2003  
Criminal Justice Act 2003  
Youth Justice & Criminal Evidence Act 1999  
Family Law Act 1996  
Protection from Harassment Act 2012  
Common Law (Trespass, Assault and Breach of Peace)  
Offences Against the Person Act 1861  
Public Order Act 1986  
Criminal Damage Act 1971  
Criminal Law Act 1997  
Criminal Justice Act 2003  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Equality Act 2010  
CPS Guidance on Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence 2005

## RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES and OTHER DOCUMENTS

Working Together 2013

Vulnerable Adults Abuse and Safeguarding Missing Persons

Hate Crime Policy and Procedure

Repeat Victimisation Procedure

Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding Adults at Risk in Swindon and Wiltshire

National Guidance for Stalking and Harassment, Forced Marriage, Investigation of Rape and Murder Investigation all now found within the Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) interim guidance 2012-2013

Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)

Interim Guidance 2011-2013

Swindon and Wiltshire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2012-2014

Firearms Administration Policy

Shotgun Administration Policy

Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law, 2012 to 2013

HM Government (2007) Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse

Home Office (2006) Tackling Sexual Violence Guidance for Partnerships

Skills for Justice. Preventing and Tackling Domestic and/or Sexual Abuse/Violence

## AUTHORISED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

[NB: links below go to the APP secure site - users must register to access the APP secure site].

- [Domestic Abuse](#) [Major Investigation and Public Protection > Domestic Abuse]
- [Prosecution & Case Management](#) (see Enforcing Sentences, Victim & Witness Care and Possible Justice Outcomes)

## DATA PROTECTION

Any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual recorded as a consequence of this policy and procedure will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations and the [Force Data Protection Policy](#).

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

This document has been assessed as suitable for public release.

## MONITORING and REVIEW

Detective Superintendent Public Protection Department is responsible for the accuracy and integrity of this document. This policy will be continuously monitored, and updated when appropriate, to ensure full compliance with legislation. The Public Protection Department will review this process to ensure that all aspects are being adhered to in accordance with the framework of this policy.

Detective Superintendent Public Protection Department is responsible for this policy and procedure. All queries relating to this policy or procedure should be directed to the Public Protection Department.

## WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT THIS POLICY

Detective Superintendent Public Protection Department is responsible for this policy and procedure. All queries relating to this policy or procedure should be directed to the Public Protection Department.

## PROCEDURE

### 1. DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Although Wiltshire police and partners have adopted the term Domestic Abuse we recognise the Home Office definition of Domestic Violence which is defined as:

*'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<sup>1</sup> 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 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<sup>2</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> *Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or stepfamily.*

<sup>2</sup> *This 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.*

### 2. RESPONSIBILITY OF CALL TAKERS

#### 2.1 Minimum Standard of information when taking an initial report of domestic violence

On receipt of a report of Domestic Abuse the call taker will complete an initial assessment to determine the level of response which will be recorded upon a STORM log. Call takers will seek the following information when taking an initial report of domestic violence:

#### 2.2 Location and identity of

- Person making the report
- Suspect
- Location of other parties -children and witnesses

#### 2.3 Ascertain the following

- Are there any injuries?
- The severity of any injuries;
- Is medical assistance required;
- Have any weapons been used?
- Does any person present appear drunk or taken drugs;
- Are any children present? If so are they safe?
- Is there a history of domestic violence? Information given in the form of disclosures made by victims relating to domestic abuse history must be acted on, with attending officers advised at the earliest opportunity.

- Description of the suspect;
- Are there any court orders?
- Are there any special needs, e.g. disability, language difficulties? Is an interpreter required?
- Is the victim or another member of the household an adult at risk or vulnerable adult? If so who is their main carer?

## 2.4 Record

- Identity of the parties involved including victim and children ensure names are spelt correctly
- Sex,
- Dates of birth,
- Home address,
- Telephone numbers;
- Details of the demeanour of the victim/suspect/witnesses;
- A first account of what the caller says has happened recording it verbatim.

## 2.5 Research

Call takers and attending officers will ensure appropriate checks are made on Niche and other police systems for;

- Previous reported domestic violence history,
- PNC checks,
- Bail conditions,
- Civil injunctions,
- Court orders relating to child contact,
- Child protection, vulnerable adult intelligence systems,
- ViSOR (if appropriate);
- PND (if appropriate)

## 2.6 Minimum Standards - Deployment

Call takers will:

- Despatch an officer having prioritised the safety of officers and others;
- Ensure that medical assistance is en-route, where appropriate;
- Make sure that support/back up is available for the officer(s) attending the incident,

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATTENDING OFFICER

### 3.1 Powers of entry

- Under section 17(1) (b) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, a constable may enter and search any premises for the purpose of arresting a person for an indictable offence.
- Under section 17(1) (e) of PACE, a constable may also enter and search premises for the purpose of saving life or limb or preventing serious damage to property (**in the exercise of police protection powers if entry to premises is refused, this section may give adequate powers**);
- Under Common Law a constable has the power to enter premises to prevent or deal with a Breach of the Peace;
- Under section 48 of the Children Act 1989, a warrant may be obtained to search for children who may be in need of emergency protection;

A record of all searches must be made in accordance with PACE and PACE Codes of Practice.

### 3.2 Actions on arrival at the scene

To ensure both the safety of officers, victims and children and to secure and preserve evidence, on arrival at the scene officers should:

- Re-assess victim and officer safety, including immediate risk (potential access to weapons)
- Make an immediate assessment of the need for first aid or other medical assistance
- Separate parties, including any children;
- Confirm the identity of the suspect
- Establish who is or was at the scene, **including any children, young persons and vulnerable adults** (if there is a vulnerable adult or adult at risk check who their main carer is and whether they are known to social services or subject to a safeguarding alert/process/plan?)
- Request appropriate checks on the suspect and household, including warrants, bail conditions, civil orders, and children subject to protection plans , if not already done;
- Make accurate records of everything said by the suspect, victim and any witnesses, including children (ensuring compliance with PACE). Significant statements or admissions to offences of domestic violence by perpetrators **must always** be recorded by attending officers. Golden Hour principles and standards of initial investigation will not be affected by significant statements by the perpetrator and such enquiries must continue, irrespective of such disclosures.
- Consider taking photographs and/or using a video camera to record evidence;
- Secure the safety of victims in their home, e.g., if appropriate or the home of a relative or refuge.
- Obtain an overview of what has occurred, taking into account the established risk factors associated with domestic abuse.
- Ensure that information relating to the suspect is included in any risk assessment processes.
- Provide the victim with time and space away from the perpetrator, thus maximising the opportunity to reassure the victim and create opportunity for disclosure to the attending officers.

### 3.3 Protecting the scene

Officers should take the following action appropriate to the circumstances;

- Note that both the victim and suspect are considered the primary scenes, and victims safety, state of mind and ability to cope with forensic requests should be a priority.
- Secure, preserve and control the scene to limit any access until sufficient information is available to make an informed assessment of the situation.
- Consider any potential areas of contamination that could impact upon the integrity of evidential material;
- Consider erecting cordons and putting in place a log list to record persons entering and leaving (dependent upon the severity of the incident);
- Request a CSI to attend or record the reasons on the PPD1, why a CSI was not called or did not attend;
- Ensure the scene is photographed or videoed as soon as possible.

### 3.4 Police Powers of Arrest

Officers must note that charging standards are for custody officers and the CPS to use to determine what offence to charge a suspect with. The standards **do not** affect police powers of arrest.

Section 110 Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2003 replaced section 24 of PACE with new powers.

You can arrest for **any offence but only if** there are *reasonable grounds to believe* **one** of the following necessity conditions applies:

- Child or vulnerable person: to protect
- Obstruction of the highway: prevent
- Physical Injury: to prevent (cause/ suffering, self /other)
  
- Public decency: to prevent offences against
- Loss or damage to property: to prevent
- Address not known or doubted
- Name not known or doubted
- Effective/prompt investigation of offence: to allow for
- Disappearance of person: preventing prosecution

### 3.5 Positive action

Positive action includes arresting the suspected perpetrator for any offence as detailed above. It is the decision of the attending officer whether or not to arrest a suspect and therefore victims should not be asked whether they require an arrest to be made.

The requirement for 'positive action' means that in all Domestic Abuse cases, officers should consider the incident as a whole, not just the oral or written evidence of the victim.

Officers must focus efforts from the outset on gathering alternative evidence in order to charge and build a prosecution case that does not rely entirely on the victim's statement. This is particularly important where at any stage the victim appears not to support a prosecution.

The victim's views are always to be considered but the decision to arrest remains with the officer even if the victim does not wish to pursue a complaint. All actions will be taken in the interests of the victim in order to take the pressure and responsibility away from the victim.

It is acknowledged that on occasion, the victim may not agree with the actions taken, however the overriding concern is to keep the victim safe. Only by protecting the victim can we be truly focused on the survivors of domestic abuse.

**Previous withdrawals of support for a prosecution should not adversely influence the decision making in whether to arrest for an offence.**

The Domestic violence definition does not require 'violence' to have been used and 'abuse' is much wider than any criminal allegations.



### 3.6 If the Suspect **IS NOT** arrested;

- Officer **MUST** record their rationale in PNB and on the PPD1
- Justify why an arrest has not been made
- Record what action has been taken to safeguard victim and family
- Gather evidence to support future criminal prosecutions/civil proceedings e.g. those relating to child contact.
- Officers **will not** under any circumstances interview a suspect of domestic abuse by way of contemporaneous notes (For guidance, please see Force [Contemporaneous note Interview](#) policy).
- If an interview is required, and only if the suspects arrest cannot be justified, arrangements will be made for the suspect to be interviewed at a Police station under invite.
- Supervisors reviewing PPD1's will be expected to make reference within the PPD1 to the decision taken not to arrest as part of their oversight into such matters, cognisant of the decision making process from the attending officer and the risks known at that time.

### 3.7 The submission of charge or summons files for domestic abuse

- The Directors Guidance will **always** be referred to and fully complied with. If the outcome deems that the appropriate form of process is by way of a summons, the first line supervisor (Sergeant) or a supervisor on duty (Sergeant or Inspector) will authorise the summons and ensure the file with the CPS for consideration during that tour of duty or as soon as practicable afterward. Summons files for domestic abuse **must** remain victim focussed and be treated as a priority.
- If the Streamlined Process is to be used for Domestic Abuse Cases, officers must note that a full evidential witness statements will be always be required from victims and witnesses. (For guidance, please see force Streamlined Process under Policy and Procedure)
- If charges or summons are authorised the case file will be delivered electronically, and in person, to the Integrated Prosecution Team (CJU File Build) within 24 hours of reporting for prosecution or, during a weekend, by the following Monday. The reporting officer is charged with the personal responsibility to email the Case Managers inbox at Melksham to advise them of the files impending arrival.
- On receipt of the file (which has already been quality assured by the initial supervisor) the Case Manager will, within 24 hours, process that file for the Courts team to commence the laying of the summons process with HMCTS. The Courts team supervisor will then liaise with HMCTS regarding the timely return of the summons to Wiltshire Police.

### 3.8 Completion of PPD1 and DASH risk assessment

Domestic incidents reported to the police falling within the domestic abuse definition will result in the completion of a PPD1, which incorporates the DASH risk assessment (Annex B) This must be submitted electronically to the Public Protection Department (PPD) before **the end of their tour of duty**.

The DASH risk assessment must **always** be completed in cases of stalking, harassment and honour based violence. Should the DASH risk assessment not be completed the officer must record the reason.

In very rare circumstances, a PPD1 will not be required. This will only happen when all of the criteria below are met.

1. A verbal argument takes place which is **not overheard** by a third party (unconnected to the household).
2. There have been **no offences committed** and **no previous PPD1's** submitted in respect of either person involved.
3. There are **no children living within the household (either present or not)** at the time of the incident.

### 3.9 Standard assessment of risk

It is the responsibility of the attending officer to ensure safety measures are in place for the victim and her/his children and to signpost the victim to support agencies. Initial safeguarding measures taken will be documented by the attending officer within the PPD1.

The responsibility for the investigation and on-going management of the perpetrator remains with operational police officers

### 3.10 Medium assessment of risk

It is the responsibility of the specialist Domestic Abuse Investigative Team (DAIT) to ensure safety measures are in place for the victim and her/his children and to signpost the victim to support agencies. Safeguarding measures undertaken will be documented by the DAIT officer within Niche.

The responsibility for the investigation and on-going management of the perpetrator remains with operational police officers.

### 3.11 High assessment of risk

Following attendance at domestic abuse incidents if the attending officer deems the incident high risk the duty Inspector must be informed at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure immediate supervisory oversight of high risk cases and provide support to the attending officer when managing the risk.

It is the responsibility of the specialist Domestic Abuse Investigative Team (DAIT) to ensure safety measures are in place for the victim and her/his children and to signpost the victim to support agencies. DAIT officers will fully support operational staff when managing high risk cases. Safeguarding measures undertaken will be documented by the DAIT officer within the Niche record.

The DAIT team also hold the responsibility for the investigation and on-going management of the perpetrator where capacity allows. An agreement has been reached that in circumstances where, due to capacity, DAIT are unable to deal, the CID or Local Crime Team (LCT) will carry out the initial investigation and where appropriate the perpetrator will be bailed back to DAIT team officers to conclude the investigation. In extreme circumstances, where there are no specialist detectives available, response officers will be asked to manage the initial investigation.

DAIT administrators will link the relevant Standard Risk, Medium Risk or High Risk Domestic Abuse victim flag to the victim on Niche. The current expiry limits are 90 days for Standard, 180 days for Medium and 42 days for High Risk. High Risk flags will be reviewed on expiry, whereas Standard & Medium flags will automatically drop off.

### 3.12 Impact on children, young persons and vulnerable adults

Officers attending domestic incidents must assess the risk and respond positively to ensure the safety of all vulnerable parties, particularly children, young persons under 18 and vulnerable adults, whether they were present at the incident or not.

It is good practice to see the child, young person or vulnerable person in order to assess the impact of the domestic incident upon the them, whether they witnessed the incident or not. Due consideration is to be given to establish if the incident involves any Honour Based Violence.

Officers attending domestic abuse incidents **must** record the following details of Children, Young Persons and vulnerable adults on the PPD1:

- Name, including other family names and any previously used names (correctly spelt);
- Date of birth;
- Sex;
- Normal address;
- General practitioner;
- Primary carer or care arrangements;
- School;
- Full details of the child's/vulnerable adults circumstances, witnessed by the officer, to include
  - personal welfare including evidence of self harming
  - cleanliness,
  - communication ability,
  - injuries
  - demeanour; including anger, aggressive behaviour, withdrawal, lack of interest, hyper vigilance and disassociation
- Details of anything said by the child/vulnerable adult;
- Full details of other children ordinarily present at the address. Ensure a check is made to establish if child is subject to a protection plan

If the child/vulnerable adult was present during the incident the following must be recorded:

- How do they feel?
- Do they feel safe?
- What have they witnessed, heard or been aware of?
- Have they been a victim of direct abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect)?

Notify parent or carer that the information will be shared with partner agencies in line with Swindon and Wiltshire Domestic abuse Reduction Strategy.

If a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm refer to South West Child Protection Procedures and if in immediate risk of harm consider removing child under Section 46 Police Protection powers. In cases involving a vulnerable adult this will be referred to the appropriate community care team in line with Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse in Swindon and Wiltshire.

In both cases officers should liaise immediately with the duty PPD supervisor or between 2200 hrs and 0800 hrs with the Duty Inspector.

### 3.13 Possession of firearms

Any previous reports of domestic abuse and any indication of access to firearms must be taken as increasing the risk. Firearm/shotgun holders who are involved in domestic abuse (whether as a survivor or as a perpetrator) will be flagged and referred to the Firearms Licensing Unit for a review of their certificate. Evidence of domestic abuse should indicate that an individual should not be permitted to possess a firearm or shotgun.

If the Firearms Licensing Unit become aware that a certificate holder may be the perpetrator of domestic violence, then they will complete a PPD1 – containing the information they have available and consult with the Public Protection Department. Depending on the circumstances of the disclosure, the Firearms Licensing Unit may also consult with the Force Incident Manager with view to the firearms being removed from the certificate holder as a matter of urgency.

### 3.14 Lines of investigation

Attending officers should consider the use of digital photography to capture condition of victim, children and alleged perpetrator, damage to property and condition of scene to support the initial report or full allegation by the victim. Digital equipment can also be used to capture injuries to victim/s.

Officers using photographic evidence techniques should:

- Photograph all injuries
- To the victim and suspect,
  - bite injuries should be photographed as soon as possible with an appropriate scale included;
- Photograph or video record all damage/disruption at the scene including damaged clothing and weapons
- Any other evidence that might assist in corroborating victim or witness accounts or proving the offence
- Use CSI photographs whenever possible in domestic violence cases **irrespective** of whether Polaroid or digital photographs have been taken;
- Record video footage of crime scenes when appropriate, and in particular, more serious domestic violence cases;
- Make arrangements for the victim to be re-photographed when injuries may be more apparent;
- Use photographs, particularly instant, pro-actively to assist in the investigative interview, *see Defence disclosure and Suspect interviews*;
- Provide custody officers with photographs to assist them with decision making, particularly in respect of police bail
- Attach photographs to the file of evidence to inform the CPS, magistrates and judiciary.

The previous history of domestic abuse should be explored with the victim and family members, including any previous presentations for medical treatment or third party disclosures. Consider securing evidence from family members, close friends, colleagues and neighbours.

- Attending officers should secure physical and forensic evidence.
- 999 tapes should be secured as a useful source to support a prosecution.
- House to house enquiries should be considered.
- Consider telephony and computer analysis where relevant.

### 3.15 Counter Allegations

When investigating counter allegations, officers should conduct immediate further investigation to attempt to establish the primary aggressor and note/record the comparative severity of any injuries inflicted by the parties.

Records should be made as to whether each party has:

- Made threats to another party, child or another family or household member;
- A prior history of violence;
- Made previous counter allegations;
- Acted defensively to protect himself or herself or a third party from injury.

### 3.16 Information to be included in Officers statement and prosecution file

Interviews will cover the officer's initial appraisal of:

- Victim's injuries;
- Suspect's injuries;
- Presence of children and/or vulnerable adults (adults at risk) and any injuries they may have sustained;
- Any damage to property;
- Observations of the scene, e.g., overturned furniture, broken ornaments, marks on clothing;
- Demeanour of the suspect, victim and witnesses, including children;
- Identification of risk factors (see section 3);
- Allegations made by the victim;
- Unsolicited comments made by the suspect;
- *Res gestae*;
- Significant statements made by the suspect.

### 3.17 Taking comprehensive retraction statements

In the event that a victim indicates that they wish to retract their statement, the officer attending should consult a specialist in the Domestic Abuse Investigation Team (DAIT).

The DAIT investigator will not be expected to take the retraction statement themselves but will be able to give advice to the officer in the case. It is essential that the statement captures the reasons why the victim no longer wishes to support a prosecution and should include reference to them understanding that Special Measures and support may be available to them.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIRST LINE SUPERVISOR.

It is the responsibility of the first line supervisor to review all standard and medium risk PPD1s to ensure:

- Appropriate Immediate safety measures have been put in place for the victim and any children
- Positive action has been taken in respect of the perpetrator
- If children were present that they were checked and impact upon them has been considered and recorded
- Appropriate initial investigative action has been taken and is fully recorded within the NICHE
- The PPD1 is of a high quality of completion

- Names and addresses , wherever possible, are accurate and consistent throughout the report
- All relevant DASH questions have been completed
- The NICHE has a corresponding PPD1
- The NICHE outlines a clear SMART investigation plan and all effective lines of investigation are being carried out in a timely way
- The victim desired outcome has been recorded and considered

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DUTY INSPECTOR.

It is the responsibility of the duty inspector to review all high risk PPD1's unless it is impracticable to do this because of other commitments. If the duty inspector is unavailable then the CIM within the Force Contact Centre should be used as an alternative to review high risk domestic abuse cases. As a last resort a first line supervisor will carry out the review process. With the reviewing of all high risk cases particular emphasis should be given to locating outstanding offenders, ensuring that safeguarding is in place for the victims and any children.

The duty Inspector will ensure that all outstanding high risk domestic abuse perpetrators are flagged on the force risk management portal as part of the daily management process in order that oversight can be maintained and risk can be managed appropriately.

## 6. POLICE OFFICERS AND STAFF VICTIMS / PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

ACPO guidance 2008 should be referred to in circumstances where police officers, police staff and partners or family members of officers and staff are victims of domestic abuse.

## 7. POST CUSTODY PROCEDURES

### 7.1 Bail

Before a suspect is released from a police station officers must:

- Inform the victim of the suspect's impending release and record this notification on NICHE regardless of whether the suspect has been bailed or not
- Ensure NICHE is updated regarding bail conditions, in case of future calls.

### 7.2 Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders (DVPN, DVPO)

Wiltshire police will make full use of the Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) and Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) schemes in order to offer greater protection to victims of domestic abuse.

Following a full investigation, including PACE interview of the suspect, a decision will be made as to whether there is sufficient evidence to charge. If the decision is that the evidence does not meet the threshold test the suspect will need to be released with no restrictions on his/her future behaviour. In these circumstances consideration **must** be given to the application of a Domestic Violence Protection Notice as per Home Office Guidance.

### **7.3 Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)**

Wiltshire police will make full use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, using existing legislation and information sharing protocols, to consider whether an individual at risk of domestic abuse should be informed of the previous history of their partner either through a process referred to as 'Right to know' or 'Right to ask'.

Such decisions will be made in accordance to the Home Office guidance.

### **8. DEFINITION of VULNERABLE ADULT (Adult at Risk)**

Under this policy vulnerable adults (also referred to as Adults at Risk) are those:

- aged 18 years or over;
- who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; *and*
- who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

### **9. FURTHER SUPPORT**

Further and useful documents relating to domestic abuse can be found on the Public Protection website using the link below;

[http://firstpoint/deptinfo/policingservices/PPDandSafeguarding\\_pages/Forms/AllItems.aspx](http://firstpoint/deptinfo/policingservices/PPDandSafeguarding_pages/Forms/AllItems.aspx)