



Leicestershire
Police
Protecting our communities

Operation Encompass – Leicester Frequently Asked Questions

Operation Encompass is a project that is running in various parts of the United Kingdom. Leicestershire and Rutland rolled out the scheme in 2016/17. Leicester is launching the project city wide early 2018.

Overview

- Operation Encompass is an initiative to enhance communication between the police and schools where a child is at risk from domestic abuse.
- The purpose is to ensure schools have more information to support safeguarding of children. When police have attended any domestic violence incidents at the homes of children, their schools are informed before the next school day begins. By knowing that the child has had this experience, the school is in a better position to understand and be supportive of the child's needs and possible behaviours.
- Operation Encompass will complement existing safeguarding procedures.

Q. What is Operation Encompass?

A. This is a process used to inform schools when the police have attended an incident of domestic violence or abuse, where domestic abuse incidents have occurred in the homes of their pupils since the previous school day.

Q. How will it work?

A. Police will share information with Leicester City Council Social Care and Early Help. The duty officer within Early Help assigned to Operation Encompass will phone the school between 8.00am and 8.30am and ask to speak with the headteacher or designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The school will be informed simply that there was an incident and the name of the child. The child may or may not have been present. The staff member making the phone call will not be in a position to give more information at that point.

Q. What can the school do with this knowledge?

A. By knowing that the child has had this experience, the school is in a better position to be supportive and understanding of the child's needs and possible behaviours. The headteacher or DSL will share this information on a need to know basis, for example the class teacher.

The sharing of information should not, in itself, provoke a proactive response to individual children by the school, but informs the school's response to any presenting behaviour.

Q. What if the headteacher/DSL misses the call?

A. Should the DSL or headteacher be unavailable to take the Operation Encompass call, the staff member will ask the school to return the call swiftly. They will also ask for an email address for the DSL or headteacher if they do not have one already.

The DSL or headteacher will then be emailed an alert with instructions for a return call. No information about the child or incident will be supplied via this email and no information will be discussed with staff other than the DSL or other nominated deputy. No further calls will be attempted.

Q. How frequently will schools receive this type of call?

A. Local data indicates that there are 13 calls to the police in Leicester regarding domestic violence and abuse each day, and around 70% of these have children usually resident in the household.

Q. Will parents be aware of this new process?

A. Schools will need to let all parents know, via newsletter or other appropriate means, that when police attend an incident of domestic violence or abuse, the school will be informed the next morning. This communication will also inform parents of local and national specialist domestic violence and abuse services available to them.

Q. What should Schools do to ensure effective participation?

A. There are a number of activities which will support the process:

- Alert those who may pick up the phone between 8.00am and 8.30am about this scheme and that wherever possible a DSL or headteacher is available to take the call.
- DSL/headteacher should ensure that every effort is made to return Operation Encompass calls where an alert email is received.
- Increase awareness amongst staff and parents by sharing or organising a viewing of the BBC video clip on Operation Encompass (bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03y9r5h) or other appropriate resource. Schools can reference Operation Encompass in their safeguarding policies to ensure that schools staff and parents are aware of the process.
- Schools can make use of template letters for parents about the scheme. They can also access local training on domestic violence and abuse.

Q. What is the review and evaluation process?

A. The scheme will be evaluated and reviewed as it evolves. It will be incorporated into the school health check, can be referenced in the internal audits governors undertake around s11 and will feature regularly in the DSL Forum. Schools will be asked to participate in assessing whether the scheme has made any positive (or otherwise) impact on the experience of the children in their school. In other areas it has been found to be a very effective way of supporting children at a most difficult time,

Q. Where can I find out more about the background to Operation Encompass?

A. operationencompass.org

Here's how Operation Encompass worked in one school...

Police attended a case of domestic abuse at the home of a reception aged child. The next morning, when the child arrived at school with his mum he had his teddy bear tightly clutched in his arms.

Normally, he would have been asked to leave the toy with mum or in the classroom. The teacher did neither – understanding his teddy had been brought in for a reason. The boy hugged his teddy all day while the teacher quietly supported him, occasionally letting him know she was there.

The headteacher said “The most important thing she did was not ask him to let mum take his teddy home, not to put teddy out of the way in the classroom and not to even make any comment about him hugging his teddy all day.”

“It was nothing – but to that little boy it was everything.”

(Evening Herald, July 2011)

