DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY
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DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY
STATEMENT

The NSW Police Force takes domestic and family violence seriously and is committed to reducing the levels of domestic and family violence, and to improving our response to victims. You are encouraged, whether you may be experiencing domestic violence yourself, or know of someone who is, to contact NSW Police for advice. For urgent matters call Triple Zero (000).

If you are a perpetrator of domestic violence you will come to our attention and you will be held to account for your actions and behaviour.

Our commitment is to ensure that NSW Police Force:

- Regards all personal violence crimes, in particular crimes against women and children, the elderly, the disabled and the vulnerable, as serious and damaging to individuals, families and to our community.
- Conducts thorough investigations to support a proactive prosecution response to the investigation and management of domestic and family violence.
- Encourages investigating officers to give the strongest consideration to arresting offenders of domestic and family violence. Charges will be laid against offenders where evidence exists to support criminal charges.
- Enforces a proactive victim support response and will ensure appropriate protective measures are taken to keep victims safe and prevent further violence against them, including applying for an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) and referral to specialist domestic violence services.
- Recognise that domestic and family violence is a child protection issue and we will be proactive in fulfilling our role and responsibilities as mandatory reporters of children and young people at risk of significant harm. If a child has been abused, or is in need of protection from the offender, police will make an application for an AVO.
- Recognises the prevention of crime as a family, community and whole of government responsibility. The NSW Police Force supports, encourages and will continue to work in partnership with other agencies to deliver coordinated effective services to victims, offenders and their families.
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY STATEMENT

The following principles underpin this policy statement:

- Domestic and family violence will not be tolerated. Domestic violence offences and crimes cause significant trauma to the victims, their families and communities.

- The NSW Police Force will respond to domestic and family violence incidents in a timely and professional manner.

- The NSW Police Force will regard the safety, protection and wellbeing of victims as of paramount importance.

- The community in which police serve represents a community diverse in Aboriginal, cultural, religious, gender, language, social, sexuality, ability and age differences. Police must consider understanding, and recognition of these differences when responding to victims and offenders of domestic and family violence, and the families affected by this crime.

Purpose of the Policy Statement

The purpose of the Policy Statement is to inform police personnel and the wider community of the police priorities and principles of providing comprehensive services in responding to victims of domestic and family violence, and to reduce rates of violent crime.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch APM
Corporate Spokesperson for Domestic and Family Violence
30 July 2012
## MODIFICATION HISTORY

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Domestic and family violence is an abhorrent crime that damages our community at all levels and is related to approximately 40% of all homicides. Domestic violence does not discriminate. It impacts people of different genders, all ages and cultures.

Where there is evidence a domestic violence incident has occurred, is occurring, or is imminent, police will take action to ensure the victim and their family are afforded immediate protection.

The NSW Police Force Domestic and Family Violence Policy and these associated procedures provide strong and consistent responses directed at ensuring the safety and well being of victims; holding perpetrators to account and reducing risks to police safety.

They reflect our commitment to building trust and confidence in the NSW Police Force amongst victims of personal violence with the aim of increased reporting and legal action rates.

People who are experiencing domestic and family violence personally, or know of someone who is, should contact the NSW Police Force on Triple Zero (000).

The NSW Police Force is committed to reducing domestic and family violence, and improving our responses to victims of this complex crime. If you are a perpetrator of domestic violence you will come to our attention and you will be held accountable for your actions and behaviour.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch APM
Corporate Spokesperson for Domestic and Family Violence
PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

PURPOSE

• provide police with information that will ensure consistency in the investigation and management of domestic and family violence crimes.

• protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who are exposed to domestic and family violence by giving direction to police to recognise domestic and family violence as a child protection issue, and to ensure their protection through the use of protective orders.

• support and promote a coordinated, multi-agency response to domestic and family violence.

CONTEXT

Domestic and Family Violence is a Crime

Domestic and family violence involves an abuse of power, mainly perpetrated by men in an intimate partner relationship or after separating from the relationship. It extends beyond physical violence and may involve the exploitation of power imbalances and patterns of abuse over many years. Domestic and family violence can occur in all sectors of the community and in traditional and non-traditional settings. It amounts to a pattern of behaviour that can include:

• escalating levels of abuse and violence
• intimidation
• physical abuse
• sexual assault
• verbal abuse and/or threats
• psychological abuse
• threats to harm others, and/or causing harm to pets
• threats to damage property or actually damaging property
• financial deprivation and social isolation
• coercive control in order to maintain control over the victim’s behaviour, or to have them suffer emotional or physical torment and live in fear
Police have at their disposal a range of options to enable officers to intervene to protect victims and prevent domestic and family violence. They include:

- making an application for an AVO on behalf of victims
- referrals to support agencies
- development of strategies to deal with repeat victims and repeat offenders
- or in the case of a criminal offence, arresting and charging the offender, or charging for breaches of AVOs.

These options offer protection against many forms of domestic and family violence, including acts that are not physically violent.

Domestic and family violence requires a high standard of professional investigation that can lead to more effective prosecutions. The importance of gathering forensic and other evidence helps avoid the over reliance upon the victim’s willingness and capacity to testify in court.

The investigation of domestic and family violence is complex due to the unpredictability, interpersonal nature of incident/s, and associated risk factors for police and victims.

Due also to the recidivist nature of domestic violence police need to be thorough in assessing the future level of protection for victims when investigating domestic and family violence. Research has shown that the context, type of abuse and number of incidents of domestic violence does provide predictors of future harm.

**Objectives**

The specific objectives of the Policy are to:

- Clearly communicate the NSW Police Force position and commitment to the safety, protection and wellbeing of victims of domestic and family violence as being of paramount concern in all domestic and family violence investigations.
PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

- Provide clear direction to NSW Police Force employees to ensure they understand their responsibilities as mandatory reporters of children and young people suspected of being at risk of significant harm as a result of their exposure to domestic and family violence.

- Reinforce the commitment of the NSW Police Force as lead government agency in responding to domestic and family violence, to work together with key interagency partners to achieve joint outcomes for victims, their families and communities, and to work together to improve domestic and family violence service responses.

- Provide a better practice framework for the development of systems, guidelines, education and SOPs in relation to all aspects of domestic and family violence.
All NSW Police Force employees are required to comply with the principles outlined in the Domestic and Family Violence Policy and the associated policy procedures.
DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of the Procedures definitions are taken from section 3 of the Crimes \textit{(Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007}. Section 11 defines a domestic violence offence as follows:

’’\textit{Domestic violence offence} means a personal violence offence committed by a person against another person with whom the person who commits the offence has or has had a domestic relationship.’’

\textbf{Section 5 Meaning of “domestic relationship”}

For the purposes of this Act, a person has a \textit{domestic relationship} with another person if the person:

(a) is or has been married to the other person, or

(b) is or has been a de facto partner of that other person, or

(c) has or has had an intimate personal relationship with the other person, whether or not the intimate relationship involves or has involved a relationship of a sexual nature, or

(d) is living or has lived in the same household as the other person, or

(e) is living or has lived as a long-term resident in the same residential facility as the other person and at the same time as the other person (not being a facility that is a correctional centre within the meaning of the \textit{Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999} or a detention centre within the meaning of the \textit{Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987}), or

(f) has or has had a relationship involving his or her dependence on the ongoing paid or unpaid care of the other person, or

(g) is or has been a relative of the other person, or

(h) in the case of an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander, is or has been part of the extended family or kin of the other person according to the Indigenous kinship system of the person’s culture.
**Note:** “De facto partner” is defined in section 21C of the *Interpretation Act 1987*.

Over time legislation has placed a greater responsibility on police to apply for AVOs for domestic violence victims and for children who witness or experience violence in the home. Similarly there is now a greater onus on police to charge offenders in an effort to reduce the incidents of domestic and family violence.

**Is domestic and family violence a gendered crime?**

NSW legislation defines a domestic relationship as much more than an intimate partner relationship. While the majority of incidents reported to police involve a male offender and a female victim, it is the experience of police that both genders can be victims and offenders.

While the overwhelming majority of AVO applications are made by women against their male partners, or ex-partners, this does not preclude domestic and family violence occurring within same sex or other domestic relationships; including where domestic and family violence occurs between family members, as well as where children are the offenders.

A recent analysis of domestic violence trends for a five-year calendar period (2006 – 2010) confirmed that the gender distribution of victims has remained the same during this period. The majority of victims in all domestic violence incidents continue to be females 65.9%, and 33.9% being male. (NSWPF COPS/EDW data prepared by the Chief Statistician, 10/08/11)

Police often face conflicting versions of events and counter allegations of violence from both parties involved in the incident. However research suggests that the types of abuse used by men differs to the types of abuse used by women.

“Based on research with female victims, we may also expect that domestic violence reported to the police involves behaviours (whether physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial etc.) used as an ongoing pattern of fear and coercive control by one person against another with whom they have or have had a relationship … will usually involve one partner being violent, involve frequent abuse, and is likely to escalate and to result in serious injury. Within this context it has been found that women, in particular, may use ‘violent resistance’ against violent male partners”.

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When police attend a domestic and family violence incident they will investigate the incident with a view to identifying the alleged victim in the incident together with the person of interest. To make an informed decision the process will involve looking at all the circumstances of the incident, the history of domestic violence between the parties and forming an opinion on the basis of the information at hand.

Applications for AVOs will be pursued, and strong consideration will be given to applying for an exclusion condition as part of a provisional order, taking into consideration the victim’s immediate safety and the longer term impact on the victim and any children.

Background

The NSW Police Force has a strong commitment, and a clear responsibility to develop and implement strategies for the detection, investigation and management of domestic and family violence. Police officers are generally the first to respond to domestic and family violence incidents, and therefore the NSW Police Force has a major responsibility to ensure police officers respond appropriately, professionally, consistently and ethically.

These Procedures and the associated Domestic and Family Violence Policy has been informed by research on policing practices in other jurisdictions as well as the:

- NSW 2012
- Australasian Policing Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Family Violence
- Time for Action: The National Council’s Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022
- NSW Domestic & Family Violence Action Plan: Stop the Violence, End the Silence
- NSW Ombudsman Audit of NSW Police Force handling of domestic and family violence complaints - May 2011

In addition police have a role in the prevention of domestic and family violence to identify high risk offenders and repeat victims, and to ensure appropriate action is taken to protect the victim and demonstrate that
offender behaviour is unacceptable. Where services exist to provide accredited change behaviour programs for domestic violence offenders then police will refer to these services.

Legislation

The primary pieces of legislation which govern police responses to the investigation and management of domestic and family violence are the:

- Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007
- Crimes Act 1900
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Young Offenders Act 1997
- Criminal Procedure Act 1986
- Family Law Act 1975

Young offenders

Contrary to popular belief young offenders involved in domestic and family violence may be dealt with under the Young Offenders Act 1997 depending on the seriousness of the offence, the degree of violence and the harm caused to any victim. These considerations must be balanced against the NSW Police Force proactive stance on domestic violence and community expectations.

The NSW Police Force recognises the advantage of dealing with young offenders involved in domestic and family violence matters under the Young Offenders Act to:

* retain family involvement in the process without placing the victim in jeopardy,
* allow young offenders to take responsibility for their offending behaviour and restore the damage done to the victim,
* provide opportunity to address the offending behaviour, and
* decrease the number of young offenders going to court.
POLICY PROCEDURES

Taking out an AVO against a young offender is also appropriate where it is necessary to protect the victim. This will not interfere or affect any action taken under the Young Offenders Act such as a caution or a youth justice conference. The AVO will need to include a condition to enable the victim to participate in the conference if applicable. NOTE: An offence of breach AVO cannot be dealt with under the Young Offenders Act (pursuant to section 8).

NSW 2021

On 6 September 2011 the NSW Premier released NSW 2021, a 10 year plan which will drive the Government’s agenda for change in NSW.

NSW 2021 highlights police actions in the areas of domestic violence and community engagement. The NSW Police Force has lead responsibility for Goal 16: Prevent and reduce the level of crime

The NSWPF targets under this goal are:

- **Reduce domestic violence**
- Reduce alcohol related assaults
- Reduce other personal crime by 10% by 2015-2016
- Reduce property crime by 15% by 2015-2016
- Increase confidence in police

As a result police will lead in partnership with other agencies a more integrated coordinated delivery of services to victims and their families.

The role of police in responding to domestic and family violence

Police have five key roles in relation to domestic and family violence. They are to:

1. Investigate incidents of Domestic and Family Violence.
2. Provide safety and support to victims.
3. Bring offenders before the court or apply the Young Offenders Act to young offenders where appropriate.
4. Be proactive in preventing Domestic and Family Violence.
POLICY PROCEDURES

5. Work with local service providers to reduce incidents of domestic and family violence.

The police response will take into account the needs and experiences of people from diverse backgrounds, and work with these communities to reduce domestic and family violence (NSW Police Force Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) Forward Plan 2011-2014; Disability Action Plan 2011; Sexuality & Gender Diversity Policy 2011-2013).

Police will be mindful of the cultural differences among Aboriginal communities and will work with them to reduce family violence (Aboriginal Strategic Direction 2012-2017).

Domestic and family violence can occur in all communities. Police recognise that children and young people who are victims of domestic and family violence are representative of a diversity of communities. Older children and young people have additional complexities to manage as they often have to negotiate being between two communities, and are often the public representatives of newly arrived and emerging communities.

Police have respect for the value of different community practices and beliefs on policing. Aboriginality, ethnicity, age, language, culture, religion, sexuality, education, abilities, socio-economic factors, area of residence, etc. all contribute to the formation of diverse families and communities that police work with.

Policing responses to all communities will be flexible, respectful and appropriate to the needs of the families with who police work.

Child protection requirements when responding to domestic and family violence

It is not only adults who are affected by domestic violence. Historically the impact of domestic violence on children has not been sufficiently recognised. However there is now greater recognition about the impact on children of living with violence.

All police officers have a legal responsibility under S24 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to report children at risk of significant harm as outlined in section 23 of the Act.
Section 23 states the legislative requirements for police to report children at risk of significant harm, particularly when exposed to domestic and family violence:

S23 (d) the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm check this definition in amended legislation

Members of the community and mandatory reporters who suspect that a child or young person is at “risk of significant harm” (the statutory threshold) should report their concerns to the Child Protection Helpline. This new statutory threshold has replaced ‘risk of harm’ in the legislation.

A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.

What is meant by ‘significant’ in the phrase ‘to a significant extent’ is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family’s consent.

What is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child or young person’s safety, welfare or wellbeing.

In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child after the child’s birth.

Significance can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.

**Domestic and family violence is a child protection issue**

Children who live in homes where domestic and family violence occurs are at risk of harm and actual injury. Whether a child witnesses domestic and family violence, is in another room when an assault occurs, or attempts to intervene to protect their parent, the impact upon children exposed to violence in the home is considerable and should not be minimised.
When police attend a domestic and family violence incident and children are present, then the attending police officer(s) will use their professional judgement to make an assessment to determine whether the child or young person is at ‘risk of significant harm’ and requires an immediate report to the Child Protection Helpline.

A child will only be reported to the Child Protection Helpline if they meet the threshold for ‘significant harm’ (defined above). If the child present during the domestic violence incident does not meet the significant harm threshold, then the police officer will complete their COPS Event, including a Child at Risk incident report, back at the station.

**Child Wellbeing Unit**

The Child Wellbeing Unit (CWU) receives electronic reports from COPS and officers will review these reports and conduct further analysis of information obtained from the reporting officer or other agencies, to determine what further action is required. Officers at the CWU will use the MRG tool to reassess the information they have to see whether the threshold for significant harm is met. If the threshold is met then a report will be made to the Child Protection Helpline. If the threshold is not met then the CWU officers will either make a referral to a Family Referral Services to put families in touch with appropriate local services, or retain the information locally.

**Children on Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs)**

Police are the only authority mandated to apply for AVOs on behalf of a child under section 48 (3) of the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act*.

In March 2008 the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act* was amended to encourage the inclusion on AVOs of children involved in domestic and family violence incidents. The courts, or officers of the court, are required to place children considered in need of protection on an AVO, unless the defendant can justify the exclusion of the children from the order. An AVO is a civil matter and does not result in a criminal offence unless the AVO is breached by the defendant.

This means that when police attend a domestic and family violence incident involving children, and they take out an AVO to protect the victim, then the
children of the person in need of protection will be included on the order and the conditions that apply to the person in need of protection, also apply to the children.

If a defendant breaches an AVO protecting a child, then police will consider whether this breach places the child at risk of significant harm in which case they will be required to make a report to the Child Protection Helpline. A breach of an AVO is a criminal offence, and as such, may place the child at greater risk of harm if the defendant has no respect for authority, or the safety and wellbeing of the victim or children.

**Mandatory reporting**

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act*, officers of the NSW Police Force are mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter is an individual required by law to report to Community Services when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child, or a class of children, is at risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person’s work.

In the course of their duties police officers are required to immediately phone the Child Protection Helpline (13 36 72) to report children who they believe meet the statutory threshold of risk of significant harm. All other reports regarding children at risk are completed electronically on COPS using the MRG tool and automatically disseminated to either the Child Protection Helpline, where appropriate, or to the NSWPF Child Wellbeing Unit.

To find out more about the role of police in recognising and reporting children and young people at risk of significant harm, police officers are referred to the following documents that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- *Domestic and Family Violence Standard Operating Procedures*
- *Code of Practice for Police investigations of Child Abuse*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- *NSW Police Force Youth Policy*
POLICY PROCEDURES

Working with diverse communities

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex

The NSWPF policy on Sexuality and Gender Diversity 2011-2014 Working with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people is a guiding document for all police officers, particularly liaison officers such as DVLOs. Collaborative work is encouraged, as are efforts to ensure that all officers are equipped to respond sensitively and effectively to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex victims of domestic violence.

The Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO) program enables investigators of domestic and family violence in same sex relationships, or violence experienced by transgender and intersex people, to contact a GLLO for advice and/or victim support. Many LACs will have a GLLO; however GLLOs in nearby LACs can also be called on for assistance.

Older People

Abuse of Older People can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse and neglect. The offender may be the person’s partner, family member or carer.

NSWPF will be developing guidelines on the Abuse of Older People. In the meantime, police officers should refer to the NSW Government Interagency Protocol for Responding to Abuse of Older People.

People with a disability

People with a disability may be victims of intimate partner violence, violence committed by a family member, violence committed by a carer or violence committed in a residential setting. Particular dynamics that can occur when the victim has a disability include:

- restricting access to aids, guide dogs or wheelchairs;
- withholding or forcibly administering medication;
- intimidating the victim, which can have a disproportionate effect on a person with an intellectual disability.
In many cases of domestic and family violence against a person with a disability, the offender may be the person’s main carer. This makes it particularly difficult for the victim to leave a violent situation.

Victims may have particular needs depending on the nature of their disability. For example, a victim with a physical disability may need assistance with accessing a police station or court and may need an interpreter. A victim with an intellectual disability may need a support person to assist them while being interviewed, and may need to have the legal process clearly explained to them while the support person is present.

**Culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse (CALD) communities and new and emerging communities**

There may be a number of considerations to assist police in working with CALD, refugee and other emerging communities. While a person’s cultural background and experience is no excuse for domestic violence, understanding cultural and contextual interpretations will assist police in determining the starting points in collecting information, gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, or engaging in violence prevention strategies.

Police will use accredited professional interpreters in formal procedures to ensure that information is communicated and understood by all parties involved.

**Proactive approach**

The NSW Police Force will use a proactive approach in dealing with offenders. This approach requires police not only to respond to incidents of domestic and family violence, conduct thorough investigations and give strongest consideration to arrest, but to reduce recidivism. In adopting a thorough proactive investigation police will interview witnesses, take statements, record injuries and property damage using digital and video cameras to gather evidence, and prepare detail briefs for the prosecution.

The NSW Police Force is committed to using all lawful means to policing domestic and family violence. This includes wherever possible, removing offenders from the victim, taking out an AVO on behalf of victims and any children living or spending time with the victim (whether they are by
consent or not), investigating breaches of AVOs, and developing solutions to managing repeat offenders.

When applying for an AVO exclusion conditions will need to be considered in situations where the violence is escalating and the threat of danger to the victim, and or children, presents an increasing risk of harm, and the victim is able to remain in their home.

This proactive approach should also apply to young offenders. This includes taking out an AVO against the young offender, however where exclusion conditions are necessary, duty of care towards the young offender must be taken, and all efforts must be taken to ensure that the young offender is accommodated appropriately.

**Interagency Partnerships**

Across the state police work on a local level with a variety of key partners to provide effective legal and social services to victims of domestic and family violence. There are a number of interagency partnerships involving police that aim to deliver a coordinated response. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) which oversees 28 Women’s Court Advocacy Services across 108 local courts
- The Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model (DVICM) – operating at Campbelltown, Macquarie Fields and Wagga Wagga
- Staying Home Leaving Violence – operating at Eastern Sydney, Redfern, Penrith, Campbelltown, Blacktown, Liverpool, Fairfield, Newcastle, Wyong, Moree, Bega, Kempsey, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Dubbo, Walgett, Wollongong and Shoalhaven
- Integrated Domestic & Family Violence Services Program (ID&FVSP) – consists of six projects covering 10 locations across NSW. The NSW Police Force is one of the core partners in each of these projects. A number of the projects are co-located with the NSW Police Force and the Northern Region Command is the auspice agency for one of the projects – the Area Domestic Violence Integrated Care and Education (DV ADVICE) project, which covers the Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes LACs.
It is the responsibility of the Commander at each LAC to support the development of strong links with local agencies, through their Crime Management Unit and DVLO, to provide an effective, coordinated local response to investigating and managing domestic and family violence.

**Victim support**

The impact of domestic and family violence on victims is of significant concern to both the NSW Police Force and the community. No one agency can provide an effective response to domestic and family violence. A multi service approach is needed to provide the most effective support to victims.

To prevent this serious crime and provide coordinated interagency responses to domestic and family violence, police officers and LACs will develop partnerships with key local agencies to provide effective victim support. In demonstrating the NSW Police Force’s strong commitment to meeting the needs of victims of domestic and family violence, officers will:

Where victims consent, refer them to support services. When a victim is required to attend court they will be referred to their local Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, where available, or other local court support provider.

- Police officers are encouraged to seek information from victim support services as to the choices available to victims if they take up the service and support services are encouraged to provide advice to police as to whether or not the victim has taken up the services offered

- Ensure Local Area Commands develop strong links within their communities and work with them to identify strategies to further enhance the way in which police respond to domestic and family violence.

- Work with Aboriginal communities, with the assistance of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, to gain their support and trust, particularly women, to address broader family violence issues.

- Work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, with the assistance of Multicultural Community Liaison Officers, to gain their support and trust, to develop appropriate responses to reduce domestic and family violence.
Impact on police of working with domestic and family violence

Working in the domestic and family violence area is demanding and at times can be rewarding or demoralising. Often there are no obvious answers or quick resolutions to matters. It is not uncommon for police to respond to repeat victims and repeat offenders. Responses to incidents will often require different approaches due to the complex and often uncertain nature of domestic and family violence. The type and level of support given to officers will often have a bearing on the effectiveness of the outcome.

Domestic and family violence investigation requires thorough and comprehensive investigation. This is achieved through good supervision and ongoing monitoring of investigations. New police officers will be teamed with more experienced police when dealing with a domestic and family violence incident.

Implementation

The contents of this document, will be communicated to NSW Police Force staff including operational police officers, intelligence practitioners, Crime Managers, Crime Coordinators, Local Area Commanders, Specialist Operations Commanders, Domestic Violence Liaison Officers, Youth Liaison Officers, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officers, Multicultural Community Liaison Officers, School Police Liaison Officers, the NSW Police College and the Crime Management Programs Unit.
ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of police in domestic violence has changed over the years. There is now a greater emphasis on police not only responding to incidents of domestic and family violence but working with the community to prevent an incident of violence or any further escalation. To this end NSWPF are committed to working with other service providers to improve practice and reduce incidents of domestic violence in the community.

To help achieve this, the NSWPF has identified specific roles and responsibilities within the organisation to coordinate its responses to domestic violence. These roles and responsibilities are both operational and corporate and aim to improve the strategic and local responses to domestic and family violence. They include specialist liaison officer positions located within the Crime Management Unit at a Local Area Command.

Crime Management Unit (CMU)

Within each LAC, Crime Management Units ensure a more strategic response is developed across all crime areas. Locating each of the specialist officers and liaison officers within the Unit, with responsibility to the Crime Coordinator and in turn to the Crime Manager, allows for better strategic developments in relation to planning, intervening in crime and preventing crime at the local level. DVLOs are based within the CMU.

A Command CMU may consist of all or some of the following roles:

**Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO)**

This specialist role supports the LAC by providing vital linkages with community issues and concerns, information and intelligence, while forming partnerships for victim support and follow-up. Responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- maintain liaison with support agencies or services to ensure consistency and continuity of the victim follow-up process
- ensure a detailed list of appropriate services and their role within the Command is supplied to all police with the Command
• assist victims through the court process for AVOs.
• liaise with court staff and prosecutors to ensure local procedures are complied with and that police within the Command are aware of these procedures
• keep police abreast of the latest legislative changes and research in domestic and family violence, and bring such changes to police within the Command
• monitor repeat victims and repeat offenders.

**Domestic Violence Operatives (DVO)**

The DVO role has a primary function to proactively identify, target and monitor repeat and high risk offenders. The DVO will provide advice and assistance to investigating police, coordinate compliance operations and work closely with both government agencies and non government organisations targeting DV offenders.

**Youth Liaison Officer (YLO)**

The YLO ensures that matters involving young offenders are dealt with under the Young Offenders Act where possible, and to consider the nature of family dynamics when delivering a police caution under the Young Offenders Act. The YLO should also not involve the victim as the support person for the young offender during the caution. They are also responsible for addressing school related issues and providing crime prevention workshops to schools. The YLO also plays a quality control role in the policing of young people.

**Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO)**

Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs) are unsworn officers and at a Local Area Commands. Their primary role is to liaise, mediate, develop and maintain open communication lines and establish rapport with the Aboriginal community. They are responsible for providing advice and support to police about the management of Aboriginal issues within the local area as it relates to the Aboriginal Strategic Direction.
In addition, ACLOs assist in developing, implementing and monitoring programs that bring about positive outcomes between police and Aboriginal people. They also work towards reducing tensions between police and Aboriginal people by enhancing understanding of policing roles and ensuring that police stay well informed and aware of local Aboriginal issues. ACLOs establish and maintain a close personal rapport with Elders, respected community leaders and other members of the Aboriginal community.

**Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLO)**

The Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs) Program is central to the NSW Police Force’s response to anti-gay/lesbian/transgender violence, and a range of issues affecting gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. This incorporates including same sex domestic and family violence, including violence experienced by transgender and intersex people.

**Multicultural Community Liaison Officers (MCLO)**

The Multicultural Community Liaison Officer (MCLO) program employs unsworn officers at the local level to work with local communities and police towards achieving corporate priorities through liaison, project implementation, victim support and networking. The role of MCLOs in strengthening links and facilitating communication and interaction between police and culturally and linguistically diverse communities is critical to a high quality customer focused policing service. Some MCLOs provide assistance to DVLOs at court and are actively involved in assisting DVLOs to develop their understanding of working with culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities.

**Crime Prevention Officer (CPO)**

Crime Prevention Officers (CPO) are located within each the LAC and assist in the implementation and coordination of community based safety and crime prevention strategies and programs within the Command. They liaise and work closely with other government departments and agencies in developing strategies and solutions to local issues including environmental factors through Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
Corporate Response to Domestic & Family Violence

Corporate Spokesperson for Domestic & Family Violence

The Corporate Spokesperson for Domestic & Family Violence holds the responsibility for representing the Commissioner externally and internally on matters concerning domestic and family violence and ensures the profile of police in managing domestic and family violence is corporately supported. The Corporate Spokesperson responsibilities include:

- providing advice to the Commissioner and the Executive Team on matters relating to domestic and family violence.
- participating in, and coordinating the NSWPF involvement in, appropriate interagency activities that require NSWPF input.
- overseeing and monitoring the development of NSWPF policy and practice regarding domestic and family violence.
- speaking publicly on behalf of the Commissioner on matters concerning domestic and family violence.
- overseeing internal NSWPF activities and priorities (including chairing committees) concerning domestic and family violence.

Domestic and Family Violence Team, Operational Programs

The Domestic and Family Violence Team consists of both sworn and unsworn staff and provides advice and support to both the NSWPF Senior Executive and the field on operational, legal and corporate issues. The Team is also a strategic and active partner in many interagency forums with government and non-government agencies. The team includes a Legal Consultant who is a specialist domestic violence police prosecutor. The Domestic and Family Violence Team is instrumental in developing and implementing projects and strategies to holistically improve NSWPF response in the investigation and management of domestic and family violence.
Region Domestic Violence Sponsors (RDVS)

Region Domestic Violence Sponsors are selected Local Area Commanders from each of the six NSWPF regions. Their role is to promote awareness and understanding of contemporary policing in the investigation and management of domestic and family violence within their respective regions. The Sponsors provide a critical link between operational responses and corporate issues. In addition, they maintain an awareness of interagency work and promote the benefits of coordinated responses to domestic and family violence across the Region.

Region Domestic Violence Coordinators (RDVC)

Region Domestic Violence Coordinators (RDVC) positions have been established within each of the six NSWPF Regions. The positions answer directly to their respective Region Operations Managers and work very closely with the Region Domestic Violence Sponsors. The RDVC position is a vital link between NSWPF and other government agencies and non-government organisations to provide an integrated, coordinated response at the local level to domestic and family violence.