

## OP ENCOMPASS

Every child has the right to grow up safe from harm and should feel that those they love are also protected. Violence in the home shatters a child's basic right to feel safe and secure in the world. Children need the violence to stop.

Adults who work with children, including teachers, need the awareness and skills to recognise and meet the needs of the children exposed to violence in the home and to refer children to the appropriate services. Children who have an adult who gives them time to talk; warmth and attentive care cope better than those who do not. Children who are exposed to violence in the home need to know that they are not alone and that the violence is not their fault.

Responses to children exposed to domestic abuse should be comprehensive and holistic, taking into account the range of effects and needs of different children.

### **“None of us know what all of us know”**

Operation Encompass was initially launched in Plymouth in February 2011 in order to address a shortcoming in the early sharing of information with schools. Its purpose is to safeguard and support children and young people who have witnessed and/or been present at the time of a domestic abuse incident.

Operation Encompass aims to share information with schools at the earliest possible stage to provide schools an opportunity to give relevant and tailored support to children and young people and ensure that they feel safe.

On a daily basis, seconded Police Officers within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will interrogate local Police systems to determine the number of domestic abuse incidents that have occurred within Gateshead.

These will be broken down to only those incidents where a child has been involved and/or has witnessed an incident and a Child Concern Notification (CCN) has been created or where the child is not present and there is a recent Domestic Abuse history that would reflect significant concerns that would warrant such action being taken.

Upon identification of an incident that hits the criteria, Police Officers will make direct contact with the school and share all relevant information with the nominated Key Adult. This will include the background and nature of the domestic abuse incident as well as any actions that have already been undertaken by the Police (e.g. support plans for victims, arrest of perpetrator etc). Tailored support can subsequently be implemented by the school to support the child and ensure that they feel safe.

The approach has been recognised by the Chief Constable of Northumbria Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria. In Gateshead, Operation Encompass will be included as part of the wider

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) that has recently been established within Gateshead Council to support vulnerable persons. The approach has been fully endorsed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Community Safety Board and Safeguarding Adults Board.

We are confident that the initiative will help to deliver a better quality of life for local children and young people within Gateshead.

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