

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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FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME

Module title: Policing in the Workplace 3 (DHEP) - BMPP6001D

Workbook Guidance

Please read these notes carefully. They provide essential information. The documents you will use in developing your workbook are on the following pages.

What is the workbook for?

The purpose of this workbook is to enable learners to demonstrate and provide evidence of how they meet the learning outcomes set by the College of Policing, for the Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice. You are being asked to outline your experiential learning based upon your theoretical understanding in a range of operational situations.

- Wellbeing and Resilience
- Criminal Justice
- Conducting Investigations
- Decision making and discretion
- Maintaining Professional Standards
- Leadership and Team working
- Policing the roads
- Information and Intelligence

You may wish to use the same incidents as you have outlined in the Occupational Competence Portfolio.

How should the workbook be presented?

Blank electronic copies can be found on Moodle of this workbook. You must submit this document electronically therefore it is important that you save your work regularly and upload the final typed version through Turnitin on Moodle.

Word count policy can be found in chapter 7 of the Academic Quality under section 7.7 (this applies to presenting work above and under the specified word count).

https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/academic-office/agh-chapters/chapters---en/Chapter_07_Assessment-Taught_Programmes_Pages_72-79-UPDATED-05-11-2019.pdf

Reflective practice is a core aspect for your workbooks and although there is a variety of useful resources on Moodle, there is one particular book, that is specifically based on reflective practice in policing, here is a link to one chapter from Selina Copley's Reflective Practice for Policing Students:

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/298870/mod_resource/content/1/Reflective%20Practice%20for%20Policing%20Students%20-%20Selina%20Copley%20Chapter5.pdf

How is the workbook assessed?

Advice and support about the completion of this workbook is available to you. Please contact Kelly Andrews direct using k.andrews@uwtsd.ac.uk with any questions or queries you may have.

Dates of workbook submission can be located within the General information tile within Moodle.

Once submitted your workbook will be assessed and marked independently. You will be provided with individual feedback once the work has been marked.

Confidentiality

It is important that no individual can be identified either directly or indirectly from the information in the workbook. However, you must:

- adhere to guidance in the Candidate Handbook about confidentiality.
- not identify individuals including witnesses, victims, or offenders by name.
- not write information that enables any individual to be identified indirectly through the description you provide. This includes references to names, colleagues, places (including hospitals, schools, town, villages, streets) specific incidents which were high profile and could be identified due to past publicity, other professionals or any other personal information including medical or other conditions.
- take personal responsibility for adhering to confidentiality rules.
- not include any dates of any incidents or anything that specifically identifies an actual incident.

Please be aware that any content that is deemed to be inappropriate, disrespectful, or abusive will not be tolerated. Following review of any content of this nature the information will be shared with the employer of the student responsible.

Should any health and wellbeing concerns be raised because of disclosures made by the student within this workbook, the employer of the student will be informed.

NOTE

Your workbook will be submitted electronically via Turnitin on Moodle. Guidance on this is in the Candidate Handbook.

Remember that the workbook is YOUR responsibility you must not rely on the assessor or anyone else to pick up any confidentiality breaches as this is your work and you must accept full responsibility for confidentiality. Meeting all the confidentiality requirements is particularly important.

Dyslexia and other special circumstances

If you have any condition that you feel may affect your ability to deal with any part of the programme, please see the Candidate Handbook for further guidance. The University has a Student Services Unit that may be able to help but ***it is the learner's individual responsibility to contact them.***

Competency Based Workbook 2 - Learner Workbook

Guidance:

- Your workbook must contain items 1 - 5 below (in the order given).
- You should use the pro-forma to insert your text within each section.
- Note that this module has 2 components with each weighted at 50% of the overall 100% marks total.
- You should upload your completed document as a saved pdf file of this workbook; if this is not possible then a Word Doc file is acceptable. Do not send a scanned file from a photocopier, an apple.dot file, or a Microsoft publisher file as Turnitin will not be able to assess them, despite you being able to upload them.

Contents

Component 1 50%	Area of Professional Practice	Word count
Task 1	Vulnerability and Risk Evidence-based policing	2000
Task 2	CHOOSE ONLY 1 OF THESE 'ADVANCED LEARNING AREA' OPTIONS. IT SHOULD BE ONE THAT HAS BEEN AGREED WITH THE FORCE TO STUDY IN YEAR 2.	All options are 2000 words
Task 2		2000
Option 1	Response Policing	
Option 2	Policing Communities	
Option 3	Road Policing	
Option 4	Information and Intelligence	
Option 5	Conducting Investigations	
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Task 1

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Vulnerability and Risk, Evidence-based policing

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.

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

For my reflective practice into my investigative case study, I have chosen to use Gibbs' Reflective Model. This model consists of six stages: Description, Feeling, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, and Action Plan (Gibbs, 1988).

For the first stage of Gibbs' reflective model, I will describe the circumstances and context of the policing incident I attended. The investigation revolved around a victim that had received a threatening letter to her home address. They had previously reported an incident to the police 15 months prior to the investigation I led, whereby a package was delivered to their place of work that contained a letter written in Welsh and a copy of a book about the rape and murder of a female character. Although this was investigated, no suspect was identified and no further action was taken. The second report was of the victim receiving another letter, this time to their home address. This package contained another letter written in Welsh and a copy of a DVD called 'Bully', which depicted a group of males planning to murder a female character. The language issue within this incident, the letter being written in Welsh, presented a challenge. This was an important facet to the investigation as the choice of using this language within the letter could be a determining evidential factor in linking this recent report with the previous incident.

After discussing the situation at length with the victim, I determined that the legislative context in which this investigation would fall under centred on an offence contrary to Section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act of 1988 (UK Government, 1988).

To progress the case, I submitted the package for forensic investigation. Traces were found on the inner contents of the package but did not match any subjects on the national database. The package was then submitted to the fingerprint examination team for analysis. Prints were located but, again, no matches were identified. However, the prints were uploaded to the Fingerprint Investigations Bureau database for future reference and identification.

Moving on to stage two of Gibbs' reflective model, 'Feelings', I remember feeling particularly passionate about this investigation. The victim was extremely distressed because of the letter being delivered to their home address and it had brought back previous trauma from their first report. I also felt that the subject's actions were particularly malicious and insidious. In evaluating the experience, as part of stage three of Gibbs' reflective model, I feel that there were no further options to explore after the conclusion of the forensic examination. The victim was happy to be informed that fingerprints were located and that there may be hope of justice in the future. I did note, however, that my inexperience in handling the relevant paperwork for forensic examination did cause a slight delay in the investigation. Although this was not ultimately an impediment, it was a learning point for me to develop in future incidents.

I will now move on to stage four of the reflective cycle, 'Analysis'. As part of this investigation, I had to evaluate the impact of the incident on the victim to determine if they would be classed as vulnerable. This is defined as; *'a person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation'* (College of Policing, 2021). Guidance from the College of Policing states that *'...if officers and staff listen to people, spot potential indicators of risk and are curious about these indicators, it will help them to identify individuals who require higher levels of intervention and support'* (College of Policing, 2021). To assist officers, there are risk assessment tools available to help determine the level of vulnerability of a victim. One of these is the THRIVE+ model which includes the factors of *'threat, harm, risk, investigation needs, engagement requirements and the need for prevention/intervention'* (Thompson, 2015). There are also other risk assessment tools available to frontline policing, such as the THOR model employed by Hampshire Constabulary (HMICFRS, 2018). However, I feel that the THRIVE+ model is more thorough and allows for more assessment of victim considerations, such as mental health impacts, than the THOR model. For example, applying the THRIVE+ model to the victim in my case study shows that there were factors at play under the categories of 'Prevention' and 'Intervention' and can support a decision to classify a person as vulnerable. On reflection, and a point of learning for me going forward in my career, is that this risk assessment model assists when prioritising opportunities to prevent further harm. Namely, in this case study, forensic examination of the package to try and identify a subject and the involvement of outside agencies to enhance victim support. Studies support that key aspects of safeguarding vulnerable victims are identifying *'opportunities to prevent further incidents occurring or worsening of threat, risk and harm and allocating the most appropriate resource... to intervene before further, more serious, police intervention is required'* (Critchfield et al., 2021). The early allocation of multi-agency resources, which is captured in the THRIVE+ model under 'engagement requirements' but not specifically captured in the THOR model, to mitigate worsening the effect of a crime on a victim also aligns with academic research that shows the *'early proactive*

approach ideally allows the police and partners to establish appropriate safeguarding measures to ensure the risk of harm due to vulnerability is removed' (Williams, 2023).

An essential factor of managing vulnerable people came to light during my conversation with the victim, namely allocating appropriate mental health support. They stated that the previous letter that they had received to their workplace had severely impacted their mental health. The victim disclosed that they were so afraid that they changed jobs to remove themselves from further risk, they were fearful to leave the house and had considered suicide on more than one occasion. This second incident had reignited these mental health issues. Right Four of the Victims' Code of Practice in England and Wales states that victims have *'the Right to be referred to services that support [them]... and to have [their] needs assessed so services and support can be tailored to meet [their] needs'* (UK Gov, 2006). Although there are in-house teams that police forces use to facilitate this, such as the Victim Care Unit and the appointment of a Victim Care Officer (Gwent Police, no date), academics have noted that *'officers... [are] only able to provide a short-term solution to a person's long-term needs'* (Schwarzfeld et al., 2008). Due to the mental health impact on the victim, it was my assessment that a collaborative approach would be best to reduce further risk in the long-term. I submitted a Public Protection Notice detailing my concerns for the victim's mental health, which then informed a multi-agency response to support the victim's needs (HMICFRS, 2023). Whereas I recognise that police can provide initial reassurance through effective communication with the victim at scene, I agree with work carried out by Morris that finds *'the value of multi-agency working lies in being able to respond holistically to needs and arriving at broader understandings of causes and possible responses'* (Morris, 2010, pg. 174). On reflection, and continuing with Gibbs' fourth stage of 'Analysis', I see value in opening a multi-agency response to victim's needs as early as possible if any concerns are raised. Without this, whilst there may be short-term relief to a victim through police presence and attention, their long-term mental health needs could go unaddressed and deteriorate without subject matter expert intervention.

Of relevance to my investigative case study is the factor of repeat victimisation and offending. The term 'repeat victimisation' applies when a victim has been subjected to a crime more than once (Cronje & Zietsman, 2009) and carries the risk that *'people... once victimised, are more likely to be victimised again'* (Farrell, 2014). The victim in my investigation had received two threatening packages and was worried that there would be more. Evidence-based policing (EBP) has been offered as means of assessing and identifying solutions to the problem of repeat victimisation and offending. There are several definitions for EBP, but all revolve around *'a common thread that policing should adopt a systematic use of research and evidence to support and inform practice'* (Selby-Fell & Newton, 2022). Laurence Sherman coined the term EBP, stating that *'of all the ideas in policing, one stands out as the most powerful force for change: police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best'* (Sherman, 1998). He and other academics support the idea that research, evidence, and critical evaluation should inform a proposed solution, summarising that this type of analytical thinking can *'develop a clearer or deeper understanding of an issue... [and] evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention'* (Emma et al., 2022). Whilst this is seen as good

practice in principle, some argue that there are disadvantages in EBP in that policies implemented using this can only be as good as the research it is based on (Weisburd & Braga, 2019). Others argue further that *'many police officers may not be sufficiently versed in research methods to properly implement these strategies'* (Miller, 2020).

Principles under EBP that applied in my investigation were those of 'focused deterrence' and the use of DNA analysis. Focused deterrence targets *'repeat or violent offenders, making it clear that if they do not stop their behaviour, they will be dealt with swiftly and certainly'* (Mitchell & Huey, 2019), with the use of DNA and forensics to assist with offender identification. In the same literature, it is shown that *'processing DNA evidence... [shows] an increase in suspect identification'* (Mitchell & Huey, 2019). The results of DNA and fingerprint analysis conducted during my investigation were stored by the Fingerprint Bureau in the case that the subject later comes into police contact. This feeds back into the EBP methodology by opening potential for future focussed deterrence opportunities.

Victim care and support were also factors in preventing repeat victimisation and managing risk in my case study. This emerged when conversing with the victim to build a rapport, establish their wellbeing needs, and to identify relevant support networks. Research shows that implementing appropriate support builds *'victim confidence in the criminal justice system and willingness to support the investigation and prosecution'* (College of Policing, 2020). The College of Policing provide the 'RARA Model' to support identification of appropriate safeguarding measures. The most applicable facet of this model for my investigation (since the identity of the offender was unknown) is the final stage of *'accept and manage the risk'* (College of Policing, 2020). The use of this and similar models can inform an appropriate multi-agency response. However, such models do have limitations when considering what works to reduce repeat victimisation, depending on crime type. The RARA and DARA/DASH models (College of Policing, 2022) are effective when there is a known offender or a domestic-related offence but provide limited assistance in assessing risk when the offender is not known.

To address the issue of potential repeat victimisation and offending on a wider perspective, the importance of multi-agency engagement and involving the community has been widely documented. Research has shown that *'a key characteristic of effective crime prevention is that it is specific and concentrated: selection and focus are the most important features. A crime prevention policy that is too general... is not effective.'* (De Waard, J, 2014). An operational example of this can be seen in 'hot spots policing', defined as *'a strategy that involves the targeting of resources and activities to those places where crime is most concentrated... Activities could include directed police patrols, aggressive disorder enforcement or problem-oriented policing'* (College of Policing, 2018). This methodology falls under the umbrella term of Situation Crime Prevention (Freilich & Newman, 2017), which is underpinned by two theories; Rational Choice Theory (Felson and Clarke, 1998) and Routine Activities Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979). However, despite the effectiveness of EBP tactics, such as hot spots policing, at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in specific high-crime areas, they have limitations when applied to crime types like that seen in my case study against an individual. After consideration of EBP and strategies that it offers, I feel that ongoing, appropriate victim support

and the use DNA analysis to achieve focussed deterrence through offender identification are the best options to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation in offences of an intimate and targeted nature.

For the final stages of Gibbs' reflective cycle, I conclude that careful consideration of vulnerability, risk, and the use of EBP can be vital aspects of reducing repeat victimisation and offending. I have learned of the importance of multi-agency approaches for ongoing victim support using appropriate vulnerability and risk assessment tools, especially in investigations where the offender has not been identified. As an action plan going forward, I have gained experience in choosing the most appropriate risk assessment tools for assessing vulnerabilities, the potential limitations within EBP and how effective early involvement of a multi-agency approach can be in supporting a vulnerable victim.

Word Count: 2170

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Task 2

Choose 1 of these 5 options to answer

(Note for officers who have an interest in becoming a detective and wish to specialise in this role, you **MUST** choose option 5)

1. Response Policing.
2. Policing Communities.
3. Road Policing.
4. Information and Intelligence.
5. Conducting Investigations.

Task 2 Option 1:

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:

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.

2000 words (+/- 10%: *include your actual word count at the end of each section*)

ANSWER:

To reflect on the domestic abuse incident I attended, I will use Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. This is a four-stage cyclical process that includes the following steps: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984).

For the first stage of this cycle, concrete experience, I will outline the circumstances of my domestic abuse case study. The investigation that I will use to critically assess the challenges associated with dealing with domestic abuse

incidents was multi-faceted and complex in nature. It followed the victim's attendance at their local police station to provide disclosure to officers in person, as they felt unsafe to do so anywhere else. The victim's situation was exacerbated as their partner had also attended with them, under the impression that the victim was providing a witness statement for a separate event. The victim provided a statement accounting years of assaults and threats to kill against them by their partner. They also disclosed that the perpetrator had routinely been taking money from their account and may have deliberately passed HIV on to them, a deplorable act worsened by the fact that the victim was currently pregnant with their child. The partner was subsequently arrested to allow for the investigation to progress and to provide bail conditions to protect the victim. However, as the investigation proceeded the victim decided to retract their statement and refused to provide any further information. This, as well as the other observations I will discuss throughout this essay, created moral and investigative challenges.

As I consider this investigation under the reflective observation stage of Kolb's learning cycle, it provided me with an example of the challenges and frustrations that come with domestic abuse incidents. I cannot help but find it frustrating to want to help a victim, and have the tools and agencies to do so, but to find that they neither want nor support the help offered to them. Whilst I understand the emotional complexities of such intimate crimes for the victim, it is challenging to not be able to support a person through a tough time and watch them step back into harm's way.

To begin my analysis, domestic abuse is defined under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: *'Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive'* (UK Gov, 2021). My investigation met the criteria of domestic abuse as both parties were aged over 16 and the physical abuse and controlling behaviour displayed by the perpetrator qualifies as 'abusive'. Domestic abuse as a theme continues to be targeted as a high priority by UK government as it *'accounts for almost 13% of the Crown Prosecution Service's overall caseload'* (HMCPSI, 2023).

The first challenge within domestic abuse investigations I will discuss can be seen from the outset of my investigation. I will summarise this challenge as 'under-reporting'. Analysis conducted by Women's Aid in 2023 revealed that the average time that abuse was suffered by a victim in a relationship was six years and one month (Gulamali, 2023). The victim in my case study came forward with their disclosure after already experiencing years of abuse, with no previous incidents being reported. This aligns with findings from the Domestic Abuse Policy Framework published by the Ministry of Justice that states *'domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced'* (Ministry of Justice, 2020). In a 2014 study, it was found that *'only 27% of women and 10% of men claimed that they would report domestic abuse to a police officer, however, 76% of women and 61% of men claimed that they would tell somebody they knew more personally if they were experiencing domestic violence'* (HMIC, 2014). The reasons for this reluctance to report include *'a fear of being disbelieved; fear of retribution by the offender or others connected to the*

offender; feelings of shame; embarrassment; living in an isolated environment; fear of being blamed; lack of confidence or trust in the legal system; and lack of confidence or trust in police' (Lelaurain et al, 2017). The reasoning of the victim in my investigation for not coming forward sooner is reflected in these findings, as they were fearful of repercussions from their partner should they be found reporting. Whilst this is a complex issue, UK policing and supporting agencies have implemented steps to attempt to mitigate the risk of retribution by vengeful parties. One of these strategies was the 'Make Yourself Heard' campaign of 2019 which was launched following an *'investigation into prior police contact with a woman who was tragically murdered by her partner. She had wrongly thought that police had her number and if she made a silent 999 call, they would know to come'* (IOPC, 2020). It raised awareness that callers can press '55' on a 999 call to be silently put through to the police if they were in danger and couldn't speak. However, it is observable that this practice has its limitations as the victim of my investigation only felt safe enough to report their abuse when they were physically in a safe environment.

As well as the physical security element that inhibits reporting domestic abuse, there are also psychological challenges. These were evident in the case study I have chosen, as the victim would frequently use phrases such as "he's not that bad", "he's alright if he hasn't had a drink" and "but he looks after me". The over-arching mindset of the victim was that of cognitive dissonance, first explored by Leon Festinger in the mid-20th century. *'Cognitive dissonance theory explains why women who stay with abusive male partners adapt their beliefs and behaviours. They do this so there is no contradiction between staying with him and their thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs'* (Murphy, 2013). This was apparent when the victim attributed the subject's behaviour to alcohol use, rather than acknowledging the abuse. The victim was also downplaying the abuse, a factor that was seen in a 2009 study on victims of domestic abuse. Throughout this study, victims *'minimised the impact of the abuse and thought of others as worse off than themselves'* (Crawford et al. 2009). The latter example statement from the victim is evidence of 'trauma bonding' occurring within the relationship. This is when *'bonding may occur between the victim and perpetrator, and this relationship may come to feel like the "basic unit of survival"'* (Harper, 2015). The victim in my investigation saw their partner as the provider in the relationship, which created a feeling of dependency on his presence.

For police officers, affecting impactful and lasting change on these psychological challenges is difficult as this is not an area in which, by and large, they are subject matter experts. Whilst officers can offer experiential advice and short-term security, early multi-agency intervention is key to prevent further victimisation. In my case study, following my initial actions I submitted a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) form and a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referral. These procedures for engaging in multi-agency approaches are effective for organisations as *'it offers a broader perspective, a better understanding of the issues, and increased understanding of, and improved interactions with, other agencies'* (Atkinson et al. 2002). For a victim, engagement with the DASH system reduces *'the risk of cases slipping through the safeguarding system'* (College of Policing, 2015). However, there are challenges in this multi-agency system. For the individual that is referred for support, it is not

an enforced system and requires the victim's engagement. If they do not see themselves as victims or if they do not feel they require outside agency support, due to some of the psychological factors discussed earlier, the multi-agency response will be limited in what help it can offer. This was the case in my investigation, and highlighted a challenge that agencies face when attempting to gain victim cooperation. Furthermore, there are inherent organisational challenges that each agency must face. The themes of these challenges have been summarised in academia as *'funding and resources, roles and responsibilities, competing priorities, communication, professional and agency cultures and management'* (Atkinson et al. 2002).

Historically, it has been identified that *'there is a very real possibility of retraction in domestic abuse cases'* (HMIC, 2014). This analysis proved true during my investigation and provided insight into another challenge in investigating domestic abuse incidents, that being a lack of victim support in investigation. A 2017 study into domestic violence cases in England showed that *'over 160,000 victims of domestic violence requested charges against their abusers be withdrawn. This is 40% more than in 2015'* (Astills, 2017). This was seen during my investigation when the victim provided a retraction statement, detailing their unwillingness to proceed with police enquiries or court attendance. The victim's rationale for this was that they were pregnant with the perpetrator's child, and they wanted to provide the child with a family life. This perspective has been identified in research into victim withdrawals, stating some motivations to be:

'...framed around victim problem solving including: a) accepting the relationship which resulted in a discordance in proceeding with the prosecution of the abuser b) rejecting the relationship thereby rendering the prosecution as redundant c) engaging in procedural problem solving where alternative measures such as civil actions were sought to substitute a CJS prosecution and d) the effect of children where motivations were split between retracting to return to the complete family unit... and retracting due to recognising the importance of the father's role' (Hopkins, 2023).

The victim's outlook that they wanted to maintain a family unit for their unborn child has several detrimental factors. A 2020 study by the Royal College of Midwives revealed that *'not only is domestic abuse more likely to begin or escalate during pregnancy, but it has significant negative health implications for pregnant women and their babies. Domestic abuse doubles the risk of preterm birth and low birth weight'* (Royal College of Midwives, 2020). These findings show that, as well as the continued risk to the victim by their withdrawal from police investigation, there was a far-reaching risk to the health of the baby itself. However, the challenge earlier identified within the psychological factors of domestic abuse cases applies in this point. The victim needs to engage with multi-agency support activity to benefit from it. If the victim withdraws their support by their own free will, or at least this being their perception, then it inhibits the level of effectiveness and safeguarding that agencies can provide.

There are strategies in place that anticipate a victim's withdrawal to try and maximise prosecution opportunities. A strategy relevant to my investigation was that of evidence-led prosecution. This means that *'wherever it is in the public*

interest to do so, police and prosecutors should progress cases even if this means doing so without the support of the victim' (HMICFRS, 2020). However, a challenging factor within this was a lack of evidence of the domestic abuse. There were no forensic opportunities nor photographs of injuries and the victim withdrew her consent to gain medical evidence, which severely limited evidential opportunities for prosecution. This case displays that evidence-led prosecution can have its limitations, despite overall being a force for good. Under the third stage of Kolb's learning cycle, abstract conceptualisation, a concept that could have assisted an evidence-led prosecution would be if police could obtain medical evidence if they are acting in the victim's best interest. However, I respect that this observation carries inherent privacy concerns.

Another strategy available to police in cases where victims may withdraw a complaint, or if the case is likely to be classified as No Further Action, is the issuing of a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN). If a DVPN is granted following authorisation by an Authorising officer of Superintendent rank or above, it gives a 48-hour *'breathing space to victims by granting a temporary respite from their abuser and allowing referral to support services without interference... The DVPN/DVPO process can be pursued without the victim's active support, or even against their wishes, if this is considered necessary to protect them from violence or threat of violence'* (College of Policing, 2015). This can be particularly effective as it removes the onus from the victim and affords the victim time to reflect and engage with agencies.

In conclusion and under stage four of Kolb's learning cycle, active experimentation, I have presented a case study of a complex domestic abuse investigation and critically assessed the challenges associated with these incidents. I have experienced challenges around under-reporting and the contributing factors of physical safety and psychological barriers. I have also explored the internal and external challenges facing organisations that are engaged in multi-agency work against domestic abuse. I have then experienced the issue of the withdrawal of victim support from the investigative process and offered a concept that could support evidence-led prosecution if this does occur. I will apply this experience on future incidents and continue to support victims in a way that they feel confident in proceeding with investigations.

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