

Domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS) – data recording and enhanced occurrence enquiry log (OEL)

Optimising consistency around data recording for the domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS) to improve the service offered to victims.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Violence against women and girls Violence (other) Vulnerability and safeguarding
Organisation	North Yorkshire Police
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Region	North East
Partners	Police Health services Local authority
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.

Key details

Start date	April 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults

Aim

The aims are to:

- provide consistency and accountability when recording domestic violence data
- uphold the domestic violence disclosure scheme principles and the stalking super complaint to ensure that internal procedures are efficient and accessible

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to improve:

- data recording to identify whether the 28-day statutory limit is being met
- the identification of groups who have lower reporting rates
- communication with victims by providing regular updates on their case

Description

North Yorkshire Police identified inconsistencies in the data recording of domestic abuse cases, through dip sampling and peer reviewing. The domestic abuse coordinator conducted a consultation with the domestic abuse team and the domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS) lead to determine the expectations of information gathering and risk assessments.

In response, the domestic abuse coordinator developed an occurrence enquiry log (OEL) template, which is hosted on the force record management system. The individual online templates are used for the following DVDS stages:

- contact attempts

- researcher(s) submitting for authorisation
- authorisation or non-authorisation details
- disclosure not completed
- disclosure completed

Each form has a header stating the stage, with a combination of common pre-filled outcomes or disposals and free text options.

The OEL template sits within Niche (force record management system) which provides a central place for officers and staff to record updates. An enhanced OEL template is completed by each reviewing development assessment officer (DAO). This ensures every case is reviewed for a potential DVDS right to know (RTK), and that there is an audit trail for the reasons for instigating or not instigating disclosures.

The DVDS process is available on SharePoint and is analysed by Power BI. The datasets have been expanded to include further protected characteristics including sexuality, ethnicity, English as a first language, and disabilities, in addition to gender and age.

‘Right to ask’ refers to Clare’s Law, which allows the public to request information about a current or former partner’s history of domestic abuse or violent behaviour. ‘Right to ask’ requests are triaged each morning by the research team. The team then conduct checks on Niche, Police National Computer (PNC) and Police National Database (PND) to identify whether a minimum defined threshold is met to proceed further, or whether the person at risk can be notified of an update in quick time. The triage process enables identification queries and checks being completed on receipt. Duplication person records can also be identified and rectified.

Following the governance structure process in North Yorkshire Police, the force have introduced a red, amber, green (RAG) rating.

New authorising officers can easily be adopted into the process by using the OELs. New DAOs can effectively choose an ‘option’ which is fully explained, rather than waiting for direction.

DVDS Panel

North Yorkshire Police introduced a monthly DVDS panel which looks at multi-agency engagement (police and local authorities) around complex disclosures. It also provides single points of contacts

(SPCOs) within each organisation who have training and awareness of the scheme.

There was no cost to the planning or delivery of the initiative. All changes and developments have been conducted by an already established team.

Overall impact

The feedback from staff has been positive around the simplicity of recording information. There has also been positive feedback from multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) who can tailor any actions set. The public have welcomed the initiative, particularly those who have been updated within 24 to 48 hours of their request.

Engagement with domestic abuse officers has been positive regarding changes, as well as from safeguarding managers who have provided support to the team.

Learning

What went well

- Renewed risk assessment processes through the enhanced triage has allowed more efficient identification of crimes and mapped escalation procedures.
- The process was previously tracked on an Excel spreadsheet. Transitioning to SharePoint has enabled the force to import the previous spreadsheet without having to start from the beginning.
- Hosting the OEL template on Niche has improved the recording of information and supported the responding of 'right to ask' and RTK requests.

Challenges

- If there are changes to procedures all teams across the force need to be informed in absence of domestic abuse officers. This is a significant officer base to roll out to, and arranging times to provide inputs that capture these officers is challenging.
- The force has faced challenges when introducing changes to procedures alongside managing workloads with no additional funding or staffing.

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