



**Public
Prosecution
Service**

Independent
Fair
Effective

Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Abuse

Draft for Consultation

November 2022



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Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Abuse

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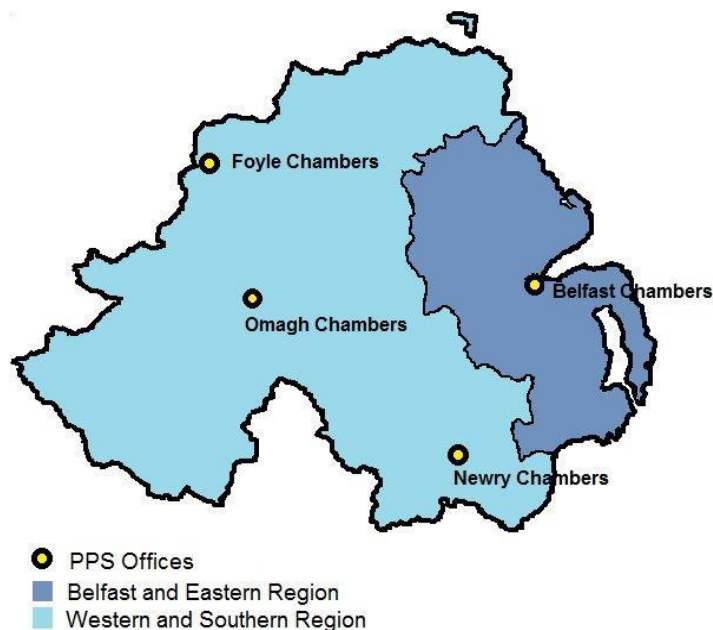
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About the Public Prosecution Service

The PPS, which is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

While the PPS works closely with the police and other agencies, it is wholly independent; its decisions are impartial, based on an independent and professional assessment of the available evidence and the public interest. The PPS vision is to be recognised as providing a first-class prosecution service for the people of Northern Ireland



The PPS is a regionally based organisation (see map above). There are two regions, both headed by an Assistant Director. The Assistant Director has overall responsibility for decisions as to prosecution and for the conduct of all prosecutions in that region, apart from those cases which are considered by prosecutors at Headquarters in Belfast.

There are also a number of other sections within the Service, each headed by an Assistant Director, which deal with specialised areas of work. These include High Court and International, Fraud and Departmental, Central Casework and the Serious Crime Unit.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this policy

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to explain the approach of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) in taking prosecutorial decisions in respect of offences arising from domestic abuse. It is intended that this policy will also provide practical and legal guidance to prosecutors dealing with cases of domestic abuse.
- 1.1.2 Domestic abuse offences are regarded by the PPS as serious offences where the risk of re-offending by the perpetrator and the risk of harm to the victim is much higher than in other types of cases. The domestic nature of the offending behaviour is an aggravating factor because of the abuse of trust involved. Complainants will know and often live with, or have lived with, the offender. There may therefore be a continuing threat to the complainant's safety, and in the worst cases a threat to their life or the lives of others around them.
- 1.1.3 Domestic abuse can inflict lasting trauma on victims and their extended families, especially children and young people who may not see the violence or abuse, but may be aware of it, or hear it occurring. Some individuals suffering domestic abuse, whether in intimate relationships or within familial situations, will not always be aware that what they are experiencing is abusive behaviour.
- 1.1.4 Domestic abuse is likely to become increasingly frequent and more serious the longer it continues, and result in death in some circumstances. Cases involving domestic abuse can also be very difficult to prosecute, and require sensitive and careful handling, taking into account the nature of the offending behaviour, the relationship between the complainant and alleged offender, the complainant's family circumstances, cultural or religious beliefs and other factors such as sexual orientation and/or gender identity, mental capacity or physical disability, poor health etc.
- 1.1.5 The PPS is committed to dealing with offences of domestic abuse in a fair, effective, sensitive and compassionate manner and without avoidable delay in order to minimise any adverse impact that the process may have on victims and witnesses.
- 1.1.6 The introduction of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 has changed the way the criminal justice system views domestic abuse. The new domestic abuse offence, which became law on 21 February 2022, now allows prosecutors to adopt a more holistic approach

when considering cases of domestic abuse, ensuring that the range of tactics (not limited to violence or threats of violence) an abuser uses to control the victim is prosecuted where the evidence allows. Further information on how prosecutors will use the new domestic abuse legislation can be found at section 2.4 below.

- 1.1.7 While each case must be considered individually, there are general principles that apply in every case. Prosecutors must be fair, independent and impartial. They must not allow any personal views about gender, age, disability, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, political views or sexual orientation of the suspect, victim or a witness to improperly influence their decision. They must not be influenced by improper or undue pressure from any source. Prosecutors must always act in the interests of justice and not solely for the purpose of obtaining a conviction.
- 1.1.8 The PPS, in exercising its functions, will ensure that it complies with the binding obligations of international law ratified by the UK. It will comply with the Convention rights incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime (and Abuse of Power), relevant EU Directives and Conventions and relevant case law. These commitments apply not just to the rights of victims and witnesses, but to accused persons also.
- 1.1.9 Prosecutors will have regard to the [Victim Charter](#) and [Witness Charter](#) which set out the entitlements and services that victims and witnesses of crime in Northern Ireland can expect to receive from all service providers within the criminal justice system.
- 1.1.10 Prosecutors will also follow legal guidance provided by PPS and the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, including Human Rights Guidance issued under Section 8 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2004.
- 1.1.11 One of the most effective ways of combating domestic abuse is through the pursuit and disruption of offenders, which includes prosecution. The PPS is committed to reducing harm through the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic abuse where the Test for Prosecution is met (see below).
- 1.1.12 The PPS will review this policy regularly so that it reflects current law and practice. We welcome any comments and observations that help us to do this.

1.2 PPS Code for Prosecutors

- 1.2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the PPS Code for Prosecutors and other PPS policies, including the PPS Victim and Witness Policy.
- 1.2.2 The Code sets out the general principles to be applied in decision-making and outlines in detail the Test for Prosecution, as well as guidelines for the conduct of criminal prosecutions and other information about what we do and how we work.
- 1.2.3 Prosecutions are initiated or continued by the PPS only where it is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. This is a two stage test as follows:
- (1) the Evidential Test – the evidence which can be presented in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction; and
 - (2) the Public Interest Test – prosecution is required in the public interest.
- 1.2.4 The Public Prosecutor must analyse and evaluate all the material submitted in a thorough and critical manner. The Evidential Test must be passed before the Public Interest Test is considered. Each of these stages must be considered separately and passed before a decision to prosecute can be taken.
- 1.2.5 The [PPS Code for Prosecutors](#), along with other PPS publications, is available on the PPS website at www.ppsni.gov.uk or a hard copy can be obtained by contacting PPS directly.

1.3 Our commitment to victims and witnesses

- 1.3.1 The PPS recognises that the provision of services and support for victims and witnesses, and ensuring their needs are met, is essential to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system. Being the subject of, or witnessing a crime, is often a traumatic experience. It is vital, therefore, that victims and witnesses are given the support, information and services they need to minimise the disruption and upset caused to them, while enabling them to give the best possible evidence.
- 1.3.2 The PPS [Victim and Witness Policy](#) explains in full the range and standards of service that victims and witnesses will receive from the prosecution service.

- 1.3.3 It is recognised that victims experience many hurdles which make them reluctant to tell police or authorities what has happened to them. They may be apprehensive or frightened about coming to court to give their evidence or find it difficult to understand the legal process. Many victims are concerned about the consequences of giving evidence and may be reluctant to support criminal proceedings. They may, for example, fear risk of harm to themselves or their family members. Some victims may fear that exposing what has happened to them or to their family could lead to a breakdown of the family unit and social isolation.
- 1.3.4 The PPS recognises the different impacts domestic abuse can have on people from a range of communities and groups, and the particular considerations that prosecutors will need to bear in mind. Further information on the range of issues the PPS considers to be relevant to particular groups of people experiencing domestic abuse can be found at **Annex A**.
- 1.3.5 The PPS will consider the range of legal measures available to support and protect victims and will make appropriate applications to the court to enable victims to give their best evidence. When necessary, the PPS will also ensure that an appropriate interpreter, translator or registered intermediary is provided to enable victims to give evidence at court, to translate correspondence or to interpret for a victim at any meetings with the prosecutor. More information on the measures which can be applied for at court to assist victims and witnesses is provided for in the PPS Victim and Witness Policy.
- 1.3.6 The PPS recognises the need for a multi-agency response to the challenges of dealing with domestic abuse. The PPS works collaboratively with the police and other agencies in the criminal justice system and the voluntary sector in identifying ways to enhance the prevention, investigation and prosecution of cases involving domestic abuse, as well as improving victim witness care and protection.
- 1.3.7 The PPS is committed to working with agencies, both statutory and voluntary to provide victims and witnesses with appropriate protection and support to ensure their safety, thereby enabling them to support a prosecution.
- 1.3.8 Further information on victims and witnesses is set out at **Chapter 5**.

2. Domestic abuse: The legal framework

2.1 What is Domestic Abuse?

2.1.1 There is no statutory definition of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. In order to identify and record cases of domestic abuse, the PPS applies the definition of domestic abuse set out in the NI Executive's '[Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy](#)' (March 2016):

“...threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member”

2.1.2 Domestic abuse is a form of trauma and can include, but is not limited to¹:

Coercive control – controlling or coercive behaviour that can take the form of an act or number of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation, or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim. This behaviour is designed to make a person dependent on their abuser by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of freedom of action and/or regulating their everyday behaviour.

Psychological/emotional abuse – which can include verbal abuse (yelling, insulting or swearing at the victim), rejection and ‘gaslighting’ (making the victim doubt themselves, including their sanity, by manipulation of the truth), putdowns, publicly embarrassing them or blaming them for everything. The aim of emotional abuse is to chip away at the person’s feelings of self-worth and independence, leaving them feeling that there is no way out of the relationship, or that without the abuser, they have nothing.

Physical abuse is any physically aggressive behaviour and/or indirect physically harmful behaviour. This may include, but is not limited to, a range of violent acts such as hitting (with or without an object), kicking, biting, slapping, shaking, punching, choking, beating, scratching, pinching, pulling hair, burning, threatening with a weapon or threatening to physically assault.

Sexual abuse is any situation when a person is forced (without consent) to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity. Forced sex,

¹ See [Abusive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship – Domestic Abuse Offence Statutory Guidance](#) (Department of Justice for Northern Ireland, February 2022).

even by a spouse or intimate partner with whom you also have consensual sex, is an act of sexual abuse. It is also a very serious criminal offence for a perpetrator to engage in non-consensual sexual activity and will be dealt with by the PPS's Serious Crime Unit.

Economic and financial abuse is where one person deprives their partner or family member of financial resources or the ability to make money. This creates a financial dependency, controlling them or preventing them from leaving the relationship.

Online and technological abuse is where abusers exploit the use of technology, social media or other online means to control or coerce victims.

2.2 What is coercive and controlling behaviour?

2.2.1 Coercive behaviour is defined as an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.²

2.2.2 Controlling behaviour is defined as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.³

2.2.3 It should be noted that the terms 'coercive' or 'controlling' behaviour are not referenced in the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 (see below at 2.3). Behaviours of these types are captured by the statutory definition of 'abusive behaviour' at section 2 of the Act.

2.2.4 Examples of coercive or controlling behaviour may include:

- Preventing or controlling access to money;
- Running up bills and debts in a victim's name without their knowledge;
- Controlling the victim's movements;
- Controlling the victim's access to their phone or other form of communication;
- Not allowing the victim to visit family or friends;
- Removing the victim's access to transport;

² See '[Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship: Statutory Guidance Framework](#)' (Home Office, December 2015).

³ *Ibid.*

- Using spyware to track or follow the victim;
- Controlling what clothes the victim can wear or what they can eat;
- Using abusive names to humiliate the victim whether in private or in company;
- Threatening to hurt the victim's child or pet;
- Mocking the victim about their disability, gender, sexual orientation or physical appearance;
- Playing mind-games causing the victim to doubt their own sanity.

2.2.5 Further information on the effects of abusive behaviour can be found within the Department of Justice's Statutory Guidance.

2.3 The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021

2.3.1 [The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#) (referred to as the 'Act') became law on 21 February 2022. Section 1 of the Act creates a new offence of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. The domestic abuse offence closes a gap in the law by criminalising a course of abusive behaviour against a person who is 'personally connected' to the perpetrator.

2.3.2 The domestic abuse offence covers not only what may typically be considered domestic abuse (that is, in the context of an intimate relationship), but also covers familial abuse such as abuse of parents or grandparents, as well as abuse of close family members more generally.

2.3.3 The victim and perpetrator are personally connected if they:

- are, or have been, married;
- are, or have been, in a civil partnership;
- live together (or have lived together) as if they were married or in a civil partnership;
- are or have been in an intimate relationship-this is intended to cover relationships between two individuals (including young/teenage and same-sex relationships), although the relationship need not be sexual, nor long term; or
- are family members.

2.3.4 A family member includes a person's parent, grandparent, child or stepchild, grandchild or sibling (including half siblings). It also includes a person's 'in-laws' (the parent, grandparent, child, grandchild or sibling of the person that they are in a relationship with, i.e. their spouse, civil partner, or someone

they live with as if they are married or in a civil partnership). Half-blood and step-relationships are also covered.

- 2.3.5 A 'course' of behaviour involves behaviour on at least two occasions. This is to capture abuse that occurs over a period of time. There is no set time between the incidents of behaviour and the occurrences do not necessarily have to occur in quick succession. However two incidents taking place a year apart (for example) may not be sufficient as it is unlikely that this will be considered a 'course' of behaviour.
- 2.3.6 'Abusive behaviour' includes psychological or controlling or coercive behaviour that could not previously be prosecuted under existing offences. Behaviour that is violent or threatening (including sexual and physical violence) also constitutes abusive behaviour.
- 2.3.7 Behaviour can be either directed personally at the victim or indirectly, for example the abusive behaviour could be directed at a child, or another person for the purpose of abusing the victim. Behaviour can also be directed at property, including shared property, for example family cars or pets.
- 2.3.8 Behaviour includes saying, communicating or otherwise doing something. It also includes intentionally failing to do, say or communicate something, for example by not passing on important messages about childcare.
- 2.3.9 There is no requirement to prove that the victim suffered actual physical or psychological harm for the domestic abuse offence to be committed. Instead the court must be satisfied that the behaviour would be likely to cause harm. This ensures that perpetrators do not escape criminal liability in cases where the victim has become so 'normalised' to coercive control or physical abuse that they do not report physical or psychological harm or even fail to realise that they are victims. Courts can also take account of any particular vulnerabilities of victims without requiring prosecutors to prove that the victim did actually suffer physical or psychological harm.
- 2.3.10 Before prosecutors can prosecute the domestic abuse offence, they must be satisfied that a 'reasonable person' would consider the behaviour to be abusive and that the perpetrator intended to cause physical and/or psychological harm or was reckless as to whether physical and/or psychological harm would be caused.
- 2.3.11 The courts in Northern Ireland have the power to deal with abusive behaviour occurring outside the UK (for example on a family holiday) provided that the behaviour would constitute the domestic abuse offence if it occurred in

Northern Ireland and the perpetrator is a UK national or habitually resident in Northern Ireland.

- 2.3.12 Children may often not be aware that they are victims or that they are being used as part of abuse on someone else. In order to recognise the long-lasting impact of domestic abuse on children, the Act creates two child aggravators which can be applied to the domestic abuse offence where the child is the victim of the domestic abuse (section 8) or where they have been used to abuse someone else (section 9). For the purposes of this offence a child is a person under 18 years at the time of any of the abusive behaviour.
- 2.3.13 Where a child aggravator is proven in a particular case the court is required to so state upon conviction and to record the conviction in a way that shows that the offence is aggravated. Furthermore, in determining the appropriate sentence the court must treat the fact that the offence is so aggravated as a factor that increases the seriousness of the offence and, in imposing sentence, explain how the sentence has been affected. The fact that the offence is proven to be aggravated under section 8 or 9 of the 2021 Act does not change the maximum sentence that is available upon conviction for the domestic abuse offence.
- 2.3.14 The child aggravators are applied at the discretion of the prosecutor. Prosecutors may use their discretion not to apply a child aggravator where the victim and the perpetrator are peers and the perpetrator is also a child.
- 2.3.15 It should be noted that where a perpetrator has parental responsibility for a child under 16 years of age, the domestic abuse offence and aggravators will not apply. Abusive behaviour in these relationships will be covered by the child cruelty offence under [section 20 of the Children and Young Person Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1968](#).
- 2.3.16 The domestic abuse offence can be prosecuted in both the Magistrates' and the Crown Courts. The maximum sentence for the domestic abuse offence is 12 months' imprisonment in the Magistrates' Court and 14 years' imprisonment in the Crown Court.
- 2.3.17 The Act creates a defence to the domestic abuse offence. Where the perpetrator can show that the course of behaviour was reasonable in the particular circumstances of the case, the domestic abuse offence cannot be proven. It was intended that this defence would only be used in a limited range of circumstances. For example, this defence might be applicable where a concerned son or daughter restricts the movement of a parent who has a medical condition (such as dementia) for their safety and the safety of others. It may also apply where an individual prevents a partner with a

gambling, drug or alcohol addiction from associating with certain people, going to certain places or having control of the household finances.

2.3.18 If the court cannot be satisfied that the domestic abuse offence has been made out, the court can make findings of alternative offences provided the evidence adduced amounts to an alternative offence. These are:

- Harassment under Article 4 of the [Protection from Harassment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#). This alternative could be used by the court where the court is not satisfied that the parties are personally connected.
- Putting people in fear of violence under [Article 6 of the Protection from Harassment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#). This alternative could be used by the court where the court is not satisfied that a ‘course of behaviour’ has been proven.
- The stalking offence under [the Protection from Stalking Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#) which received Royal Assent on 26 April 2022.
- The offence of ‘threatening or abusive behaviour’ under [the Protection from Stalking Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

2.3.19 Where only one occurrence of abusive behaviour is reported, or where there is insufficient evidence of a ‘course’ of abusive behaviour, prosecutors will consider other existing criminal offences, for example, common assault or criminal damage. Where another criminal offence is directed, prosecutors may apply a ‘domestic abuse aggravator’ (section 15 of the Act) to the substantive criminal offence.

2.3.20 Where a section 15 aggravator is proven in a particular case the court is required to so state upon conviction and to record the conviction in a way that shows that the offence is aggravated. Furthermore, in determining the appropriate sentence the court must treat the fact that the offence is so aggravated as a factor that increases the seriousness of the offence and, in imposing sentence, explain how the sentence has been affected. The fact that the offence is proven to be aggravated under section 15 does not change the maximum sentence that is available upon conviction for the criminal offence directed.

2.4 How prosecutors will apply the domestic abuse offence

2.4.1 The domestic abuse offence is designed to capture abuse that typically occurs over a period of time in order for an individual to exert control. The offence requires evidence of abusive behaviour on at least two occasions,

but as outlined above, two incidents of abusive behaviour will not automatically amount to a course of behaviour.

- 2.4.2 When considering violent offending (for example, assaults or sexual assaults), prosecutors may be satisfied that two single episodes could be construed as a course of conduct. In this instance prosecutors may direct prosecution for the domestic abuse offence.
- 2.4.3 Non-violent and coercive forms of abuse will require proof of a more repetitive pattern of the offender exerting control in a manner that is likely to cause psychological harm. For the more subtle types of domestic abuse such as financial control, social isolation of the victim or controlling the victim's daily habits, prosecutors will need to evidence repetition of this behaviour in order to prove that psychological harm is likely. Two incidents of, for example, telling a partner what they cannot eat or what they cannot buy, is unlikely to amount to the domestic abuse offence. Episodes of such control taking place daily over a matter of weeks, months or years however will more readily satisfy the court that the perpetrator has exercised power and control over the victim.
- 2.4.4 Where the prosecutor decides that the evidential test is not met for the domestic abuse offence (as there is insufficient evidence of a course of conduct), it is still open to the prosecutor to prosecute the abusive behaviour using other existing criminal offences, such as common assault or criminal damage. Prosecutors will apply the domestic abuse aggravator to these offences where the conditions set out in the Act are satisfied.
- 2.4.5 Where a specific incident of alleged behaviour represents a particular aggravating aspect of the defendant's conduct (for example, serious sexual assault, serious physical injury or using a weapon) or gives the court jurisdiction to consider additional orders⁴ such as Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) and Violent Offences Prevention Orders (VOPOs), then prosecutors should carefully consider prosecuting that particular offence in its own right.
- 2.4.6 As a general rule prosecutors should prosecute sexual assaults and violent assaults (assault occasioning actual bodily harm and more serious assaults) as standalone charges. These offences may attract SOPOs and VOPOs. Where these offences are charged as standalone offences, they will not be included in any section 1 domestic abuse offence which might also be directed against the defendant.

⁴ See paragraph 4.2.8 below for further information.

2.4.7 Prosecutors should ensure at all times that the selection of charges facilitates the clear presentation of the case at court and accurately reflects the extent of the accused's involvement and responsibility. The selected charges should also allow the court appropriate sentencing powers.

3. How we take decisions in domestic abuse cases

3.1 Understanding the impact and dynamics of domestic abuse

- 3.1.1 It may not always be straightforward to identify the primary aggressor and true victim in a case of domestic abuse. It is possible in some cases that a primary 'victim' of abuse or violence may have acted in a manner in which they are then seen as the perpetrator, for example where there is retaliation against the primary aggressor after years of abuse.
- 3.1.2 As such, the prosecutor should ensure that they consider the full facts of the offending behaviour and relevant background and history before taking a prosecutorial decision.
- 3.1.3 The particular dynamics of domestic abuse mean it is crucial that prosecutors proactively address the security and safety of the victim, and any children, from the point of charge and throughout the prosecution. It is only after suffering abuse for some time that victims may come forward to report to the police.
- 3.1.4 Prosecutors need to be aware that certain actions, such as the victim supporting a prosecution, may place the victim and/or any children, or other family members at increased risk. In addition, many victims will often be in a situation where they are unable to effectively resist the abuse perpetrated or escape from the defendant.
- 3.1.5 In most cases, separation from a partner or escape from a relationship may lead to an increase of abuse experienced by a victim. This may take a different form of abuse (such as harassment, stalking or intimidation, committed either online, offline or by both methods) and may be of increased severity. As a result prosecutors need to be sensitive to the changing risk to a complainant, as well as changing safety requirements.
- 3.1.6 Offenders in cases of domestic abuse could also have a lot to lose if the prosecution leads to a permanent separation which may result in some offenders embarking on conduct to maintain a relationship, or alternatively witness intimidation / harassment. In cases of familial abuse the dynamics will be different. Victims may escape abuse by leaving the home whether on a permanent or temporary basis, but for some victims this escape may not be fully realised. For example, in some close-knit communities, family members may have contacts in other parts of the country that may know the victim or inform the family of the victim's whereabouts, or coerce or threaten them to return. In other situations, feelings of shame or duty to the family may force the victim to

return.

- 3.1.7 For some victims personal circumstances may make them less likely to report the abuse experienced. For example, victims in a relationship with their abuser for a significant period of time may blame themselves or feel they are wasting time by coming forward; they may also face wider issues such as disruption to the lives of their children or other dependants, or their financial circumstances may be significantly impacted upon (such as the loss of another salary or benefits); other victims may fear that reporting will 'out' their sexual orientation, or put them at risk from others in their community.

3.2 Myths, stereotypes and avoiding assumptions

- 3.2.1 Offences involving domestic abuse are some of the most complex offences the PPS and the wider criminal justice system deals with. Despite many positive changes in society regarding attitudes to domestic abuse, we recognise that some misconceptions, myths and stereotypes surrounding domestic abuse remain. Prosecutors are trained to ensure there is no discrimination or unconscious bias in decision-making and the conduct of criminal proceedings.

- 3.2.2 Examples of such myths include:

- Domestic abuse is always physical;
- Domestic abuse is a crime of passion;
- Domestic abuse is a momentary loss of control;
- Domestic abuse is a one-off incident;
- Domestic abuse is a private matter;
- Domestic abuse is only perpetrated by men on women;
- Domestic abuse only occurs between couples that live together;
- Older/independent/stronger people are not subject to domestic abuse;
- Where the victim has a learning disability or mental health condition, they lack credibility as a witness;
- The cultural/religious background or belief of the victim is responsible for domestic abuse;
- Where the victim has previously withdrawn a complaint, they lack credibility;
- Children are not affected by domestic abuse;
- If the situation was really that bad, the victim would just leave the relationship.

- 3.2.3 Prosecutors should be careful not to make assumptions with regard to a victim's age, the nature of the relationship with the abuser and the physical stature / appearance or gender stereotypes of the parties.

- 3.2.4 Where prosecutors consider that they require further understanding of religious, cultural or other issues in a particular case, they should discuss the most appropriate means of seeking advice with police.
- 3.2.5 Prosecutors should always be sensitive to the needs of diverse communities; however, cultural sensitivity should not be used as a basis to avoid taking appropriate action in domestic abuse cases.
- 3.2.6 Police and prosecutors should understand the vulnerability of victims and the particular impact that control, coercion and psychological abuse may have on the individual. There may be some circumstances in which the offender will accuse the victim of having mental health difficulties, and that the allegation reported did not occur. Each case should be considered on its own facts and merits. Victims should not be subjected to any preconceptions of how a stereotypical victim may present.

3.3 Case building

- 3.3.1 As domestic abuse incidents often take place in private the complainant may be the only witness. Giving evidence may be very difficult for them, leading to uncertainty about the course of action they should take. The police and PPS understanding of the nature of the offending, and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, is central to the delivery of the best response provided.
- 3.3.2 Where the initial background information is inadequate, prosecutors should proactively request further information from the police. Early consultation with the police is strongly recommended and should take place in any case where the early involvement of a prosecutor would assist in the gathering of relevant evidence, the questions to be asked of suspects, any pre-charge court procedures and any strategy for a likely prosecution.
- 3.3.3 Police officers reporting or attending domestic abuse incidents have a duty to pursue all reasonable lines of enquiry whether they lead towards or away from the alleged perpetrator. They are required to gather and preserve the widest range of evidence and not focus solely on the willingness of the victim to give evidence.
- 3.3.4 Prosecutors will seek to obtain the following evidence (where available) in order to apply the Test for Prosecution:
- Statements from the victim and key witnesses;
 - Police body worn video recordings of the scene and the victim's first complaint;

- The 999 recording if applicable;
- Photographs of injuries / damage etc.;
- Enquiries with neighbours and any other potential witnesses and obtaining statements as necessary;
- Interviews with children in the household who may have witnessed the incident;
- Details of interviews with the suspect;
- Any CCTV footage;
- A Domestic History Report;
- Details of the risk assessment conducted by police.⁵

This list is not exhaustive and additional evidence and information may be required depending on the circumstances of each individual case.

- 3.3.5 The prosecutor should consider the needs of the complainant when taking a decision on a file. This should include the need to apply for special measures (for example, use of screens at court or the possibility of giving evidence remotely via live link).

3.4 Retractions and withdrawals by victims

- 3.4.1 There may be a number of reasons why a complainant will withdraw their support from a prosecution, or retract their allegation, but this does not mean that the case will be automatically stopped.

- 3.4.2 The following is a list of possible reasons why a victim may no longer support a case:

- Fear of other offences being committed, or risk of further harm (both in person, but also through online technologies);
- Fear of coming face to face with the perpetrator in court;
- Pressure from the perpetrator, the perpetrator's family or associates;
- Pressure from other family members, other members of the community or community 'elders';
- Fear of being publicly shamed, disowned or cast out from the community;
- A wish to be reconciled with the perpetrator, if not already reconciled, or a wish to return to the family, if estranged;

⁵ Risk assessments are usually conducted by the police upon notification of an incident, and can provide invaluable background information to understand the circumstances the complainant may be experiencing. The risk assessment tool used is a PPN (Public Protection Notice). The risk assessment should also address any risks around children.

- The victim is no longer in a relationship with the perpetrator or does not want to re-live the incident;
- A fear that children will be removed and placed into care, or not wanting to be perceived as 'being difficult' if children or other dependants are involved;
- A fear of the impact on children, or other dependants, or financial repercussions (such as the receipt of certain child maintenance, tax allowances or financial support through benefits);
- The perpetrator may agree to drop other proceedings such as custody applications for children, if the victim withdraws the complaint;
- Feelings of isolation or vulnerability, and fears they may not be believed as a result of those vulnerabilities;
- Fears that showing support for a prosecution may place them at further risk of harm;
- Fear of immigration status being made known to law enforcement authorities, or fear that a victim may reveal the perpetrator's immigration status which may not be secure;
- Fear of being 'outed' about their sexual orientation, or gender identity if not already known about.

This is not an exhaustive list.

- 3.4.3 Where a victim retracts the allegation and no statement has been made, prosecutors should consider whether the evidential test is met without oral evidence. Where the evidential test is met, prosecutors should ascertain why the victim has withdrawn their support for the case and assess the risks/impacts posed to any children and/or dependants before deciding what action to take.
- 3.4.4 Where the victim has made a statement and subsequently withdraws their evidence, prosecutors should consider the nature of the original allegation and the victim's reasons for withdrawing support. Depending on the nature of these considerations, it may still be possible to continue with proceedings against the perpetrator without the victim's active support. The safety of the victim, or any other potentially vulnerable person, should be a prime consideration.
- 3.4.5 Where the evidential test has been met, but the victim is not willing to support the prosecution, prosecutors should carefully consider the public interest in continuing with the prosecution given the nature and serious impacts of such offending. It will be rare for the public interest not to be met.

3.4.6 Careful consideration should be given to public interest factors, including the interests and safety of the victim, other family members and any children or other dependants. To properly assess the public interest, prosecutors should be made aware of any children living in an abusive household. The impact on children must always be taken into consideration, as it may increase the seriousness of the offence, and influence the final prosecution decision.

3.4.7 Factors that are useful when considering the public interest may include:

- The seriousness of the offence - the more serious the offence, the more likely it is that a prosecution is required;
- Whether the offence is likely to be repeated;
- The culpability of the defendant;
- The extent to which the offending was pre-meditated;
- Whether any threats were made before or after the attack;
- Whether the defendant has any previous convictions or out of court disposals, or record of any other offending whilst on bail or whilst subject to a court order;
- Whether the offending was or is likely to be continued, repeated or escalated;
- The age or level of maturity of the defendant;
- Whether the defendant was suffering from any mental or physical ill health before, or at the time of the offence taking place;
- The complainant's injuries - whether physical or psychological;
- Whether a weapon was used;
- Whether the offence was motivated by any form of discrimination against the complainant's ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, mental or physical capacity, age, religion, immigration status, employment status, social background etc.;
- If there were any children or other vulnerable dependants living in the household;
- Whether the offence took place in the presence of, or near a child;
- Whether the victim is/was pregnant at the time of the offence;
- Any continuing threat to the health and safety of the complainant (irrespective of the relationship status), or anyone else who is, or may become involved; and
- The history of the relationship, particularly if there has been any violence in the past.

3.4.8 If it is suspected that the victim has been pressured or frightened into withdrawing the complaint, we will ask the police to investigate further. The investigation may reveal new offences, for example, harassment or witness intimidation. If necessary, we will ask the court to delay any hearings so that

a thorough investigation can take place before we make a decision in respect of the case.

- 3.4.9 The fact that a victim withdraws their support does not mean they can no longer engage with police. The victim is still entitled to have future complaints believed and taken seriously.

3.5 Proceeding with a case without the victim's support

- 3.5.1 The Test for Prosecution may be met without the victim's live evidence in court. Prosecutors may be able to use evidence other than that of the victim (for example, admissions by the suspect in interview, CCTV, police body-worn video footage, 999 recordings etc.) in order to proceed.
- 3.5.2 Where the Test for Prosecution is not met without the victim's live evidence, prosecutors may consider whether it is necessary to issue a witness summons to compel the victim to attend court. This is a last resort and prosecutors should ensure that all other avenues have been exhausted. Before the decision to apply for a witness summons is taken, prosecutors must make enquiries to satisfy themselves that the safety of the victim, any children and / or other dependants will not be endangered.
- 3.5.3 A list of factors that prosecutors will consider when deciding to issue a witness summons is included at **Annex B**.
- 3.5.4 If the victim refuses to attend court following the issue of a witness summons, prosecutors should consider whether a warrant application to the court is appropriate. The intention of obtaining a warrant is to assist attendance at court and not to penalise or criminalise the victim. Prosecutors should use this only where absolutely necessary.
- 3.5.5 It is possible that after considering a victim's reasons for retracting their allegation or withdrawal of support, a prosecutor may discontinue the case as the victim's evidence was the only admissible evidence available, and a summons would not be appropriate.

3.6 What happens if we decide not to prosecute?

- 3.6.1 We understand how disappointing it can be for a victim to be told that after careful consideration, a decision has been taken not to prosecute. Every effort is made to ensure that communication with victims and witnesses in cases of domestic abuse is timely, sensitive and clear.

- 3.6.2 Where there is insufficient evidence, or it is not in the public interest to prosecute an individual, a 'no prosecution' decision will be issued. This is often very difficult for victims to hear. It does not mean that the Prosecutor does not believe the victim. It is simply that there is not enough evidence to meet the very high standard of proof that the law requires for the offence to be proved, or it is not in the public interest to prosecute this particular case.
- 3.6.3 The victim will be informed of this decision by a letter from their Case Officer within the Victim and Witness Care Unit. Reasons for this decision will be provided in general terms. This would indicate if the case failed to meet the Test for Prosecution due to insufficient evidence or on public interest grounds. Victims are also entitled to request more detailed reasons for the no prosecution decision. The VWCU Case Officer will provide information on how these can be requested and will offer any assistance necessary. Where detailed reasons are requested, the Prosecutor will consider what information about the decision may be provided, taking into account the interests of all parties and the facts and circumstances of the case.
- 3.6.4 Where detailed reasons have been provided but further explanation is required, the victim is entitled to ask for a meeting with the PPS to discuss the decision. Whilst the PPS will try to accommodate this request, it might not always be possible. The VWCU Case Officer will explain how to make such a request.
- 3.6.5 It should be noted that in a wide range of cases which might be classified as more serious, due to the nature of the offence or the vulnerability of the victim, detailed reasons will automatically be given for the decision not to prosecute and a meeting offered.
- 3.6.7 More information on support for victims when a decision has been taken can be found in the [PPS Victim and Witness Policy](#).

3.7 Reviewing decisions not to prosecute

- 3.7.1 Victims should always be confident that their case has been thoroughly considered, even where they do not agree with the decision made. We will listen carefully to victims and witnesses, and explain our decision-making. Victims can also ask for a review of a decision not to prosecute in appropriate cases. The approach taken in these circumstances is set out fully in the PPS Code for Prosecutors, but is summarised below.
- 3.7.2 If no additional evidence is provided connected to the request for a review, the case will be considered by a prosecutor other than the prosecutor who

initially took the decision. The prosecutor conducting the review will consider the evidence and information reported in the police investigation file and will apply the Test for Prosecution and take a new decision. The rationale for this decision will be recorded in writing. The decision may be to allow the original no prosecution decision to stand or that a prosecution should now be taken (or that the matter is dealt with by way of a diversionary disposal).

3.7.3 If additional evidence is provided in connection with the request for a review of the decision not to prosecute, the case will be reconsidered by the prosecutor who initially took the decision. The prosecutor will consider all the evidence and information now available and will apply the Test for Prosecution and take a new decision. There are two possible outcomes of such a review:

(a) It is concluded that the Test for Prosecution is now met and criminal proceedings are commenced (or the matter is dealt with by way of a diversionary disposal); or

(b) It is concluded that the Test for Prosecution remains not met. In this situation the case will be referred to another prosecutor who will conduct a review of the decision.

3.8 Alternatives to prosecution

3.8.1 It will rarely be appropriate to deal with a domestic abuse case by way of a diversionary disposal.⁶

3.8.2 Where the complainant does not support a prosecution, and the available evidence (including any additional evidence adduced) would only disclose a very minor offence, this should not automatically work in favour of the defendant, as the public interest would be towards prosecution given the nature of the offending.

3.8.3 Where a complainant has attended court and consulted with a prosecutor and has given their views on how the case should proceed, prosecutors should balance all the factors in the case and determine whether in all the circumstances a diversion is appropriate.

⁶ See [PPS Guidelines for the Use of Diversionary Disposals](#) for further information.

4. Court proceedings

4.1 Dealing with the case at court

- 4.1.1 We understand that when a case comes to court it can be a particularly anxious period for a victim, especially with the prospect of giving evidence. We have measures in place to make this a more comfortable process. The PPS is committed to ensuring prosecutors have the right skills to prosecute domestic abuse offences cases effectively, including the ability to deal sensitively with victims and witnesses.
- 4.1.2 Where possible, the prosecutor will try to speak to victims and witnesses before they give evidence and try to put witnesses who may be nervous at ease.
- 4.1.3 If a suspect has been charged by police with an offence involving domestic abuse, the police will take the decision as to whether it is appropriate to release the suspect on police bail to attend a court hearing within a short period of time. However, police may also decide to keep the defendant in custody so that he/she may appear at the next available Magistrates' Court, (usually the next day), for a remand hearing. At the hearing, the defendant is entitled to make an application to be released from custody on bail.
- 4.1.4 The District Judge (Magistrates' Court) will decide whether bail is appropriate after hearing representations from both the prosecution and the defence. In order to enable the prosecutor to make representations to the court, police will have provided relevant evidence and information to the prosecutor. The prosecutor's primary concern should be the safety of the complainant and any children or other dependants.
- 4.1.5 In most contests/trials (i.e. where the defendant pleads not guilty), the defendant's legal team will challenge the victim's account of the allegations. This is normal and is allowed in law. The defence have a duty to act in the best interests of their client and to challenge the victim about his or her account.
- 4.1.6 There are, however, rules about inappropriate cross-examination and particularly about questioning a victim about his or her previous conduct or behaviour. This type of questioning can only take place with the permission of the judge. The PPS will ensure that the prosecutor is proactive in objecting to such questioning where it is considered to be inappropriate. If the defence seek to introduce such evidence or questioning and the judge considers that

its real purpose is to attack the character of the victim, then it should not be allowed.

- 4.1.7 The prosecutor will also object to allegations about the character or demeanour of the victim which are irrelevant to the issues in the case. There are specific legal principles to govern the introduction of evidence of a victim's previous conduct and the prosecutor will ensure that these are applied correctly.
- 4.1.8 The defence may on occasion approach the PPS with an offer to plead guilty to only some of the charges that they are facing, or to a lesser charge or charges, with the remaining charges not to be proceeded with. Whilst 'plea bargaining' has no place in the practice or procedures of the PPS, in some cases the prosecutor may consider accepting a guilty plea from the defendant to a different charge. This might arise, for example, because the victim no longer wishes to proceed, or because new evidence has come to light. However, the general principle is that the decision to prosecute, and the offences to be prosecuted, should not be altered unless there is proper reason to do so which is consistent with the evidence and the information available at the time and meets the requirements of justice.
- 4.1.9 Except in the most exceptional circumstances, the acceptance of alternative pleas should be transparent with the prosecution able to explain their reasons for accepting the pleas in open court.
- 4.1.10 When considering whether to accept a plea of guilty to a different, and possibly less serious charge, the PPS will, take the proper interests of victims into account as required under the Victim Charter.

4.2 Sentencing

- 4.2.1 If the defendant is convicted of an offence involving domestic abuse or pleads guilty, the judge will decide the sentence. In some cases, the sentence handed down by the judge may not always be what the victim had hoped for.
- 4.2.2 The PPS will make sure that the court has all the information it needs to sentence appropriately, including any relevant information contained in a Victim Personal Statement or in a Victim Impact Report which may have been requested by the court. A Victim Personal Statement is a statement made by a victim, setting out in their own words the effect that the crime has had upon them, while a Victim Impact Report is a report prepared by a professional, such as psychiatrist or psychologist, at the request of the court.

- 4.2.3 The prosecution has a duty to assist the judge with the law and guidelines on sentencing, including any ancillary orders that may be available to the court.
- 4.2.4 Upon conviction or following a guilty plea, the defendant is entitled to enter a plea in mitigation of sentence. This may include information about previous good character or other factors the defendant wishes to be considered before a sentence is imposed. Ultimately these issues are for the judge to consider as part of his/her decision on sentencing. However, the prosecutor will be alert to mitigation that attempts to detract from the character of a prosecution witness, and will challenge anything misleading, untrue or unfair.
- 4.2.5 Where there is a significant difference between the factual basis on which a defendant pleads guilty and the case contended by the prosecution, the prosecution should seek to establish the facts upon which the court should base its sentence.
- 4.2.6 Prosecutors should challenge any assertion made by the defence in mitigation that is inaccurate, misleading or derogatory. If the defence persist in the assertion, and it appears relevant to the sentence, the court should be invited to hear evidence to determine the facts and sentence accordingly.
- 4.2.7 In addition to imposing a sentence, where the court is satisfied that it is necessary for the purpose of protecting the public or any particular members of the public from serious harm by the offender, the judge may also impose an order or orders on the defendant. These are referred to as ancillary orders.
- 4.2.8 Examples of ancillary orders include:
- A Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) is an order which the court may make for the purpose of protecting the public or any particular members of the public from serious sexual harm from the defendant;
 - A Violent Offences Protection Order (VOPO) is an order which the court may make for the purpose of protecting the public or any particular members of the public from violence from the defendant;
 - A Restraining Order is a civil order which may contain such restrictions or prohibitions as the court considers appropriate to protect a person from harassment by the defendant.

5. Helping victims and witnesses to give evidence

5.1 Giving evidence: Use of special measures

5.1.1 Giving evidence can be a particularly traumatic experience for victims of domestic abuse. Some victims, quite understandably, find it difficult to give evidence in the view of the defendant. The PPS can apply for special measures to make the experience more comfortable and to support the victim to give their best evidence. Examples of special measures include:

- Giving evidence by a pre-recorded video interview;
- Giving evidence from a separate room via a live video link;
- Screening the victim from the defendant;
- Giving evidence in private, with the court cleared of the public.

5.1.2 There are also special measures available to assist vulnerable witnesses, such as the use of aids to communication, and to assist witnesses with communication needs such as Registered Intermediaries.

5.1.3 Since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act, victims of offences involving domestic abuse are automatically presumed to be eligible to apply for special measures. The judge makes the decision about whether special measures will be allowed. The court will only allow a special measure where it considers that the measure would be likely to improve the quality of evidence given by the victim or witness.

5.1.4 The PPS will discuss with police what special measures might assist the victim or witness to give evidence in court, and then make an application to the court. The views of the victim and witness are taken into account. Ideally, early decisions should be taken about special measures to assist victims and witnesses. However, circumstances might change and it is always possible to apply at any stage of the proceedings.

5.1.5 The PPS will ensure that victims and witnesses are made aware that they can change their minds about special measures. In some cases, victims may initially state that they do not require special measures, but when the contest/trial approaches, they may decide that they do. In these circumstances it will be for the court to decide if special measures should be granted. Further information about special measures, and services for vulnerable or intimidated witnesses, is available on the PPS website.

5.1.6 The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act removes the defendant's right to cross-examine a victim of an offence of domestic abuse in person.

5.1.7 Under the Act a prosecutor may also apply to the court for the exclusion of specified persons from the court while the victim is giving evidence.

5.2 Other support

5.2.1 In an increasingly diverse community, we recognise there will be victims and witnesses for whom English is not their first language, In these cases the PPS will seek advice from police as to the victim's / witness's ability to give and understand oral evidence in English or whether an interpreter is required. The PPS will try to ensure that the interpreter engaged is familiar with the particular dialect or regional variation of the foreign language which the witness uses.

5.2.2 The PPS will arrange for the provision of English or Irish sign-language interpreters for witnesses who are deaf or hard of hearing.

5.2.3 There are two witness support schemes available in courthouses in Northern Ireland: one for adult witnesses (the Witness Service) provided by Victim Support NI; and one for younger witnesses under the age of 18 (the Young Witness Service), provided by NSPCC. Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI) and the NSPCC aim to support victims and prosecution witnesses before, during and after the experience of attending court to give evidence.

5.2.4 The aim of the Witness Service is to support victims and prosecution witnesses, along with their families and friends to deal with attending court and giving evidence. The Witness Service normally contact the victim or witness before the court hearing to offer its services. Trained volunteers offer confidential services free of charge.

5.2.5 The PPS recognises that some victims will find it very difficult to give evidence and may need further practical and emotional support. If a victim would find it helpful to bring a friend or close relative with them for moral support at each stage of the process then they are very much encouraged to do so. However, nobody known to the victim is allowed to be present during the recording of an interview, or in the live link room if they are also giving evidence during the trial.

5.2.6 Specialist agencies can also provide support and advice at any stage of the victim's experience.

5.2.7 An independent advocacy service, ASSIST NI, was launched in Northern Ireland on 1 September 2021. This service is accessible to victims of both

domestic and sexual abuse, regardless of the level of risk posed to them, their gender, age, or where they live within Northern Ireland. Advocates will identify the victim's individual risks and needs and ensure clients are referred to specialist services as appropriate. ASSIST NI support clients within the criminal justice system throughout the process and will liaise with criminal justice partners on behalf of the client as appropriate and necessary. This will include liaison with PPS and PSNI in order to track progress of particular cases through the criminal justice system. Advocates are skilled in dealing with both domestic and sexual abuse cases which will involve adult and / or young victims

5.2.8 The Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU) aims to improve the experience of victims and witnesses. It provides victims and witnesses with a single point of contact from when an investigation or charge file is submitted to the PPS through to and including the outcome of any court proceedings. The VWCU will contact a victim once their case is received by the PPS and will keep them informed at key stages as the case progresses. These may include the following matters:

- if a defendant is granted bail or their bail conditions are changed;
- when a prosecutor takes a decision in their case;
- notifying or updating a victim about key court hearings;
- notifying the victim of the result of the case and any sentence imposed on the defendant;
- notifying the victim if there is an appeal and the outcome of the appeal; and
- providing a victim with information about making a Victim Personal Statement.

5.2.9 The VWCU can also refer victims to specialist organisations for additional support. Referral can be made to Victim Support NI, or NSPCC as appropriate.

5.2.10 Contact details for the PPS regional offices, as well as a number of other agencies and support organisations, are provided at **Annex C**.

5.3 Tackling avoidable delay

5.3.1 We are aware of the impact that unnecessary delay can have on victims and witnesses and are committed to working with our partners to improve the progress of cases through the criminal justice system.

- 5.3.2 Cases involving domestic abuse offences will generally be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court, however repeat offenders and serious domestic abuse offences may be prosecuted in the Crown Court. They will begin in the Magistrates' Court and then be transferred to the Crown Court by a process referred to as committal. This process can take time, but the Department of Justice is currently undertaking a reform of the committal procedure to reduce this delay. Where a defendant pleads not guilty, the case will need to be listed for trial and witnesses invited to attend.
- 5.3.3 Where possible, the PPS will make sure that cases of domestic abuse are not delayed without good reason and we will do our best to ensure that the victim is kept informed of the reason for any significant delay in the proceedings. All cases involving a young person will be prioritised and dealt with as quickly as possible, to minimise avoidable delay throughout the process.
- 5.3.4 Often decisions about the progress of a case may be taken at court. Victims will be informed about those decisions by the prosecutor when they are at court. If they are not at court, they will be informed as soon as possible afterwards either by the PPS or by the police.
- 5.3.5 A case proceeding to contested hearing/trial may be adjourned for a variety of reasons, including the unavailability of a prosecution witness. Even where there has been a guilty plea the court may require reports to help them sentence and there may be further adjournments required.
- 5.3.6 Adjournments may also be sought by the defence for a variety of reasons including the unavailability of their witnesses and/or for further time to prepare their case. Obtaining expert reports can be particularly time-consuming. Whilst prosecutors may raise objections to adjournment requests, the decision on any adjournment is ultimately a matter solely for the District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) or Judge (Crown Court) who will seek to be fair to all parties when making decisions about adjournments.
- 5.3.7 The PPS appreciates that delay in decisions as to prosecution or in cases proceeding at court can add to the distress of a victim. We want to ensure that all victims understand the reasons for any delay and are fully informed and supported to participate in the trial process. We would encourage any victim with concerns about progress in their case to make this known, either directly to PPS, to the investigating officer or via your advocate or any support organisation with which you may be engaging.

ANNEX A:

Domestic abuse issues relevant to particular groups

Introduction

This section is intended to identify the different impacts of domestic abuse on people from a range of communities and groups, and the particular considerations that prosecutors will need to bear in mind. Some of the issues listed will be common to all complainant and perpetrator groups, such as many victims trivialising the abuse they suffer, or fearing they will not be taken seriously.

Complainants may fall into one or more of the categories listed below. Therefore, each case will need to be assessed on its own facts and merits, and support needs identified accordingly.

Women

The PPS recognises that domestic abuse victims and complainants are predominantly women, and experience abuse perpetrated largely by men. However, this is not intended to minimise the abuse experienced by men, or abuse which has been perpetrated by women on female victims, which is also dealt with in the guidance below.

There is significant evidence available that women will be subjected to a greater level of, and more severe physical violence and control, and more likely to experience sexual violence where abuse has been perpetrated by a male. Women may therefore be more vulnerable as a result of this abuse. The abuse suffered by women will, in most cases, involve a combination of physical violence and controlling and coercive behaviour; however, it is also recognised that physical violence does not always have to feature in all cases. Often, threats of, or actual physical violence may occur where a male perpetrator wishes to exert control over a female victim. For example, some perpetrators may threaten harm where the victim does not agree to carry out certain preferences, such as the way the victim should dress or behave. In other cases, coercion or controlling behaviour can be used by a male perpetrator to exert dominance over a female victim, such as depriving them of contact with friends or family.

Familial violence and abuse

Prosecutors will be aware that males may exert dominance over female family members through a number of different methods and scenarios. For example, a son may be violent or abusive towards his mother in order to acquire a benefit or gain (such as money, or theft of an item to secure financial gain). Other male/female

relationships may be exploited in similar ways in order for the male to gain dominance over the female. However, it should also be recognised that some, but not all, instances of familial abuse will also be perpetrated under the guise of 'protecting' a female within the family, or to avoid the female bringing the family shame or dishonour.

This type of abuse is not solely perpetrated by males against a female victim; other females may also be involved, but it is important that prosecutors note the role of males in such cases (further guidance on these issues can be found in the section below on Minority Ethnic Communities).

Men

Prosecutors should be aware that there is a significant under-reporting of domestic abuse by male complainants. Many victims will be reluctant to report offending in the fear that it may damage their reputation, or pride; others may be hesitant as they fear the consequences that may ensue in relation to their family settings. A male victim's physical appearance may make them feel less able to report the abuse they are experiencing for a fear that they will not be believed. Some women may use children within the relationship to manipulate a male victim, by for example threatening to take away contact rights. In the same way that females can be victims of familial abuse, males can also experience similar issues. Male familial abuse may be perpetrated by other males in the family to exert dominance or control, but also by females. For example, male victims may be just as susceptible to abuse perpetrated in the name of forced marriage. This may occur despite the male victim's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Young People

Teenagers in abusive peer relationships

Whilst intimate domestic abuse is likely to take place in private between teenagers, it is less likely that a teenage complainant will share a home with their abuser. This means that complainants will be more likely to live away from direct or immediate physical abuse. However, this should not minimise the extent of abuse perpetrated. A teenage complainant may also suffer physical abuse and patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour can be just as intense and damaging to a complainant, but may manifest in a different way (for example, abuse through social media may be more prevalent in relationships between young people). Abuse between teenagers may take place in an 'online space' and/or other places outside of their home. For example, certain behaviours may be perpetrated at school or college/university, at extra-curricular clubs, within social events/circles or in their own neighbourhoods.

Some teenagers may also live with the perpetrator's family. In some instances, this may prove to be an additional barrier, even in circumstances where the family are unaware of the abuse taking place. Prosecutors should carefully consider the background of the relationship between teenagers. Some victims may not recognise they are in an abusive relationship, or that they may have 'normalised' the behaviour of the perpetrator in some way. Prosecutors should be mindful that the parents of those involved may not know about the relationship (individuals may fear telling their parents about their own, and/or their partner's sexuality or race, or even the fact that they are in a relationship). They may fear their family's reactions to the offending or any subsequent proceedings. These factors may pose additional barriers to the reporting of any crime. Prosecutors should be wary of the impact the family's reactions may have on the victim, and therefore need to be careful in their communications. Prosecutors are advised to find out about the victim's family life and dynamic, to establish who should receive any communications sent.

Teenagers and young people in Care Homes

Domestic abuse within the Care Home setting can be seen through various forms, including:

- 'Perceived' relationships - a victim's understanding of a relationship with other young people in the home, or, more significantly, those they meet outside the home, may in fact be a relationship of exploitation or coercion to undertake criminal activity;
- Victims may be coerced into sexual activity in return for status or protection;
- Some victims may be taken advantage of after being given alcohol or drugs, or may be abused whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol; or
- Victims may be given 'trophy' statuses or 'passed around' where they may then be abused by multiple defendants.

This list illustrates only a small example of the types of abuse falling under the domestic abuse definition which may take place between young people and should not be seen as an exhaustive list. The use of social media is very common. Victimisation can take place through mobile communication and also through social media networks.

Child to parent abuse

Violence or abuse perpetrated on parents by their children also falls under the definition of domestic abuse. Violence or abuse may also be taking place on elderly relatives such as grandparents, by children or other family members who are legally adults, as well as children under 16 years old. Victims may not report abuse as a result of a number of barriers. Such barriers may include:

- Shame or embarrassment that they are being subjected to abuse by a younger family member;
- Disagreement between family members on how the abuse should be handled;
- A possible lack of awareness that the behaviour actually constitutes abuse;
- Little understanding of the issues which may contribute to the abuse perpetrated (e.g. a new baby in the family, breakdown of family relationships, new partners of family members, substance or alcohol misuse, mental health issues etc.);
- Parents/other victims may feel that there are no support services available to them in these scenarios;
- Parents/other victims may not want the defendant to end up with a criminal record and may fear that by reporting they would be impacting on the future of the defendant; or
- Victims may be unaware of the support and services available for the young person.

Same sex, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships

The dynamics of violence within relationships involving same-sex, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) individuals may be similar to those within heterosexual relationships, but there may be additional issues, dynamics and barriers that will require careful consideration by prosecutors. For example, there may be some pre-existing isolation from the complainant's family as a result of the individual's sexual orientation or gender identity which may be exploited by an intimate partner.

Exploitation and abuse by the perpetrator could manifest in a variety of ways, as explored above through the use of physical or sexual violence, or through controlling or coercive behaviours. A complainant may fear their preferences or relationship choices may be 'outed' by an intimate partner or there may be threats of removal of children by Social Services. Additionally, where complainants' families are aware of sexual orientation or gender identity, there may be coercive or controlling behaviours used by those family members to deny or hide an individual's sexual or gender identity, such as being forced into marriage, or even being physically abused.

Some complainants may fear homophobic or transphobic reactions from the statutory services when reporting incidents, or feel less confident in accessing services they perceive to be more readily available for heterosexual individuals.

Complainants should be assured they will be treated fairly, in the same way as everyone else and without judgement, and with specialist support to their specific circumstances if further support is required. LGBT victims may not have the same range of access to places of safety as do heterosexual victims.

Older people

Some older people may be vulnerable to domestic abuse as a result of their mental or physical frailty, and/or mental capacity or physical disabilities; however, these are not the only factors which could lead to an older person being abused. Other factors prosecutors may want to consider include:

- Events occurring in later life such as the development of health problems or the retirement of their abuser from work may lead to a victim experiencing abuse or violence, or an increase in such behaviour;
- Changes in life circumstances leading to a shift in the balance of power between intimate partners, or family members
- Where the victim is physically impaired or experiencing ill health, abuse may begin as a result of 'care-giver' stress or anxiety;
- The victim's mental health may also lead to them being more vulnerable and at increased risk of abuse; or
- Older age can lead to societal or geographical exclusion or isolation which may make a victim more vulnerable to abuse.

This is not an exhaustive list, and it should be borne in mind some of these factors may also relate to inter-familial or age-related abuse, and not just abuse between intimate partners. Abuse may be perpetrated on older victims for a number of reasons, and does not necessarily cease or reduce as the victim or abuser gets older. In fact, an older victim may experience more frequent or increased intensity of abuse as they feel they are less able to 'escape' the abuse; additionally, some older people may only start to experience abuse at this stage in their life.

Older victims may:

- have grown up in a generation where domestic abuse was acceptable and not 'talked about', or expected to be tolerated as a part of a 'normal' relationship;
- find themselves in a mutually dependent relationship with their abuser, and as a result may fear that by reporting the abuse and supporting a prosecution, they will be left without a carer or companion, or without any financial support;
- feel unable to cope leaving their family home and everything they had built up with their partner over the years;
- have less knowledge of support services available to them, as some may not know how to access the information to find out more, or may be unaware of the services and the support that may be available to them.

Some victims may also believe that services are not available to them because of their age. They may:

- have no financial independence (such as not owning their own bank account or not having their name appear on the mortgage deed to their family home);
- fear negative reactions they may receive from their family or children and the thought that they may be 'making a fuss at their age'. Victims may also fear reactions from their wider community or ethnic group;
- want to protect the 'sanctity of marriage' and the privacy of their home life, and not wanting to involve 'outside' parties in their domestic life;
- have concerns over additional health needs as a result of a disability or impairment, the onset of mental health conditions, or deteriorating ill-health; and
- sometimes simply fear the unknown. The forms of abuse an older victim might experience may also take the form of neglect of care or medication, not just by a partner, but also by a family member.

Disability

Many disabled people face problems of negative attitudes towards either their mental or physical impairment and may often feel isolated. In fact, some victims may be specifically targeted as a result of their mental health condition or physical impairment by the abuser, to exert control and dominance, whether through physical violence, or through less obvious controlling and coercive behaviours. Assisting disabled and vulnerable victims through prosecutions may need the involvement of multiple agencies to ensure a holistic approach is taken to the handling such cases.

Where appropriate, the PPS will consider the use of registered intermediaries for some victims. Disabled victims will experience some of the same physical violence and coercive control that non-disabled victims experience; however, disabled victims may experience other types of abuse as a result of their specific disability. Some victims may be unwilling to report abuse due to limited access to services, a lack of confidence with managing everyday tasks, low self-esteem, or an enforced dependence on others to carry out those tasks. This social and physical dependence can lead to an increase in a victim's vulnerability to domestic abuse, leaving them with few or no alternatives to escape the violence. These circumstances may be exacerbated further by the possibility that the abuser may also be the victim's carer.

The early identification of specific support needs is critical. Certain disabilities such as deafness will require specialist care and attention to ensure that the victim has been properly understood when providing their account of the offending behaviour, and that they are comfortably supported with special measures and other support requirements if attending court.

Victims with mental health conditions should also be given special care and attention by prosecutors. Victims will require more tailored approaches depending on the level

of their mental capacity and/or learning difficulty; this should not be taken to undermine competency as a victim or as a witness in court.

Minority ethnic communities

Each offence, perpetrator and victim will be very different, and care should be taken to avoid stereotyping the type of abuse that may be suffered by victims from specific ethnic communities. Perceptions or experiences of racism in the criminal justice system and throughout other aspects of society may make it difficult for victims of domestic abuse in minority ethnic communities to report an offence or support a prosecution. Many victims may worry that they may not be believed or that they may not be treated fairly. Additional considerations, such as pressure from within the immediate and extended family and the wider community, together with cultural traditions, may also prevent or delay victims from reporting offences of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse may take different forms within minority ethnic communities and may not be demonstrated explicitly through physical violence, but rather through controlling or coercive behaviours.

Some examples are:

- Honour-based violence and forced marriage (as distinct from an arranged marriage, where the marriage is based on free consent);
- Dowry-related violence;
- Enforcement of cultural/traditional roles at a young age (e.g. female genital mutilation);
- Shaving of the head or acid attacks to minimise the female's physical appearance;
- Preventing the victim from finishing education or pursuing a career; and
- Violence and disowning of the victim by the family or community (for 'shameful behaviour'). Such behaviours may be perpetrated by intimate partners and also by family members and/or wider community members.

Assumptions should not be made that all domestic abuse within minority ethnic communities takes these forms. Some abuse will be similar to that perpetrated in non-minority communities (for example, prejudices towards inter-racial relationships; pregnancy outside of marriage etc.).

As such, the PPS will proceed with caution when communicating with the victim about a case. It is highly likely that the victim and perpetrator will be living in the same household. Some cases will be very clearly honour-based, and some will not; others, may also be a combination of both. In some cases of domestic abuse, some offences may be perpetrated by multiple offenders, and despite the conviction of one offender

the abusive behaviour may still continue by others who still have access to the victim. It is therefore essential that prosecutors and police work closely to understand the nature of the abuse and identify whether there are single or multiple perpetrators involved.

The forms of domestic abuse experienced by ethnic minority victims can be triggered by a number of issues, including, but not limited to:

- Loss of virginity;
- Being in a 'secret' or what the family perceive as 'unsuitable' relationship;
- Disclosure of rape or sexual abuse;
- Pregnancy (particularly where pregnancy occurs outside marriage, or from a 'secret' or 'unsuitable' relationship) and/or forced abortion or termination of pregnancy; or
- Lifestyle (alcohol or sexual activity) being revealed.

In some minority groups, women may become more vulnerable and fear leaving their abuser because they may be unable to speak or understand English to a confident level and may therefore feel unable to access the support that is needed. This lack of confidence may be exploited by abusers, especially in scenarios between intimate partners where threats may be made to have children taken into care. The same methods of manipulation may be used to suggest that the victim is suffering from mental health issues, where this may not be the case.

Additionally, some women with little understanding of the English language may be left in difficult situations where they have participated in religious (but not legally binding) ceremonies to marry British national men. Some victims in these circumstances will experience castigation by their husband where they do not conform to family expectations, and may be as a result left without any family or friends, community support, financial means, and in some extreme cases even made homeless.

These are only some examples of the barriers and difficulties faced by women from ethnic minority communities and should not be seen as an exhaustive list. It is therefore important that as much information is provided to the PPS as possible, and with the assistance of specialist groups where available, to understand the nature of abuse experienced by the victim, and to enable identification of the support needs required by them.

Cultural or religious beliefs may also be a deterrent for victims coming forward; victims may be made to feel ashamed by their community, or may fear isolation by the community. Additionally, community leaders or faith leaders in some cultures or ethnic groups may play the role of a mediator and discourage the victim from reporting. PPS

is sensitive to cultural issues which may take the form of mediation, as well as certain practices which some cultures exercise.

Cultural and religious practices should be respected to a point; however, they should not be seen as an 'excuse' to cover domestic abuse between partners or family members. PPS is aware of community courts/arbitration forums in some ethnic communities by victims and perpetrators. These should not be used as an alternative to criminal proceedings. Some perpetrators may use these mechanisms to make a case for staying with their partner, thereby enabling the abuse to be continued.

Prosecutors will, where possible, seek advice or information from specialist support services and organisations where required to ensure that a proper understanding of such practices is obtained, and that any risks to victims are properly identified. Family members should not act as interpreters for those who do not have a competent or confident understanding of English.

Checks should be made to ensure the interpreter does not have any connection with them or their family. Victims may request an interpreter of the same sex - this should be arranged so far as is possible. Prosecutors will bear in mind that written communication may also be difficult for a victim to understand, and translators may be required in these circumstances.

Individuals involved in prostitution

Individuals involved in prostitution can also fall into the category of those who experience domestic abuse. In some cases, these individuals may be more vulnerable as a result of their immigration status, age, mental health vulnerabilities, ethnic background or addiction/substance misuse. Victims may be at risk of domestic abuse, particularly if, as in many instances, their partner is also their 'pimp'. Additionally, victims may be forced or coerced to become involved in prostitution by their spouse or partner, which is also seen as a way of perpetrating domestic abuse.

When dealing with cases where the victim is involved in prostitution, prosecutors shall work proactively with the police to ensure as far as possible, that the victim is fully supported during any proceedings. It should be recognised that some victims may fear coming forward as a result of their circumstances and the possibility of already being known to the police. Continuing with a prosecution may place a victim at further risk from their 'pimp' or partner. As a result, victims may be more likely to support a prosecution if there are arrangements made to ensure their safety. Regardless of safety measures put in place, victims involved in prostitution may decide to withdraw their support for a prosecution; it is essential that if a prosecution continues that these safety considerations remain in place - the safety of the victim is paramount.

Risk assessments around the risks to the victim and what further risks may be revealed if for example, the victim is compelled to give evidence by witness summons. Additional offences, such as human trafficking, may also be disclosed or considered for prosecution.

Immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers

There will be a number of victims with insecure immigration status, and they may as a result have no recourse to public funds despite having valid leave to stay in the country. This restriction may make it difficult for victims of domestic abuse to leave abusive situations, often leaving them with no option but to stay in the abusive relationship or leave with little support thereafter. Immigrants will experience many barriers to reporting domestic abuse; in fact, an individual's immigration status may be used as a vulnerability to perpetrate abuse by the defendant through fear that insecure immigration status of the victim may be 'outed'.

The perpetrator's immigration status may also be used as a way to commit offences and exploit a victim - for example, the perpetrator may use the insecure status to prevent the victim from reporting the offending behaviour to the police, by telling the victim they may be penalised by the authorities in some way. Some victims may have entered the country through forced marriage and be kept isolated from other people or services or social freedom, and may find themselves being unable to leave their situation for fear of lack of support or knowledge of services available.⁷ Prosecutors may find it helpful to also refer to the PPS's Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for further information on these issues.

To settle permanently in the UK as a victim of domestic abuse, individuals will need to prove:

- Permission to enter or remain in the UK as the husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried/same-sex partner of a British citizen or person settled in the UK (even if that permission is no longer valid);
- The relationship was existing and genuine and not a 'marriage of convenience', when the permission to enter or remain was last given; and
- The individual is a victim of domestic abuse and this has caused the relationship to break down before the end of the permission to enter or remain.

Where a prosecution is pending against a partner who is a British citizen or where they are a settled in the UK, the victim may be granted further periods of limited leave to remain (usually 6 months) until the outcome of the prosecution is known. When

⁷ See the PPS's [Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking](#) for further information.

reviewing a domestic abuse case in which the victim is a member of the refugee community or an asylum seeker, prosecutors should take into account the combination of social and cultural factors, communication difficulties, lack of information in their own language and lack of access to informal and formal support, which may make it difficult for the victim to support or take part in a prosecution.

Some asylum seekers and refugees may have been victims of abuse in the countries they have escaped from; they also be suffering from experiences related to that abuse, such as mental health problems. Also, some victims may not present with behaviours which may not be seen as 'normal' for victims of abuse - again, prosecutors will be mindful to avoid assumptions and make no presumptions about being a 'perfect victim'. Where asylum seekers inform the immigration authorities of any domestic abuse that has taken place previously, the authorities will in turn inform the police.

The immigration authorities have facilities in place to assist asylum seekers in protecting their identity and that of any children, as well as moving the victim and children to safe accommodation if required. Prosecutors will note the potential problems and possible solutions of such circumstances and set out what steps need to be taken if the victim is to give evidence (for example, special measures, use of an interpreter, support from a specialist support organisation or Victim Support, etc. is needed for the victim to give their best evidence).

Annex B:

Factors considered to either support or not support the decision to issue a witness summons

(i) Consideration - Seriousness of the offence:

- Serious offence (or escalation of severity from previous incidents): desirability of summons – **HIGH**
- Minor offence and isolated event: desirability of summons – **LOW**

(ii) Consideration - Complainant's injuries (including psychological):

- Serious injuries: desirability of summons – **HIGH**
- No injuries or minor injuries: desirability of summons – **LOW**

(iii) Consideration - History of relationship:

- Violent relationship and/or pattern of offending: desirability of summons – **HIGH**
- High level of continued dependency/contact between perpetrator and complainant: desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(iv) Consideration - Attack had been planned:

- Desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(v) Consideration - Incident witnessed seen or heard by children:

- Desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(vi) Consideration - Offence(s) have been committed against a child/children:

- Desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(vii) Consideration - Likelihood of recurrence:

- Desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(viii) Consideration - Threat to health and/or safety of complainant or any other person involved:

- Desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(ix) Consideration – Pregnancy:

- Desirability of summons – **HIGH**

(x) Consideration - Current state of complainant's relationship with the defendant:

- Further incidents - desirability of summons – HIGH
- Relationship assessed as 'unstable' - desirability of summons – HIGH
- No separation or divorce proceedings - desirability of summons – HIGH
- Still lives within same household - desirability of summons – HIGH
- No further incidents - desirability of summons – LOW
- No further police call-out - desirability of summons – LOW
- No on-going civil proceedings - desirability of summons – LOW
- No history of volatile relationship - desirability of summons – LOW

(xi) Consideration - Defendant's criminal history (particularly if there has been any previous violence):

- Desirability of summons – HIGH

(xii) Consideration - Information from any other agencies supporting proceeding with a prosecution:

- Desirability of summons – HIGH

Annex C:

Useful contacts and sources of support

Public Prosecution Service

Policy and Information Unit

Policy and Information Unit
Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

Telephone: (028) 9089 7100
Deaf/Hard of hearing (SMS): 07795 675528
Email: info@ppsni.gov.uk (for general enquiries)
complaints@ppsni.gov.uk (for complaints)

Website: www.ppsni.gov.uk

Belfast and Eastern Region / Headquarters Sections

Belfast Chambers

93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

Telephone: (028) 9054 2444
Deaf/Hard of hearing (SMS): 07795 673927

Western and Southern Region

Foyle Chambers

35 Limavady Road
Londonderry BT47 6LP

Telephone: (028) 7134 0648
Deaf/Hard of Hearing (SMS): 07795 675338

Omagh Chambers

2 Townhall Square
High Street
Omagh BT78 1BL

Telephone: (028) 8224 4319
Deaf/Hard of Hearing (SMS): 07795 831188

Newry Chambers

1 Downshire Close
Newry BT34 1FD

Telephone: (028) 3083 2500
Deaf/Hard of Hearing (SMS): 07795 810114

Victim and Witness Care Unit

Belfast Office (for Belfast and Eastern Region)

Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

Telephone: (028) 9026 4690
Deaf/Hard of Hearing (SMS): 07825 118389
Email: vw cubelfast@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk

Foyle Office (for Western and Southern Region)

35 Limavady Road
Londonderry BT47 6LP

Telephone: (028) 7134 0632
Deaf/Hard of Hearing (SMS): 07825 118416
Email: vwcufoyle@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk

Police Service of Northern Ireland

65 Knock Road
Belfast BT5 6LE
Telephone: 028 9065 0222
Website: www.psnipolice.uk

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline can be contacted free of charge, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This is a confidential service available to both women and men. A telephone translation service is also available. Trained helpline workers can

talk about the help and support that you could get. You can also contact the Helpline if you are worried about a friend or relative and you want support on how to help them.

The Helpline also provides information to statutory agencies and charities. To contact the Helpline call **0808 802 1414**. It is free and the number does not appear on a landline telephone bill. You can also send an email to the Helpline address help@dsahelpline.org. The email service is also confidential and does not record your email address. Visit www.dsahelpline.org for more information and webchat.

You can also seek emotional and practical support from Victim Support NI if you have been affected by crime.

Contact the Belfast Hub on 028 9024 3133 or email belfast@victimsupportni.org.uk.

Contact the Foyle Hub on 028 7137 0086 or email foyle@victimsupportni.org.uk.

Women's Aid Federation NI

The Annex
30 Adelaide Park
Belfast BT9 6FY

Telephone: 028 9024 9041
Email: info@womensaidni.org
Website: www.womensaidni.org

NSPCC

Lanyon Building
Block 1, Unit 7
Jennymount Business Park
North Derby Street
York Road
Belfast BT1 3HN

Helpline: Telephone 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

The Men's Advisory Project (MAPNI)

5th Floor
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN

Phone: 02890 241929 (Belfast)

Phone: 02871 160001 (Foyle)

Email: info@mapni.co.uk

Website: www.mapni.co.uk/



If you require any further information about the PPS, or a copy of this document in an alternative format, please contact:

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Published for Consultation: November 2022