

Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan
National Police Chiefs' Council and
Crown Prosecution Service

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Foreword

Domestic abuse (DA) is a priority for policing and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). We recognise the devastating and long-term impact that this pervasive behaviour can have on victims and their families and children, often affecting every aspect of their lives. This is why we have committed to work together to drive improvements in our response to domestic abuse by developing a national Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan (DA JJP).

'Domestic abuse' is the term that applies to a number of offences committed in a domestic environment, frequently characterised by repeated offending and patterns of abuse often in the context of power and control. Victims will know and often live with, or have lived with, the offender. There may therefore be a continuing threat to the victim's safety, and in the worst cases a threat to their life or the lives of others around them.

In the 12 months before March 2023, one in every six homicides were domestic abuse homicides, and more than one in 10 of all offences recorded by the police were domestic abuse related. Domestic abuse represents a third of all crime received by the CPS and 13% of casework. It is therefore essential that we take the right approach so that we can better safeguard victims, hold offenders to account, and do all we can to prevent the cycle of reoffending and victimisation. We know that many victims do not report these crimes to police or seek a criminal sanction, potentially leaving them exposed to on-going cycles of abuse, therefore, when they do, it is important we respond appropriately.

The domestic nature of the offending behaviour is an aggravating factor to an offence because of the abuse of trust involved. Victims will know and often live with, or have lived with, the offender. The personal connections between victims and perpetrators in cases of domestic abuse can make it difficult for victims to engage with the criminal justice system and support a decision to prosecute.

Domestic abuse does not discriminate; it is experienced by people from all backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life. Intersectionality shapes a victim's experience of domestic abuse and often their ability to seek help.

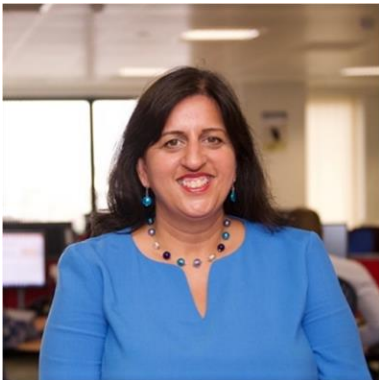
We recognise the interconnection between domestic abuse and other Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) offending, including so-called honour-based abuse and rape, and acknowledge the additional complexities this can create. Women are more likely to be subjected to all forms of abuse, including sexual abuse, which can increase by way of frequency and severity the longer it continues, and can be a significant precursor to femicide. Although the majority of reported domestic abuse victims are women and girls, a significant minority of victims are men. This plan will address all victims of domestic abuse.

We are committed to make improvements together across England and Wales through the DA JJP, supporting police and prosecutors to collaborate and develop better ways of working. We have set out how together we will improve the investigation, prosecution, and our collective handling of domestic abuse cases, building strong cases from the outset. Achieving this will ultimately enable victims to be and feel heard and to obtain the most appropriate outcome and bring offenders to justice.

Through the DA JJP, policing and CPS are determined to work together to transform how we respond to domestic abuse offending.



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Background and Context

Senior leaders from across policing and the CPS agree more must be done to tackle domestic abuse by working together to improve our response and hold more perpetrators to account. We have already seen what can be achieved through strong partnership working at every level through initiatives such as [Soteria and the Joint National Action Plan](#). Learning from these projects has informed our approach to developing and implementing the DA JJP.

For the first time the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 creates a cross-government statutory definition of domestic abuse, to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. New offences, such as non-fatal strangulation, reflect the changing understanding of the nature of domestic abuse, with investigations and prosecutions becoming increasingly sophisticated and complex. This is in the context of a changing world, where the growth of technology, social media and the digital era is leading to an increase in cyber and online facilitated offending which may impact significantly on time and resource.

Domestic Abuse may inflict lasting trauma on victims and their extended families, especially child victims and young people who may not see the abuse but may be aware of it or hear it occurring - leaving untold emotional scars that impact on the mental well-being of victims and others around them.

The growing numbers of either way offences have brought domestic abuse cases in the Crown Court to unprecedented levels, resulting in lengthy delays for victims to see justice served. This is on the backdrop of a system that is continuing to recover from the impact of the Covid pandemic. Therefore, improving timeliness into the criminal justice system is vital. A shared understanding of each other's ways of working, workloads, and organisational challenges must be realised, as well as a willingness to amend current practices to better serve victims through a successful implementation of the DA JJP.

The Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan

Policing and CPS are committed to securing a criminal justice outcome for more domestic abuse crimes where appropriate, understanding that not all victims want or will benefit from a criminal justice outcome. Commitments within the DA JJP focus on the police-CPS interface, with joint accountability for delivery and overall implementation.

We conducted a series of workshops across England and Wales to understand what needed to change so that domestic abuse cases progress efficiently through the criminal justice system. We engaged with operational police officers and prosecutors, commissioners, inspectorates, representatives from the community and voluntary sector, and Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners and government departments as well gathering insight from victims, survivors, those working within the CJS and those who commission services. We have also considered inspectorate recommendations for both policing and the CPS.

This engagement and review process highlighted issues with the quality and timeliness of police referrals to CPS, and the timeliness of CPS decisions and action plan requirements. Victims are feeling let down, unsupported, and professionals could better understand their circumstances or reasons for their behaviours. It was apparent that pressures on both organisations of more complex and increased workloads can allow systems and processes to take the focus away from the needs of the victim. The best performing Forces and CPS Areas for victims of domestic abuse are the ones which have the closest professional relationships, and work collaboratively to achieve improvements and problem solve together.

These insights have led to the actions laid out in this plan. We must act quickly to bring about change, and to make change sustainable we must make a long-term commitment to work together and ensure our culture reflects our aim to work as one team. Collectively, this highlights the need to strengthen the current system and test new ways of working to better address domestic abuse offending through 24 strategic priorities and 22 joint local principles designed to raise standards, improve performance and consistency.

The strategic priorities articulate our joint national principles and areas of innovation, including a focus on improving governance and accountability by using multi-agency partnership boards to promote collaboration and address cross-cutting issues to improve the efficiency, timeliness, and effectiveness of the local criminal justice system.

The joint local principles provide a clear articulation of the activity required by Forces and CPS Areas to raise standards, improve consistency, and strengthen the foundations on which to build innovation.

Governance will be conducted locally through Joint Operational Improvement Meetings (JOIMs) and inform the national Joint Operational Improvement Board (JOIB). The JJP details local responsibilities and sets expectations on how we should be feeding into other governance structures and multi-agency partnership boards, such as Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) and Adult Safeguarding Boards, to strengthen DA governance and avoid duplication.

Outcome 1: Innovation and testing new ways of working improves the timeliness of investigations and the efficiency of charging decisions

National Strategic Priorities

Charging Innovation¹

- 1.1 Pilot the introduction of police and CPS case conversations, assessing their impact on the timeliness of decisions, protective order applications, victim satisfaction and charging and conviction outcomes.
- 1.2 Test the impact of completing an investigation in 21 days or less, receiving a charging decision within 10 working days or less, and charging the offender within 7 days of that decision, on successful criminal justice outcomes and victim satisfaction.
- 1.3 Seek to explore other charging innovation, including police charging in certain circumstances.

National Delivery Milestones

Phase 1

- Develop and agree detailed proposals for “case conversations” and “timely decision-making on charging” to drive pilot activity, engaging with internal stakeholders and develop supportive guidance to optimise success.
- Conduct a landscape review to identify emerging and existing areas of innovation between policing and CPS.

Phase 2

- Identify and agree pilot sites and ensure they are supported to fully implement the pilots in line with the framework agreed by the Joint Charging Transformation Board.
- Review and scope the evidence base for in-custody charging and develop proposals in accordance with the findings.

Phase 3

- Evaluate and assess the charging pilots to determine future roll-out by capturing analytical data and regular reporting.

¹ Forces/CPS Areas will be selected against criteria.

Outcome 2: Robust and effective governance between Police and CPS enhances accountability and leadership

National Strategic Priorities

Quality Assurance and Best Practice

- 2.1 Produce guidance to support joint local case scrutiny panels, examining DA cases to further improve our approach and performance.
- 2.2 Develop a function to cascade learning and best practice to improve the investigation and prosecution of domestic abuse cases.

Governance, Accountability and Leadership

- 2.3 Extend Joint Operational Improvement Meetings (JOIMs) and national criminal justice metrics to scrutinise DA performance and identify areas to improve criminal justice outcomes.
- 2.4 Utilise multi-agency partnership boards to promote collaboration and address cross-cutting issues to improve the efficiency, timeliness, and effectiveness of the local criminal justice system.

Out of Court Resolutions

- 2.5 Using the appropriate pre-conditions, and implementation of multi-agency scrutiny panels, introduce the dispensation for the use of conditional cautions in standard risk cases to improve opportunities for intervention and prevention.

National Delivery Milestones

Phase 1

- Establish a DA JJP Implementation Board to progress the delivery of the JJP and strengthen joint governance on DA across our organisations.
- Produce a delivery toolkit to support Areas and Forces with implementation of the Joint Local Principles. This will include examples of local practice to raise standards as identified through knowledge sharing events, a governance guide to support DA oversight, and a communications package to inform local partnerships.
- Produce Out of Court Resolution Scrutiny Panel guidance that includes direction on panel membership (multi-agency), eligibility of cases and on-going monitoring arrangements.

Phase 2

- Develop and cascade products that clearly define the role of Police and Crime Commissioners in JJP governance and implementation to support Chief Crown Prosecutors and Chief Constables at partnership boards.

- Develop and promote local case scrutiny panel guidance to support Forces and Areas with reviewing and improving their joint handling of DA cases.

Phase 3

- Support and monitor the extension of JOIMS (Joint Operational Improvement Meetings) and provide learning opportunities to maximise their understanding of DA data metrics to scrutinise performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Utilise the Joint Operational Improvement Board DA Dashboard to drive a better understanding of DA trends, ensuring insights are shared with governing bodies and partnership boards.
- Work together to understand and monitor the impact of pilots for the use of conditional cautions.

Outcome 3: Improved culture and communications between Police and CPS increases understanding across our workforces and access to criminal justice for victims

National Strategic Priorities

Response and Investigation

- 3.1 Develop a shared understanding of evidence-led prosecutions to identify potential cases from the outset and improve criminal justice outcomes.

Safeguarding

- 3.2 Pursue protective orders at appropriate stages of the investigative and prosecution process.
- 3.3 Identify best practice in the management of bail and enforcement of protective orders to safeguard victims and support Forces and CPS Areas in achieving this.
- 3.4 Identify, pursue, and prosecute any new offences arising from a breach of bail and/or protective orders.

National Delivery Milestones

Phase 1

- Coordinate a series of knowledge or practice sharing events to create opportunities for police and CPS to come together to share examples of strong partnership working at different stages of the criminal justice process.
- Coordinate a thematic workshop to identify local practice in the management and identification of DA cases with a Summary Time Limit due to expire within 8 weeks.

Phase 2

- Utilising the examples gathered, update the College of Policing Practice Bank so that they can be disseminated wider.
- Deliver joint workshops to identify and promote emerging practice regarding bail and protective orders management.

Phase 3

- Develop a process to ensure police and CPS maximise opportunities to share examples of good work relating to Evidence Led Prosecutions and are aware of and utilise national guidance and tools for victims who are unwilling or unable to support a prosecution.
- Develop and circulate a communications package to reinforce the need to consider DA focused protective orders from the outset, to regularly review applications throughout, and to pursue any new offences that arise.

Outcome 4: Collaborative learning opportunities for police and prosecutors builds expertise and advances the quality of domestic abuse investigations and prosecutions

National Strategic Priorities

Victims

- 4.1 Build our expertise to respond effectively to the complex nature of domestic abuse, and better understand the needs of victims and victims who are children.

Offenders

- 4.2 Drive the recognition of behaviour driven offending in all domestic abuse cases as part of a suspect focused approach and update the joint protocol on the appropriate handling of stalking or harassment offences.
- 4.3 Develop a shared definition of high-risk, high-harm repeat offending, and cross-agency flagging system to identify offenders who present the greatest threat.

National Delivery Milestones

Phase 1

- Create a joint DA Leads network to raise awareness and understanding of new or emerging DA trends, such as domestic suicide, non-fatal strangulation/suffocation and cases featuring cyber abuse.
- Hold workshops to inform the development of a shared definition of high-harm, high-risk, repeat offending, and to support the revision of the joint stalking and harassment protocol.

Phase 2

- Reflect learning on new or emerging DA trends in policy, practice and guidance. This will include updating guidance on stalking or harassment offences to reflect recent changes legislation.
- Using the established shared definition, develop a system to flag high-harm offenders.

Phase 3

- Keep national training products and guidance material on DA under review to promote a victim focused, offender centric approach to investigations, case building and prosecutions.
- Promote this work through joint communications and learning events, and review and evaluate its success in improving our knowledge, understanding and insight into high-harm high-risk cases through scrutiny functions.

Outcome 5: Supporting victims and promoting victims' rights improves confidence in the criminal justice system

National Strategic Priorities

Victims

- 5.1 Identify and disseminate best practice in Victim Code compliance and support all Forces and CPS Areas to achieve it.
- 5.2 Promote national best practice in victim safeguarding, recognising victim needs may change at different stages, and support all force and CPS Areas in achieving it.
- 5.3 Provide clear and consistent information to victims and make early assessments for protective orders and special measures applications.

National Delivery Milestones

Phase 1

- Work with partners to produce materials to promote the Code of Practice for Victims (VCOP). Showcase VCOP in practice, and how we work together to safeguard victims through joint communications.

Phase 2

- Embed VCOP compliance within all JJP multi-agency scrutiny functions to identify areas for improvement and to disseminate emerging practice.

Phase 3

- Through the CPS' Victims Transformation Programme, work together to scope and develop a pilot that offers an enhanced service to high risk and vulnerable victims of DA, as defined by Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. This would include children (those under 18) and those with a disability.

Outcome 6: Improved file quality and proportionate action plans enables better case progression and more efficient criminal justice journeys for victims.

National Strategic Priorities

Files

- 6.1 Use National Criminal Justice Improvement Metrics to help recognise when Forces need additional performance support and identify a national capability that can assist the force to improve its file quality and outcomes.
- 6.2 Work together to improve file quality and file submission requirements and the triage of DA cases.
- 6.3 Develop best practice triage processes so that the system identifies and drives cases that have a realistic prospect of conviction.

Action Plans

- 6.4 Introduce measures to assess the proportionality of action plans, ensuring they are achievable and improve the likelihood of a conviction.
- 6.5 Identify best practices that can drive more timely action plan completions.
- 6.6 Using joint governance arrangements, identify the underlying reasons for incomplete action plans and work together to improve case outcomes.

National Delivery Milestones

Phase 1

- Agree metrics to help identify the Police Forces and CPS Areas which require support to improve file quality.
- Coordinate joint workshops to identify challenges with action plan completion. This will inform the identification of agreed measures to assess the proportionality of action plans.

Phase 2

- Identify emerging practice in triage processes and use insights to develop a product to support those working in triage or case building roles to promote national consistency.
- Develop a review process for cases with 2+ action plans. Assess impact on action plan proportionality and further refine as required.

Phase 3

- Work together to review what national support, tools and guidance is available to assist Forces in achieving better file quality and case outcomes. Develop targeted resources to address gaps and embed them locally to improve file quality.
- Conduct a national deep dive to better understand the factors contributing to non-completion of action plans and develop products in response to the findings.

Joint Local Principles

Outcome 1: Innovation and testing new ways of working improves the timeliness of investigations and the efficiency of charging decisions

1. Domestic Abuse Leads in Forces and CPS Areas work together to reduce the amount of time taken to conduct effective investigations and make charging decisions by exploring and sharing innovation to overcome challenges experienced by our organisations.

Outcome 2: Robust and effective governance between Police and CPS enhances accountability and leadership.

2. Extend the purpose of strategic and operational JOIMs to facilitate operational improvements relating to domestic abuse performance and case building, ensuring DA leads from both organisations are included within the core membership.
3. Adapt existing shared police-CPS performance frameworks to include data so that processes are fair, effective, and inclusive of the needs and rights of the victims, witnesses and suspects.
4. Hold thematic multi-agency panels, to provide local insights into our joint handling of DA cases, including investigation, decision making, timeliness and proportionality of action plans, ensuring findings are shared with relevant DA forums.
5. Deliver a strong and robust domestic abuse out of court resolutions framework, using conditional/diversionary cautions.

Outcome 3: Improved culture and communications between Police and CPS increases understanding across our workforces and access to criminal justice for victims.

6. Improve working relationships and contact between police and prosecutors by establishing a process to enable the OIC/CJ Unit and prosecutor to open a dialogue in domestic abuse cases requiring an action plan.
7. Communicate at an early stage in high harm, high risk domestic abuse cases, to identify reasonable lines of inquiries and consider protective orders from the outset, reducing risk to victims and their children.
8. Work together to improve responses to breaches of bail and protective orders, specifically breaches of non-molestation orders and restraining orders, ensuring

investigations and prosecutions adopt a suspect-focused approach where the behaviour amounts to a new offence.

9. Develop a process to identify (on receipt) cases where the Statutory Time Limit (STL) is within eight weeks to reduce the number of cases that cannot be charged due to a STL failure.
10. Prepare evidence-led prosecutions from the outset by capturing evidence of behaviours and the demeanour of victims and suspects, together with other supporting evidence for an effective prosecution.

Outcome 4: Collaborative learning opportunities for police and prosecutors builds expertise and advances the quality of domestic abuse investigations and prosecutions.

11. Collaborate to build expertise to recognise and consider behaviour driven offences, such as stalking or coercive control from the outset, in all domestic abuse investigations and prosecutions.
12. Implement a feedback mechanism to target triage and file submission failure, capturing local insights to inform national solutions that lead to more consistent and efficient triage processes.
13. Share resources and opportunities to invest in the continuous professional development of police and CPS colleagues, enhancing knowledge and understanding of the processes and needs of both agencies, as well as a general better understanding of domestic abuse.

Outcome 5: Supporting victims and promoting victims' rights improves confidence in the criminal justice system

14. Promote opportunities for all victims to provide a Victim Personal Statement and explain the special measures available that could assist them to provide their best evidence in accordance with the Victims' Code.
15. Through DA multi-agency forums, improve communication with IDVAs and specialist services to increase access to criminal justice for victims, particularly victims from minoritised communities. Use this platform to address factors contributing to victims' withdrawals.
16. Consider how information is provided to victims who cannot or do not support a prosecution, ensuring that this mitigates any relevant risk by working with support organisations.
17. Work with partners to map local DA service provision, ensuring this information is accessible to police and prosecutors to enable appropriate referrals and create effective working relationships.

- 18.** Ensure that both agencies use language within files and communications which is trauma informed and not victim blaming, utilising governance, scrutiny, and training.

Outcome 6: Improved file quality and proportionate action plans enables better case progression and more efficient criminal justice journeys for victims.

- 19.** Improve file quality enabling timely and appropriate charging decisions.
- 20.** Identify the underlying reasons for incomplete action plans and work jointly to find local solutions to target the causes ensuring learning is disseminated to assist those in file build and triage functions.
- 21.** Raise awareness of and, where applicable, initiate the national escalation policy where police supervision identifies potential over build or disproportionate action plans.
- 22.** Work together to develop robust case strategies from the outset ensuring communications achieve pragmatic action plans and timely responses. Maximise opportunities to explain decision making and the evidential value certain lines of inquiry can bring to an effective prosecution.

Glossary

Victim

The term, 'victim' is used to describe a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 also sets out that a child, (under 18 years old), who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of DA and is related to the victim or the suspect is also to be regarded as a victim of DA.

Suspect

A 'suspect' is someone who the police and CPS believe has committed a crime.

Defendant

A 'defendant' is someone who has been charged with a criminal offence.

Offender or perpetrator

An 'offender' or 'perpetrator' is someone who has committed a crime or has admitted it or been found guilty.

Evidence-led prosecution

In domestic abuse cases police and prosecutors gather evidence and build evidentially strong cases so that the prosecution is not focused solely on victims' statements. This means that if victims cannot or are unable to support the prosecution, cases may still proceed.

ANNEX A: Core Commitments

Domestic Abuse: Joint Justice Plan

National Police Chiefs' Council and Crown Prosecution Service and
College of Policing

An evidence base for change

Areas of focus

Efficacy, Culture and Cohesion

By working together, we build strong cases from the outset.

Our Joint Commitment

1. We will work together at an earlier stage to develop, digital or face-to-face, case conversations for complex, prolific and high-harm domestic abuse cases so that we target reasonable lines of enquiry, develop early prosecution strategies, and bring about an increase in successful outcomes for cases that are not suitable for threshold test charging.
2. Policing will improve case referrals, so that only cases which pass the evidential test proceed to a charging decision, while the CPS will take a pragmatic approach to file assessment, ensuring that action plans are issued only when necessary, and are proportionate and achievable; identifying key sequential actions so that effective charge referral decision making is consistently supported at every stage.
3. We will work together to improve file quality and file submission requirements, and the triage of domestic abuse cases.
4. We will introduce multi-agency scrutiny panels that are designed to provide local insights into our joint handling of DA cases, including investigation, decision making, timeliness and proportionality of action plans.

Police Action:

- Police organisations will quality-assure their domestic abuse response against Authorised Professional Practice to ensure that victims receive the best possible service.
- If an action plan is issued but the police take no further action or consider an alternative resolution, the police will inform the CPS with the case outcome.
- Police organisations will actively encourage and investigate reports of police perpetrated domestic abuse, ensure that victims are supported, suspects are prosecuted and engage professional standards processes in tackling this issue; delivering on the recommendations within the police perpetrated domestic abuse (PPDA) super-complaint.
- Policing will commit to problem solving and sharing emerging and promising practice, professional discussion, so that local, regional and national policing benefits from practical information and learning exchanges on a regular basis.

CPS Action:

- The CPS will continue to share best practice and lessons learnt from local scrutiny panels and look to maximise professional development by including examples of best practice within DA Area leads meetings.

- Utilising the principles from Transforming Summary Justice in the Magistrates' Courts and Better Case Management in the Crown Court the CPS will explore ways in which systematic processes, can improve timely case progression and reduce victim attrition.
- The CPS will maximise opportunities to explain decision making, recognising the powerful opportunities for learning that this can provide.
- Ensure that learning and best practice on domestic abuse is appropriately applied to other VAWG offending, in particular, for cases of non-DA stalking, rape and sexual assault.

With our Partners we will

- At a local level, we will work together with community-based services, with a commitment to partnership boards that help to both scrutinise and strengthen our domestic abuse response.
- We will develop methods of identifying offenders known to other agencies and at a local level build a comprehensive approach to disruption and diversion.

Support to Victims

Victims of domestic abuse have confidence in the criminal justice system.

Our Joint Commitment

5. We will conduct evidence-led prosecutions from the outset, ensuring we conduct victim-centred, context-led, and suspect-focused investigations. We will also ensure that these decisions are effectively communicated and explained to victims, and that their views are always reflected in victim personal statements when the criminal justice process is engaged with.
6. At a national and local level, we will work with specialist DA services, so victims are supported from report to conclusion, by:
 - Promoting a better workforce culture, identifying vicarious trauma, burnout, tackling harmful assumptions and victim blaming language wherever they arise.
 - Improving our leadership and understanding of escalating or repeated behaviour, promoting better decision-making and protection of victims through our multi-agency response.
 - Hearing the voices of victims and those who advocate on their behalf to enable us to make the best decisions in their interests.
7. Where appropriate, we will use all available powers, protective orders and special measures from the earliest stage so that victims are safeguarded, cases are strengthened, and offenders are held to account.
8. We will provide victims with clear information about the criminal justice process and raise awareness of relevant protective measures that may be available, so they are better empowered and protected.
9. We will robustly pursue those who breach bail conditions or protective orders, expeditiously prosecuting, and consider whether the behaviour creates a new offence, at every opportunity.

10. We will pursue the best outcomes for victims, recognising that criminal proceedings may not be appropriate in some cases, and we will build a strong and robust out of court resolutions framework, using conditional/diversionary cautions and other protective safeguarding tools.

Police Action:

- Police organisations will, while recognising evidential thresholds within the Code for Crown Prosecutors, identify where prosecution is critical to safeguarding and work with prosecutors to actively pursue justice outcomes.
- Policing will continue to use and develop innovative technologies such as Body Worn Video, to capture domestic abuse evidence and will make best use of this to support prosecutions.
- Policing will work with local partnerships to understand high risk, high harm and repeat perpetrators and develop metrics and expectations around reducing harm.
- Policing organisations will work together to understand and achieve best practice in the use of Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme provisions.

CPS Action:

- CPS will improve our communication with and support of victims, especially when victims do not or cannot support the prosecution.
- CPS will work with IDVAs and specialist organisations to develop a framework maximising opportunities for victims of domestic abuse to receive support through the DA Pathway.
- From the outset, the CPS will consider what protective orders and measures are available to victims and their children and make timely and accurate application where appropriate.
- Informed by victims' lived experiences, the CPS will develop and foster opportunities to support staff who experience domestic abuse, upskilling and supporting DA Allies in their roles.

With our Partners we will

- At a local level we will ensure that victims are well supported by IDVAs, effective MARACs, other specialist services, and that victim and Operation Encompass referrals are strongly governed so that victims and children receive the best possible partnership response.

Timeliness and Efficiency

We will work together to enable quick decisions to secure swift justice for victims of domestic abuse and hold perpetrators to account.

Our Joint Commitment

11. We will build our capability and expertise to respond effectively and in a timely way, from report to conclusion, to the varied and complex nature of domestic abuse.
12. We will reduce the amount of time taken to conduct effective investigations and make charging decisions, through exploring and piloting areas of innovation.
13. We will identify cases where summary time limits are relevant and progress these in an expeditious and timely manner.

14. We will ensure local joint forums assess criminal justice outcomes and that they are empowered by joint performance data to target areas for joint and single agency improvement.
15. We will work with specialist organisations to better understand the needs and requirements of specific groups of victims including those from minoritised communities, disabled victims and victims who are children, and embed this in learning and in processes.

Police Action:

- Police organisations will develop their response to domestic abuse incidents, ensuring that risk assessed, and appropriately prioritised incidents are attended by first responders trained and equipped to understand the dynamics of abuse and demonstrate empathy to victims.
- Policing will make best and appropriate use of rapid-video-response and other approved digital interface methods to improve the timely access of policing services for victims.
- Where arrest is appropriate, policing will reduce the time taken between incident and apprehension and will develop performance measures to support this requirement.
- Police will improve the quality and timeliness of investigation and case standards (as set out in Authorised Professional Practice).
- Policing will recognise and take responsibility for investigations which are unlikely to ever reach prosecution threshold and ensure that effective safeguarding, disruption, and perpetrator management takes place as appropriate.

CPS Action:

- CPS will work with the third sector to develop bespoke learning on more complex issues that impact DA including risk and risk identification, trauma stalking and for our prosecutors to ensure they understand how these can impact domestic abuse crimes.
- Recognising evidence-based learning and working closely with policing, the CPS case progression systems will help support the reduction of threat and risk to victims, including the application of protective measures.
- CPS will work with police to support them to develop robust case strategies from the outset.
- CPS will maximise opportunities in our communication pathways with police officers to upskill and support their learning for example through structured Action plans.

With our Partners we will

- At a local level we will ensure that partnerships work in a timely and effective manner, to support all victims, whether they are engaged with the criminal justice system or feel that they cannot support a prosecution, tailoring services to meet their needs and circumstances.

Next Steps

We will work together to develop a national implementation plan framework which will track our activity against these commitments. We will also meet with local Criminal Justice Board chairs and chairs of Joint Operational Improvement Meetings (JOIM) to support local areas to develop their plans in line with this framework.