

Operation Encompass: working to break the cycle of Domestic Abuse

Educating today • Empowering for tomorrow • Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse

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Background

- Domestic Abuse is a ‘cruel and complex crime’¹ which affects millions of people in our society every year and cuts across all strata of society, across all ages, cultures and races. It is damaging to individuals and to communities, it weakens a country’s economy, reduces productivity and attendance in the workplace, is a public health issue and bleeds into every part of our society. Domestic Abuse diminishes both the perpetrator and the victims. We must all work to achieve the cessation of Domestic Abuse.
- **Children exposed to domestic abuse are victims of child abuse.**²
- Operation Encompass was created to support children experiencing Domestic Abuse through timely information sharing between police and schools. One aspect of this work has been, from the inception of Operation Encompass, our desire to achieve the ending of Domestic Abuse. Once a police area and the related schools embed Operation Encompass they will have already begun to work towards this aim as Operation Encompass has so many positive yet varied implications and effects.

Context

Definition of Domestic Abuse³:

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, economic and emotional forms of abuse.

¹ Foreword to Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 by Home Secretary and Justice Secretary

² Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 Page 16

³ Proposed national definition from Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

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 a person. ⁴

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse:

A Domestic Abuse call is made to the police in England and Wales every 30 seconds. ⁵

The Home Office estimates that two million adults (aged 16 to 59) experienced Domestic Abuse in the year ending March 2018, two thirds of whom were women.⁶

At least two women a week (173 in 2018) and 30 men a year are murdered.⁷

It is estimated that between one third and one quarter of children have experienced domestic abuse. ⁸

It is estimated that 2.7 million children (aged 0-15) live with an adult who has experienced Domestic Abuse. ⁹

Impact upon children

There is a large body of evidence and research that confirms that living in a home where there is Domestic Abuse is harmful for children. This has been recognised by the Government and is a commitment in the Consultation Response and Draft Bill document and Foreword:

‘We will recognise the devastating impact that Domestic Abuse can have on children who are exposed to it’

‘No child should ever experience the trauma caused by domestic abuse.’

⁴ Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

⁵ HMIC 2014

⁶ Home Office 2019

⁷ ONS (2014), Crime Survey England and Wales 2013 - 14. London: Office for National Statistics

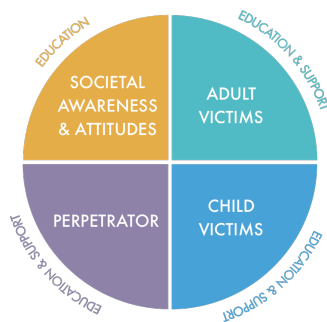
⁸ Home Office 2019

⁹ Office of the Children’s Commissioner

‘No one should have to suffer the pain of this abhorrent crime, particularly at the hands of those closest to them. Children should not have to witness violence and abuse in their own homes’

Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse

This schema is a visual representation of the implications and impact that Operation Encompass has had towards ending Domestic Abuse and the work that we have been undertaking thus far:



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Through Operation Encompass we have enabled more parents to understand that they are victims of Domestic Abuse and how this abuse is damaging to their children, thus developing the understanding that children are victims in their own right. We have also ensured that schools have the skills to offer support to these parents and understand the complexity and nuances of Domestic Abuse. Key Adults now have the knowledge of how and where to signpost victims and access external support. Schools have become a safe place for adult victims to disclose Domestic Abuse (we know that for many, reporting to staff in school is more likely than them reporting to the police) in the knowledge that they and their family will be supported unjudgementally and by staff who have a level of understanding about the issues they may be facing.



The core purpose of Operation Encompass is to enable support to be given to the child victims of Domestic Abuse. Key Adults (DSLs) in all schools involved in Operation Encompass have knowledge of Domestic Abuse and its impact upon children. In turn these Key Adults have ensured that this knowledge has been disseminated to all staff in their respective schools. Through Operation Encompass, schools are able to help children understand what is happening at home and how to best protect themselves both physically and emotionally. We have also raised awareness of our aim to have children recognised as victims of Domestic Abuse in their own right, with their numbers being counted so that the magnitude of the issue can be known and support provided.



Operation Encompass has enabled some adults who commit Domestic Abuse to understand that this behaviour is not acceptable in their home, in their community or in our society. Perpetrators have also been able to understand the harm that they are causing to both their partner and their children. For some the recognition of damage done to their children has been a revelation and the catalyst to change their behaviour. This supports the aspirations of the Home Office as explained in the new Draft Domestic Abuse Bill ¹⁰ Whilst we can never condone the behaviours of perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, working with them is crucial.



The nationwide knowledge of and support for Operation Encompass has encouraged international discussion and societal awareness about the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact that this has upon any children within the household. Media interest has assisted with this growing recognition and education about Domestic Abuse. Community awareness within the locality of each school involved in Operation Encompass is raised as schools publicise this aspect of their work. Involvement in Operation Encompass transmits a very strong message that Domestic Abuse is not acceptable. As ALL police attended incidents of Domestic Abuse are reported to schools we have also enabled a greater awareness of the range and complexity of behaviours which constitute Domestic Abuse.

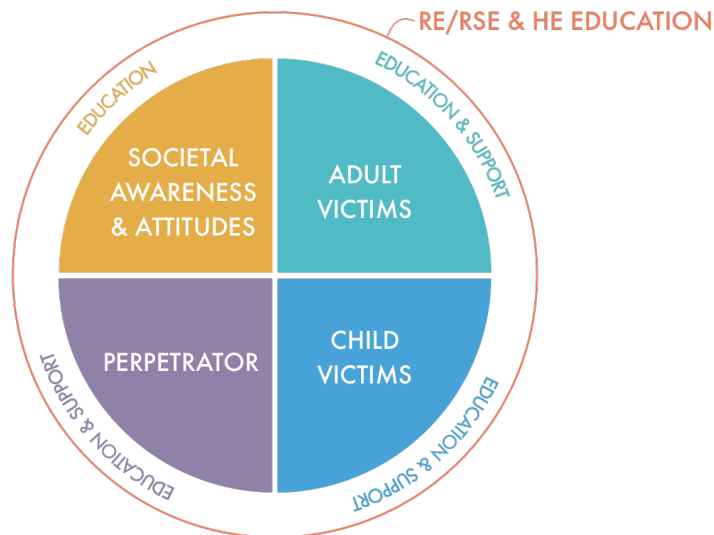
Supporting all of this work is the prevention and awareness work that schools undertake through their PHSE/RE/RSE curriculum. There has always been the opportunity for schools to teach about Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass has encouraged schools to do this and indeed many schools have done so. Whilst there has long been a professional awareness of the role schools can play in breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse, a Joint Targeted Area Inspection in 2017 revealed that 'it is often not part of the curriculum that is prioritised by schools.'¹¹ There is now an imperative for schools to teach this overtly through the new RE/RSE and HE programme heralded by the Home Office in the draft Domestic Abuse Bill and then fully articulated by the DfE in their Statutory Guidance document.¹²

¹⁰ Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 Page 72 onwards

¹¹ JTAI. The multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse 2017

¹² DfE RE, RSE and HE Statutory Guidance June 2019

This work will enable schools to support each of the elements supported by Operation Encompass that we have identified as key to breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse as described in the enhanced schema below:



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Operation Encompass aims to support schools to clearly identify those aspects of RE/RSE/HE education which support teaching about Domestic Abuse. This is Operation Encompass the Next Steps (OEtNS);



This logo is supported by the phrase:

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Together these encapsulate this aspect of our work, are the essence of our focus and clearly articulate and capture what we are trying to achieve through both Operation Encompass and Operation Encompass the Next Steps (OEtNS). Together Operation Encompass and Operation Encompass the Next Steps also support the foundation of the Home Office approach of prevention and early intervention.

Educating today: It is imperative that children and young people are given the opportunity to understand the complexity, prevalence and range of Domestic Abuse. This education should start from the very youngest of our children and then build, through a spiral curriculum, towards our older children. We must educate about healthy, respectful relationships alongside the development of an understanding of Domestic Abuse.

Empowering for tomorrow: We must equip our young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to prevent themselves becoming either victims or perpetrators. They should feel empowered to access support, to safely remove themselves from such relationships, understanding the cycle of abuse and recognising that abuse in any relationship is never acceptable. They should also be able to spot the signs in other people's relationships and know how best to support them.

Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse:

The received understanding is that 'breaking the cycle of abuse' refers to an individual's relationship. When part of Operation Encompass and OEtNS we also use this to mean working towards a cessation of Domestic Abuse in our society. It is sadly clear that month after month, year after year, additional people become victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse - this cycle has to stop and, as schools, we can play a significant part in this work.

Supporting Schools:

OEtNS in no way wishes to replace good practice that is already in place in schools.

We will endeavour to signpost schools to resources such as the Government website Disrespect Nobody, which are already available and which support the development of the exploration of Domestic Abuse from EYFS through to KS5.

Operation Encompass supports the strategic Home Office policy objectives 1 and 2 of the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill:

1. to raise awareness and challenge assumptions,
2. to support victims and their children

And the intended effects:

- permanently change the culture around, and the response to, domestic abuse;

- improve support for victims;
- decrease the incidence of domestic abuse;
- and reduce both the emotional and economic costs to victims, their families and the public and private sectors.

We will build upon the already successful collaborative working across agencies created by Operation Encompass through:

- Promoting awareness of and education about Domestic Abuse in schools but also across the wider community
- Working to mitigate the risk of children growing up to become either victims or perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.
- Empowering children and young people, creating a culture where children and young people along with school staff, feel confident to talk about domestic abuse
- Building resilience in the whole school and wider community
- Further enhancing the support offered to adult and child victims of Domestic Abuse.

Throughout the work of Operation Encompass and Operation Encompass The Next Steps (OEtNS) the voice of the child is of paramount importance.

Using the mandatory RE/RSE and HE curriculum, OEtNS has identified three key areas for exploration which should assist schools to develop those aspects which will enable children (EYFS-KS5) to participate in a developmentally age appropriate curriculum which will equip them to understand and identify;

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Abusive, unhealthy and non-respectful relationships
- Healthy behaviours in themselves and others
- Unhealthy behaviours in themselves and others
- Emotions and the impact that these have upon themselves and others
- The impact of a person's behaviour on those around them
- That rules and expectations exist across society and within relationships
- That abuse is never acceptable
- That Domestic Abuse is socially unacceptable

and to develop emotional intelligence, conflict management, understanding nonverbal communication and positive communication skills.

We know that schools ensure that what they deliver is appropriate to their pupils, becomes embedded practice and complements the PSHE/RSE and HE curriculum culture and ethos of the school.

Home Office expectations and aspirations:

Operation Encompass supports the expectations and aspirations of the Home Office as stated in the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019:

‘Domestic abuse is complex. It can go unidentified by agencies, families and friends, and even victims themselves. In order to transform the response to domestic abuse, it is important that it is first properly recognised and understood.’

‘We recognise that if we want to change attitudes we need to engage with children at the earliest possible opportunity. We know that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, lasting impact on children, with negative effects on their future behaviour and relationships. All children should be supported to understand that abuse is never acceptable ‘

‘We want to help schools deliver high-quality relationships education that covers domestic abuse.’¹³

‘We will introduce regulations and statutory guidance for schools on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education.’

‘In primary schools, we want to equip children with the foundations for healthy, respectful relationships.’

‘In secondary schools, we propose teaching young people about healthy intimate relationships, and the concepts and laws relating to consent, sexual exploitation, grooming, harassment and domestic abuse.’

‘Through this teaching, we can help children to understand domestic abuse, including coercive control, so they can recognise the signs of abuse and stay safe.’

‘Domestic abuse involves many different acts and behaviours. These include physical violence, manipulation, isolation, control, and use of threats and humiliation which harm, frighten or punish a victim. We recognise that a simplistic description

¹³ Home Office DA Bill 2019

may fail to completely encompass the dynamics of power and control, and the risk that control represents to the victim

RE/RSE and HE Curriculum:

The DfE statutory guidance on RE, RSE and HE requires the teaching of healthy, respectful relationships, including domestic abuse, stating that ‘Domestic Abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should be addressed sensitively and clearly’¹⁴

A Domestic Abuse Curriculum:

OEtNS has identified three main areas of focus which should, through a spiral curriculum, build from learning appropriate to the very youngest of children (EYFS) through to learning appropriate for the oldest of young people in school (KS5).

We will focus upon enabling schools to think about appropriate conversations and discussions which will help children to develop:

- ⇒ Emotional Intelligence
- ⇒ Emotional Mastery
- ⇒ Empathy
- ⇒ Self-awareness
- ⇒ Resilience
- ⇒ A feeling of empowerment
- ⇒ And a clear picture that abusive relationships are not acceptable

We believe that schools should see this as a spiral curriculum as this will enable children to revisit, refine, embed and deepen their understanding about each aspect of this work.

Through explicit and implicit exploration of themes and aspects it will help children as they mature to identify domestic abuse in relationships so that we can help them grow up as neither victims nor perpetrators.

We will focus upon enabling schools to think about appropriate conversations, activities and discussions which will help children to develop emotional intelligence, empathy, self-awareness, resilience and a clear picture that abusive relationships

¹⁴ DfE RE/RSE and HE Statutory Guidance June 2019

are not acceptable. We also want children to feel empowered to take action and give support if they feel that they or a friend /relative is in an abusive relationship.

This is a child led initiative both in terms of the content and the pace of the sessions.

Operation Encompass enables all children to be supported and to feel neither guilt nor shame.

RE/RSE/HE Domestic Abuse Curriculum



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Relationships/Friendships

- Understand the range of relationships/friendships at school/home/community.
- Caring and respectful relationships and friendships, awareness of all types of relationships ... equality.
- Online/virtual world, relationships versus real world, respectful behaviour, same rules apply (DfE).
- Relationships built upon respect, trust and communication.
- Exploring what is friendship? / what makes a good friend?
- How do you behave towards a friend? How does a friend treat you?
- What is love, who do you love? How is love different to friendship? How do you show love?

- Negotiating in relationships.
- Understanding that relationship/friendships are not always exclusive – when could they be? How would this look?
- When do your peers become more influential on you than your family? Is this appropriate?
- Intimate and sexual relationships.
- Being able to spot disrespectful, unhealthy or abusive relationships (DfE).
- Stalking, harassment, obsessive, controlling and coercive signs of abuse.
- Keeping safe in a relationship.

Emotions (DfE Links to mental wellbeing in document)

- Recognise, understand and manage emotions.
- Recognise, understand and influence the emotions of others: empathy (feeling that you understand and share another person's feelings and emotions).
- Be able to talk about own emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary (DfE).
- Being able to distinguish between and label different emotions correctly.
- Give children the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions and scale of emotions that everyone experiences (DfE).
- Understand emotions such as jealousy, envy, anger, loneliness.
- Understanding that we experience emotions in relation to different experiences and situations.
- Is what they are feeling appropriate and proportionate (DfE).
- How to deal with the emotions related to challenging relationships.
- How to deal with the emotions related to change (break-up of relationship/argument).
- Understanding that there is nothing wrong with any emotion, it is the action that you take to deal with it or in response to it that matters.
- Explore how to act when feeling disrespected.
- Self-awareness: the impact you and your emotions have on others.

Rules & Expectations

- Rules give us guidance to keep us safe, to keep others safe and to help us live together with others.

- Understanding the need for rules and the reasons behind them.
- Explore rules at home/school/in the community?
- What is fair, do rules always feel fair?
- Discuss consequences that might apply if we don't adhere to rules.
- Awareness and understanding of rules prepares children to play active part in society ... understanding how laws are made and upheld (DfE).
- What is Domestic Abuse? Examine definition and what this might look like in different situations.
- How to recognise characteristics of an abusive relationship? How does the law stand on this?
- It is important to know what the law says about ... relationships ... VAWG, the concepts of and laws relating to consent, sexual consent ... abuse ... coercion, harassment, domestic abuse ... and how these can affect current and future relationships (DfE).
- Keeping Safe.



Notes: