



Graduate Diploma Professional Police Practice

LEVEL 6 - 40 Credits

**Workbook title: Competency Based |
Workbook 2 (DHEP)**

**(SOUTH WALES POLICE, GWENT POLICE AND
UWTSD)**

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WORKBOOK 1

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 3,755

TASK 1 –

You must choose **a policing incident** in which you played a significant role with a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour and reflect on what happened.

Give a brief description of the incident including social and legislative contexts and any relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues.

Critically evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches (by professionals and the police) in supporting or managing vulnerable people or people at risk of harm.

Explore what works in relation to tackling repeat victimisation and repeat offending. Consider the use of evidence-based policing.

Introduction –

In order to be able to discuss, explore and evaluate victims and the way in which as a police institution support and manage the different approaches applied to victims, it is important to define what is meant by the term victim. A victim is defined as a person who has suffered, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence' (Ministry of Justice, 2020). A victim is defined within the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and provides guidance to police within England and Wales as to the minimum standard and services that a person who is defined as a 'victim is entitled to (Ministry of Justice, 2020). There are a number of factors that can apply to victims whether this be cultural, ethnicity, socioeconomic and/or language issues that can affect the way in which both professionals and police are able to support and manage a victim following a policing incident. It is important to consider these factors both at the scene and following a police incident, as support for victims does not end after police have attended.

Over the course of this assignment, I will discuss a policing incident to which I have attended, whereby I have taken a leading role in the support and managing of a victim of crime. I will reflect on both what happened at the scene and the factors that faced the victim, and how these affected the way in which I chose to manage and support the victim both at the time and over the course of the investigation. I will further discuss the way in which I have used different approaches as part of my policing role and utilised professionals within such services as victim support, women's aid and a number of other organisations (South Wales Police, u.d). Lastly, I will explore the way in which these approaches have worked when it comes to tackling repeat victims and repeat offenders.

It is important to consider that when discussing victims and the support they require police must utilise professionals in the form of third-party organisations. This is in order to allow for support to be effective and have a positive impact on the victim and the care following the harm they have suffered.

Initial circumstances –

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In order to best discuss this topic, I will be referring to an incident I have attended. For the purpose of data protection, no names will be mentioned and therefore I will be using terms such as victim, subject (offender) and witness.

Police have received a report of an ongoing disturbance, the line has cleared prior to details being taken. With limited information provided officers have attended to on a immediate response in order to ensure no persons have come to serious harm. On arrival, a number of neighbours and members of the public informed officers that they had witnessed an altercation taking place, whereby they had seen the subject assault the victim before re-entering their property. As part of initial police attendance, both parties have been separated in order to ascertain what had happened prior to the officer's attendance. The subject has asked to leave with officers from the property in order to discuss the matter further prior to any required police action. I along with another officer entered the property of the victim, where there were clear signs that an altercation had taken place. There were a number of broken items across the room, signs of alcohol consumption and the victim appeared to have a number of bruises on their body. I and another officer attempted to talk with the victim, who was distressed and visibly emotional. Due to safeguarding other officers in attendance have arrested the subject due to the above-mentioned signs of a disturbance and injuries, with the subject not showing any clear signs of injuries themselves. The safeguarding of both parties was taken into consideration in the decision officers took to arrest the subject.

I have attempted to gain from the victim what had happened on that evening, to which they refused to discuss the matter. The victim however would talk about previous incidents, allowing for myself and other officers to gain an understanding of the situation they were living in. The victim disclosed that the subject had previously hit her and damaged their property, which had significant impacts on their ability to work and lead a normal life. At this time I believed the victim to be a repeat victim and the subject a repeat offender, this information allowed me to address the way I spoke with the victim in order to best support them and their required needs. I attempted to look at this from the standpoint of a problem-orientated policing approach, whereby identifying and understanding the cause of a problem that enables it to persist, that the solution developed will be effective in tackling it (College of Policing, u.d). Whilst attempting to ascertain the causes surrounding the repeat issues between the subject and victim, it becomes increasingly difficult for the victim to trust the police in attendance. This is a common interaction when it comes to those who are a repeat victim. In this case, culture, ethnicity and language were not factors that officers faced. The victim refused at the scene to provide any further information in relation to the assault and damage.

Social and legislative context –

As previously stated within the description of the initial attendance at this incident, there are contributing factors and contexts within social and legal frameworks that need to be considered. When considering the social attitudes towards cases of domestic violence, according to Dobash and Dobash (1979), help-seeking behaviours, perceptions of gender, power dynamics and victim blaming all have bearings on a relationship. Further to this Johnson and Ferraro (2000) added that socioeconomic factors, cultural norms and the support systems that victims have access to all impact the way in which victims react in light of their circumstances. All of the above should be considered when attending an incident as best to adapt to the way a victim will react to police presence and the way they will allow police to help them. When considering

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the legislation aimed at domestic abuse and its victims this can vary, however, within the United Kingdom we look to the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. This act has allowed for police to have enhanced powers when it comes to domestic abuse and improved victim support services available (Home Office, 2004). With this context, officers approach domestic incidents with the same legal standpoint, to then later develop and adjust accordingly with problem-orientated policing.

Professionals and Police approaches to supporting and managing victims –

Police and professionals use a variety of different approaches when it comes to supporting and managing victims, these approaches vary from reactive to proactive strategies. The strategy's effectiveness varies from individual and the specific circumstance surrounding that victim. Firstly, reactive strategies, for police look at the emergency response to incidents and from crisis intervention from a professional standpoint. These look at the immediate risk of harm a victim has and concern themselves with the immediate safeguarding of that person. However, it should also be considered that these reactive approaches often only focus on short-term solutions, and therefore do not consider the underlying issues that victims are facing. In contrast, proactive strategies, which can consist of intervention programmes, can be considered equally important when it comes to supporting victims and managing any harm. Weisburd and Eck (2004) discuss that proactive efforts can assist in the reduction of victimisation. It therefore suggests that integrating reactive approaches with proactive measures could provide more comprehensive support and could be effective in the prevention of future harm for and of victims.

Tackling repeat victims and repeat offenders –

A repeat victim is defined as the 'experience of being a victim of more than one crime of the same type within the last 12 months' (Elkin, 2019). In the case of domestic violence, it is likely where repeat victims are seen, the same repeat offenders are also. In order to tackle the issue of repeat offenders and therefore repeat victims it is important to consider evidence-based policing and a multi-faceted approach. Through the use of multiple approaches, the aim is that this will address underlying factors that are contributing factors in the behaviour of repeat factors, and therefore have an effect on those who become repeat victims.

Firstly, I will be looking at focused deterrence strategies, which is a strategy that looks at combining 'strict enforcement with improved access to support' (College of Policing, 2022). Strategies like these look to use a range of legal tools, by putting offenders on formal notices that their 'next offence' will bring higher legal attention in efforts to focus a 'moral voice' on such offenders and set the standard that the violence they exhibit is unacceptable (Deuchar, 2013). There are several interventions that are considered within the focused deterrence strategy, Kennedy (2006) describes that these systems follow a basic framework; selection of a specific crime, assembling an interagency enforcement group, conducting research, framing a special enforcement, matching those enforcement operations and communicating directly and repeatedly with offenders. Focused strategies can often be framed as problem-orientated exercises, according to Braga, Weisburd, and Turchan (2019), where specific crimes are analysed and in turn, responses are customised in order to address such crimes. When looking

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at the effectiveness Weisburd and Majmundar (2018) found that ‘focused deterrence programs show consistent crime control’ this was in relation to gang-related violence. These findings showed encouraging results when it comes to the use of focused deterrence and according to the College of Policing (2022), overall evidence shows that through this approach there is a reduction in crime.

Further to this I will be looking at problem-oriented policing. Problem-orientated policing is defined by the College of Policing (2020), as an approach to tackling crime and disorder through the use of targeted interventions, rather than intervention itself. This approach can be described in the context of the SARA (scanning, analysis, response, assessment) model of the problem (College of Policing, 2020). Eck and Spelman (1987) drew upon Goldstein’s theory of creating a straightforward model for implementing problem-orientated policing, from here SARA was developed as a model for problem-solving. A report from 2004 from the National Research Council discussed problem-oriented policing and how the SARA model works in practice, stating that ‘the heart of problem-oriented policing is that this concept calls on police to analyze problems, which can include learning more about victims as well as offenders...the interconnectedness of person, place and seemingly unrelated events needs to be examined...then police are to craft responses that may go beyond traditional police practice.’ (Skogan and Frydl, 2004). Scott and Clarke (2020) reviewed a number of studies and concluded that the use of problem-oriented policing is effective when applied properly and has been demonstrated to work in tackling a wide range of policing problems. Further to this it is not limited to one exact problem (Scott and Clarke, 2020).

Conclusion –

In conclusion with every incident that police attend officers will look to define the victim and subject. What officers should consider is the evidence-based policing approaches that are available, in order to best support victims and limit re-offending from a response standpoint. By joining together both professional and policing services we are able to provide further comprehensive support to victims and could look to changing victim’s views on social challenges they face. Therefore, we should not consider simply just defining both victim and subject at the scene, but look to the reactive response we take at the scene and the proactive systems we can use beyond our initial scene attendance. Policing is no longer just simply attending and arresting at the scene, but adapting and learning from research to protect victims.

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TASK 2 –

Response Policing

A core part of the policing mission is to prevent crime and disorder. Domestic abuse causes both serious harm and constitutes a considerable proportion of overall crime

You should choose **a domestic abuse incident** that was of a complex nature, in which you played a significant role in providing a response.

Critically assess the challenges associated with a domestic abuse incident that you have attended, and the strategies developed for effective policing in such challenging situations.

Introduction –

In order to discuss domestic abuse incidents and their complex nature first we must define what is considered domestic abuse. The UK government defines domestic violence as ‘any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional (Victim Support, 2024). Data collected by the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 2.1 million people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023, with 1.4 million of these being women and 751,000 being men (Jones, 2023). Further to this Jones (2023) states that ‘the police recorded 889,918 domestic abuse crimes, excluding Devon and Cornwall, in the year ending March 2023. These were identified to be similar numbers to the year before.

Within the role of a response officer calls relating to Domestic Abuse are one of the most common calls an officer will attend. It is important to consider what formats this abuse can come in, and the way in which contributing factors and challenges can face both officers and victims at the scene. It is unusual to be able to enter an incident and for there to be little to no contributing factors or challenges that face the situation, and therefore domestic incidents can be complex in nature. Following the COVID-19 pandemic this saw a more notable complexity to domestic abuse with charities adding an increase in referrals in children and young people following domestic abuse they witnessed during the lockdowns (BBC News, 2022). Further to this when discussing a domestic incident as complex we are considering impact factors that cause the incident to have additional needs for officers to consider. Complex factors can range on a spectrum from mental health to employment (Harries, 2018). Over the course of this assignment, I will be discussing a Domestic Abuse incident the challenges faced by this specific incident, and the strategies that are in place to best help with the effective policing of such challenges.

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In order to best discuss this topic, I will be referring to an incident I have attended. For the purpose of data protection, no names will mentioned and therefore I will be using terms such as victim, subject (offender) and witness.

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Police have received reports of an ongoing at an address, whereby a male and female can be heard shouting. On the officer's arrival, the sound of an altercation can be heard coming from the address mentioned in the call. When entering a male and female have been located within the living room, with a number of empty bottles of alcohol and a number of furniture items tipped onto their sides. Officers separated both parties in order to understand what had occurred at the address and the nature of the verbal altercation that officers had witnessed. Both parties initially refused to state what the argument was over and stated that the furniture in the living room had nothing to do with it all. Officers have made it clear to both parties that one member would need to stay elsewhere to ensure the safeguarding of both parties. The male then stated to officers, in this case, the argument had started due to the female being intoxicated and wanting to go to the shops, and that when the male refused that she became aggressive and threw items at him. The female's two children were also within the house and were located upstairs. The female then stated to another officer that the male had grabbed her causing her distress and slight marks on her arm. With similar yet differing stories officers struggled to dissect the full incident at the scene and believed by separating both parties completely, then officers could visit both of them in their respective homes in order to establish if any offences had occurred. On checking on the children, a child disclosed that his mother's mouth was bleeding following the male hitting her and that he witnessed this himself. By the time that this disclosure had occurred the male subject had left. Once confirming with the female victim that this had occurred, officers were able to catch up to the male, ensuring the safeguarding of all involved. The subject has become verbally aggressive towards officers stating that due to the nature of his job, this would ruin his career, and that it was because the female suffered from mental health issues.

When returning to the female victim it was stated that the subject would regularly blame her for his actions and that due to her previous mental health struggles' she would rarely fight back against this. Further to this, issues surrounding his job and the impact that an allegation such as this would have on his career put the victim in a greater amount of fear of retaliation from the subject. Officers considered this to be a complex situation not only because of the above-noted factors but also because the witnesses were children. Officers could not be sure as to the reliability of these witnesses, due to the susceptibility factor facing children. Additionally, it was concerning to officers that it took this disclosure from the children, for the female victim to tell officers that this had happened.

Challenges faced –

When officers attended the above-mentioned incident, it was clear to them that this was not a simple and clear incident. Much like many domestic incidents, there can be a reluctance to trust the police, having previously failed before. Within this incident, it was clear that there were complex dynamics at play, which was a challenge to both the victim and the officers. Domestic abuse inherently involves intricate power dynamics and coercive controlling tactics exhibited by perpetrators that allow them to remain dominant over the victim in the relationship. Victims face a number of challenges when it even comes to registering certain actions as abuse, and inherently this affects the identification at the scene. If victims are unable to recognise emotional or psychological abuse, this can make it challenging for them to be able to seek and accept help (Pence and Paymar, 1993). By understanding these dynamics police will be able to further develop effective support and strategies in the tackling of the issue of domestic violence.

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Secondly, this incident faced challenges surrounding the victim's mental health. Mental health was a contributing factor that officers had to consider at the scene, both for the psychological trauma that the victim had already suffered in addition to already pre-existing conditions. With incidents such as these that lead to further infliction of trauma, and the limited access to support services, it is evident that this can hinder a victim's ability to leave such situations (Humphreys and Thiara, 2002).

Additionally, within this incident, the victim became concerned surrounding the job that the subject had and the legal ramifications this had on her when it came to pursuing criminal charges. The fear surrounding supporting criminal proceedings is not unique to only this incident and is a common challenge that is faced at large proportions of domestic incidents due to challenges such as complex dynamics, which inherently leave the victim being emotionally manipulated and gas-lightened in the situation (Dutton and Painter, 1993). Issues surrounding complex legal procedures and the victim's concerns surrounding the consequences of involving the police may act as a further deterrent for victims to work with police at the scene and follow through with the legal process (The Crown Prosecution Service, u.d).

Effective Policing Strategies –

In order to effectively police domestic incidents, officers should always be considering the use of such strategies as proactive risk assessment and management, to therefore identify and mitigate potential further risks that victims of domestic abuse might face. In 2009, National Policing leads endorsed a model for police response to use in order to be able to risk assess, support and improve services provided to victims of domestic abuse (Robinson et al., 2016). This model is known as DASH, Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and honour-based violence (College of Policing, 2023). This risk assessment is able to assess the level of risk level of a victim through the discussion over 29 questions (Richards, 2009), and from here develop a strategy plan best suited to that victim and their needs.

Alongside this strategy, another effective policing tool is that of multi-agency collaboration and information sharing. When conducting search risk assessments this goes within a public protection notification, which gets relayed with multi-agencies and information is shared in order to best support victims during this time. The cooperation between agencies can help reduce the risk of cases falling through the safeguarding system and in some cases assist in stopping domestic abuse within its early stages (College of Policing, 2018). It is considered that the use of multi-agencies has become the dominant approach when it comes to tackling the issue of domestic violence (Davies, Barlow and Fish, 2023). With evidence suggesting that the use of multi-agency approaches showed a reduction in offending, this evidence was correlated from a sample group of 317 nominals since December 2018 according to the College of Policing (2024).

Conclusion –

In conclusion, there are increasing challenges that face both law enforcement and multi-agencies when it comes to addressing the issue of domestic violence. When attending these incidents police are faced with a number of issues that are not always evident at the time of initial attendance, which can later add to the increasing challenges faced by both victim and police. By attempting to address these challenges through the use of policing strategies such as proactive risk assessments and multi-agency collaboration, police will be able to better equip themselves when responding to domestic incidents. Further to this, with this enhanced

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understanding law enforcement will have increasing capacity to provide comprehensive support to those victims of domestic abuse. However, with a continuing social distrust in police, it is unlikely that these challenges will decrease in large quantities in years to come, and with this distrust comes a likelihood of further challenges to come. Policing and the strategies employed by forces are changing and developing with the assistance of evidence-based policing (College of Policing, 2020), and the hope lies that here policing will be able to keep up with these increasing challenges. Further to this, officers should focus on enhancing their understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse, and should not simply turn up to incidents with the pre-conceived notion that all domestic incidents present the same. It can simply be choice words that can make an officer's comment on the incident go from ascertaining details of the situation to potential victim blaming. Leaving victims in a vicious circle where they feel like they are unable to trust in police and therefore remain in such domestic abuse relations.

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Signed: *G. Walton*

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