



**Joint Procedures  
for Sharing Information on Domestic Abuse**

**with**  
**Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole  
Early Years and Education Settings**

First agreed in September 2014  
Revised April 2017 (LSCB Safeguarding in Education Sub Group)  
September 2017 - Further addition in 2.2

**Revised: December 2019**

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## 1. Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- MARAC information and the Pan Dorset MARAC Operating Protocol:  
<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/marac>
- Dorset Information Sharing Charter (DISC) and associated guidance documentation:  
<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/disc>
- Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership – Continuum of Need  
<https://bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk/new-pan-dorset-continuum-of-need-guidance-2019/>

The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership aims to support all people experiencing domestic abuse, including children and young people who may be the primary or secondary victims of such behaviour. This is part of the Early Help Offer. To this end this agreement has been developed to assist with the sharing of information, with the aim of:

- Increasing earlier identification of domestic abuse
- Facilitating a timely and appropriate response to children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- Minimising the long-term effect of domestic abuse on children and young people and the prevention of repeat victimisation

These procedures are complementary to and do not replace the existing safeguarding procedures. At present this procedure is only available to all settings in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area.

If you have safeguarding concerns regarding a child or young person, you must contact the relevant MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) for where the child lives:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

Tel: 01202 735046

E-mail: [MASH@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Out of hours 01202 738256 / [ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Dorset

Tel: 01202 228866

E-mail: [MASH@dorsetcc.qcsx.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@dorsetcc.qcsx.gov.uk)

Out of hours 01202 657279

### 1.1 Lawful Basis for the Sharing of Personal Information

The privacy and information rights of individuals are protected by:

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (May 2018)
- The Human Rights Act (2000)
- The common law duty of confidentiality

Any decision to disclose or share information must be necessary, justified and proportionate to risks in accordance with information rights law.

The following legislation provides the statutory powers for the partner organisations to share information relating to domestic violence which may pose a significant risk to a child or adult:

- The Crime & Disorder Act (1998)
- The Housing Act (2004)
- The Domestic Violence Crime & Victims Act (2004)
- The Children Act (1989 and 2004)

Any decision to disclose information must be properly documented, including:

- The reasons for the decision to disclose
- The extent of the disclosure made
- The permitted use of the disclosed information

## **2. Domestic Abuse Information Sharing Procedures**

### **2.1 Information Sharing**

Dorset police send information about all domestic abuse incidents to BCP Children's services.

In turn, BCP Children's services will send an 'alert' to the child's education settings<sup>1</sup> whatever their status, to advise that an incident has occurred involving adults sharing the same address as a child or parent of the child. If the child is electively home educated, the Local Authority Elective Home Education Officer will be informed.

**This alert will not contain the details of the incident.**

Information will be sent via a secure email address.

The information contained in the Police incident report remains the property of Dorset Police and is shared with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole education settings (1) via the Children's Services, for the purpose of protecting and supporting children and young people.

Children's services will not share all of the information received from the police on their system. Once sent the information is deleted. The record will only state that an alert has been sent to the education setting.

Families are informed by Police at the time of the incident, that the information about the incident will be disclosed to relevant agencies including education settings for the purposes of child protection.

### **2.2 Responding to Children, Young People and Parents**

The 'alert' is a trigger for staff to consider whether further action is required.

- If there are significant concerns (Level 4 of the Continuum of Need) identified in the CSC MASH screening, then the setting will be contacted to either be part of a strategy discussion under s47 or to be part of an assessment under s17.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Education Settings' includes the college, schools whatever their status **and** early years providers such as pre-schools, nurseries, childminders and children's centres

The 'alert' will be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL should consider that any alert received without contact from CSC is assessed at Levels 1-3 of the Continuum of Need. Bearing this in mind, the DSL will consider:

- What other information is known about the family or child.
- No other concerns: If the setting does not have any other concerns, this alert should be logged, and relevant staff advised on a need to know basis, in order to monitor the child's welfare (see flowchart for other actions)
- Child is already allocated within CSC or Early Help Services: Where the child is already allocated within CSC or Early Help Services the setting and allocated worker will liaise, to understand the implications of the most recent incident on plans for the child/ren.
- Setting has other significant concerns: If there are already significant concerns within the setting, a discussion should take place with the MASH worker to share the concerns and information that the education setting already have. The CSC MASH will then consider whether their initial screening of the alert is changed by this additional information. The CSC MASH can decide whether disclosure of the content of the alert is appropriate to support the education setting in their Early Help offer to the child/ren.
- Information about an adult: If the DSL recognises that the parent(s) mentioned in the alert, work with children or vulnerable adults, they should share this information with the MASH and remind them to consider the need for sharing with the LADO who can then make the agency e.g. school, early years setting/ provider, or health, where the parent works, aware through the managing allegations process.
- The MASH will make the judgement as to whether it is at the threshold to report to the LADO based on the full content of the information shared about the domestic abuse incident and whether it warrants a disclosure in order to protect children/vulnerable adults where the parent works. The employing agency will then be able to make a risk assessment about any potential risk to children as well as offer support to their employee as appropriate. The DSL must not contact the agency e.g. school, early years setting/ provider or health, where the parent works direct. This could be challenged as a data protection breach as the information was shared only with the intention of supporting the child within the school.

All settings should include a statement in their child protection/safeguarding policy and safeguarding page on their website, that the Police via Children's Services alert them that a domestic abuse incident has occurred at the home of a child. However, routinely the detail of the incident will not be shared with the setting unless there are other concerns about a child's welfare. This is to ensure that settings meet their data protection requirements. ([Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership – BCP Safeguarding in Education, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Guidelines](#))

DSLs will make referrals to the MASH Team or share information where the child is considered to be at risk of significant harm or in need of other services.

The information should be kept in the child's safeguarding file in accordance with the P-DSCB recording guidance and records management society guidance.

Where a safeguarding file is not already in place for a child when a domestic abuse alert is received, one should be set up for this purpose. (See the Recording Guidance).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in each setting will need to store this information confidentially and securely.

The setting should be aware that alerts may be received on occasion in relation to a parent/ex-partner who is no longer in regular contact with the child. It will also not be known if the child was present at the time of the incident. This should lead the setting to be cautious in how they respond to this information. Any clarification or concerns must be discussed with the MASH worker.

It would usually only be appropriate to acknowledge the incident with a parent or child, if further information has been sought from the MASH team. This should only be done when it is thought that discussion will promote the welfare of the pupil.

### **3. Breaches of Confidentiality, Complaints Procedure and Withdrawal from the PISA.**

3.1. Any breach of the Domestic Abuse information sharing agreement will be extremely damaging for all signatory agencies and also potentially harmful to the victims of domestic abuse.

3.2. Complaints regarding inappropriate sharing of information will be dealt with via the Local Authority's normal complaints and data breach procedures, where this has taken place by an Officer of the Local Authority. If the complaint is about inappropriate sharing of information in an education setting the agency's own internal complaints and data protection procedures will be followed. This may involve referral to the Information Commissioners Officer.

3.3. This PISA is guidance with an agreement to abide by it. Information can be shared outside of the PISA providing the principles of the PISA and DISC are adhered to. All partner agencies have the right to withdraw from the PISA or to refuse to sign up to it. Agencies that do not sign up to the PISA or who withdraw from it will be excluded from participation in routine sharing of alerts about domestic abuse incidents.

#### **3.4 Termination of PISA by an organisation**

If you no longer want to be party of this PISA i.e. you no longer wish to receive domestic abuse 'alerts' you should advise the Local Authority giving at a minimum, one month's notice of termination.

### **4. Further Advice for Settings in Tackling Domestic Abuse**

Designated Safeguarding Leads, Senior Leadership Teams, Governors, Managers, Owners, committees should consider:

- A specialist input on domestic abuse at training opportunities
- Provision of posters and leaflets which detail appropriate phone numbers and support services or display information for potential victims of domestic abuse, e.g. parents/carers or others visiting the setting
- Professional support for staff who may be dealing with personal issues of domestic abuse (details of specialist support agencies can be provided)
- Fostering a 'zero-tolerance' attitude to violence and abuse

- Inclusion of lessons or sessions on healthy relationships and domestic abuse
- DSL attendance at domestic abuse/MARAC training

### **Practical support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse:**

- Emotional support, including individual informal support – staff at the setting are often the adults that children prefer to talk to
- Referral to support agencies including child protection referral where necessary
- Facilitate peer support
- Provision of clothes, resources, uniform/text books/stationary to children living in refuges (who may have left their homes suddenly and were unable to take all that they need when attending their educational setting or provider) or in households where domestic abuse is an issue and resources are lacking
- Support to children living in refuges or other places away from home, to reduce isolation.

### **Additional support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse:**

[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Childline Tel: 0800 1111

### **Where to get help for victims:**

Parents/carers experiencing domestic abuse may chose to disclose and/or ask for assistance from the professionals working with their children. You may sign post to:

Bournemouth Community Support: Tel: 01202 547755

Poole Domestic Abuse Project: Tel: 01202 710777

Dorset: [www.dorsetforyou.com/dvahelp](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/dvahelp)

The National 24hr Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

19.06.2019 JM

17.09.2019 JA (with BCP advisors: SG, JM, SW - Oct 2019)

# Information Exchange from Dorset Police to Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Education Settings (1)

