

Section 4 - Police and Domestic Abuse: Reported Activity, Response and Support for Victims

The HMIC 2015 report *'Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse'*¹ found that in the 12 months between April 2014 to March 2015, the police in England and Wales:-

- Received more than 900,000 calls about domestic abuse (an average of over 100 calls an hour or around 2,500 calls per day).
- Domestic abuse-related crime constituted 10 percent of all recorded crimes. Between 8% and 12% of all police recorded crimes are 'flagged' as domestic abuse, with the CSEW suggesting this means the police are improving in their identification of crimes that are domestic abuse related².
- Domestic abuse-related crime constituted one in three of all recorded assaults with injury crimes.

This shows that domestic abuse is a significant part of policing and the police are a major partner in domestic abuse prevention.

VAWG actions for the Police

The Police are mentioned in 11 VAWG Strategy actions. These include implementing the recommendations from the HMIC domestic abuse report, the use of sanctions to protect victims from perpetrators, more victim engagement and protection, routine data collection for police recorded domestic abuse incidents (including for Harmful cultural practices), service improvement based on victim feedback, training in VAWG and effective multi-agency working. The actions are as follows:-

POLICE RESPONSE			
85	Continue to implement the HMIC recommendations to improve the police response to domestic violence and abuse through the National Oversight Group chaired by the Home Secretary.	HO	April 2017
86	Ensure that the views of victims of domestic abuse are incorporated routinely and consistently into national monitoring arrangements on the police response to domestic violence and abuse through the introduction of the Service Improvement Survey.	HO	May 2016
87	Deliver new training on domestic violence and abuse for first responders, supervisors and coaches which reinforces the need for evidence gathering to apprehend serial perpetrators.	COP	Ongoing to 2020
88	Publish new Authorised Professional Practice on stalking and harassment including new guidance on the use of Police Information Notices.	COP	Spring 2016
89	Review the guidance to forces to make sure that it is clear to officers the expectation about using body-worn video to gather evidence including to support investigations of domestic abuse incidents.	COP	Review progress March 2017

¹ HMIC (2015) *Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse* <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/increasingly-everyones-business-a-progress-report-on-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/>

² ONS Chapter 4: intimate personal violence and partner abuse, 11 February 2016

IMPROVING DATA			
54	Work with other Government departments, the College of Policing, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and domestic abuse organisations to develop a data set relating to domestic abuse which will enable more thorough analysis of how domestic abuse is dealt with in a force area.	HO	Data set agreed by June 2016
55	Develop an approach to the collection of data recorded by police forces in relation to HBV, FM and FGM in conjunction with the National Police Chiefs' Council. Consideration will be given to this data being recorded as part of the Annual Data Return.	HO	June 2016
63	Implement HMIC's recommendation (from their report into the police response to domestic violence) for further multi-agency inspections to consider how individual services contribute to keeping victims safe, the quality of local partnerships and the ways in which joint working is scrutinised.	HO	April 2017
TACKLING PERPETRATORS			
13	Monitor the use of protection orders for a range of VAWG offences to promote wider take up and better enforcement of breaches.	HO	Review in June 2017
14	Publish an evaluation of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) to promote wider uptake.	HO	March 2016
15	Consider criminalising breach of a Domestic Violence Protection Order.	HO	June 2016

The police section focuses on five areas:-

Part 1 - Provides information on police recorded activity on domestic abuse incidents and offences for England and Wales and for South Yorkshire Police Force. This is a very detailed section which starts with a discussion on some of the issues with the reporting of police incidents, data recording by police and the obstacles the police have addressed. Then England and Wales data and South Yorkshire police force data are provided and activity compared to comparator police force areas.

Part 2 - Provides data specific to Sheffield including incidents and offences reported to South Yorkshire Police by Sheffield residents, the level of risk, brief victim demographics and detailed location of incidents by Ward and Neighbourhood areas.

The aim of parts 1 and 2 is for readers to understand the extent of domestic abuse activity that is reported to the police locally and nationally, the level of domestic abuse risk victims are experiencing in reported incidents, repeat victim data, victim demographics and location.

Part 3 – Provides an overview of the latest HMIC PEEL Police Effectiveness 2016 report which includes a critique of the police response to domestic abuse incidents. The aim is to provide an overview of the report and the recommendations it makes. Additional commentary is service user's experiences of the police response and local experts in domestic abuse

The report also details some of the issues with the use of police sanctions and the police response to victims which are discussed in detail in part 4 and Part 5.

Part 4 - Details the sanctions the police have available to take the victim from the perpetrator and their current use locally compared to other areas.

Part 5 - Details the victim in the police incidents, the use of the DASH and victim referrals into support.

4.1. Reported police activity of domestic abuse incidents and offences – National and South Yorkshire

Explanation of Police data³

Walby et al (2014) wrote that *'it is important to have accurate data on the pattern and extent of the violence...in order to find out the best places for future interventions'*⁴. Therefore the data helps to create a good understanding of domestic violence and sexual violence both nationally and locally to Sheffield.

To understand the police activity data, one needs to understand the recording of domestic abuse crimes. There is no offence group/ code for domestic abuse crimes, but there are distinct crime codes for violence against a person, homicides, rape and sexual abuse.

If a crime is deemed domestic abuse related, then the police when recording the crime under the offence, can also 'flag' the offence as domestic abuse. Therefore reported police activity for domestic abuse is based on the number of crimes recorded with a flag for domestic abuse.

The police have been working to improve the data and recording of crimes following the HMIC report *Crime-recording: making the victim count (2014)*⁵ which identified on average the under recording of crime was 19 per cent (2012/13 crime data). However a recent Crime Data Integrity report⁶ for South Yorkshire suggested a higher number of crimes could be recorded because in the 117 incidents reviewed as part of the audit, 28 (24%) had not been recorded as crimes.

The HMIC report observed that the police were found to be less likely to record violent crime which impacts on the Public Health England Indicator 1.11 for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences (indicator 1.12 explored in Part 2 on Sexual Abuse) as crimes than other offences. The inspection found that, on the national average, over a quarter of sexual offences and a third of violent crime reported to the police each year is not being recorded as crime.

The improvements in crime recording by the police are noted in the CSEW 2016 report which states:- *'Nationally there has been a recent improvement in compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard which can be seen from updated analysis comparing trends in the CSEW and police recorded crime (presented in Section 4.2 of the User Guide). This shows that the gap between the two series is narrowing; suggesting that improvements to recording practices may be partly responsible for increases in recorded crime'*.

There is known under reporting of domestic abuse incidents:-

³ The Crime Survey of England and Wales notes the following with regard to police data - Police recorded crime *'Police recorded crime figures are a by-product of a live administrative system that is continually being updated as incidents are logged as crimes and subsequently investigated. Some incidents initially recorded as a crime may, on further investigation, be found not to be a crime and are then described as "cancelled records" and removed from the force's system. Other criteria for a recorded crime being "cancelled" include a crime being recorded in error or if it is a duplicated or partially duplicated record. Recorded crimes can also be transferred to another police force and also result in the "transferred" record being removed from the original force's system. Some offences may be re-classified, for example from theft to robbery (Section 3.2 of the User Guide has further details of the process involved from recording a crime to the production of statistics). The police return provisional figures to the Home Office on a monthly basis and each month they may supply revised totals for previously supplied months. The Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics team undertake a series of validation checks on receipt of the data and query outliers with forces who may then re-submit data.'*

⁴ Walby, S. Towers, J. Francis. B, (2014) *the decline in the rate of domestic abuse has stopped: removing the cap on repeat victimisation reveals more violence.* Findings from the ESRC project 'is the rate of domestic violence decreasing or increasing? Analysis of the Crime Survey for England and Wales' Research Briefing, Violence and Society.

⁵ HMIC report *Crime-recording: making the victim count (2014)* - The final report of an inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf>.

⁶ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-data-integrity-south-yorkshire-2014.pdf>.



- The CSEW⁷ finds that of the individuals who have been a victim in the last 12 months 21% of victims told the police of the incident. Victims who did not report said the reasons they didn't report were because it wasn't important, it was a family matter, they didn't think it would help and they were embarrassed.
- Women experience an average of 35 incidents of domestic violence before reporting an incident to the police.⁸

Therefore the police activity data in this section represents the known police activity of domestic abuse crimes based on the quality of the recording of crimes at the time and the domestic abuse incidents they were informed about.

There is currently no nationwide dataset for recording domestic abuse incidents; however the new VAWG strategy (2016-2020) has an action (54) to improve police data for domestic abuse collection by developing a dataset. This dataset will enable more thorough analysis of how domestic abuse is dealt with in a force area (dataset to be agreed June 2016).

Recorded police activity for domestic abuse

The Office of the National Statistics (ONS) shows that 10.8% of all the offences recorded by the police in England and Wales were flagged as domestic abuse in the financial year 2015/16⁹. South Yorkshire flagged a smaller, 8.4% of all offences as domestic abuse related and this is also slightly lower than the comparator force areas: - 10.9% in Northumbria, 10.5% in West Yorkshire and 9.6% in Nottinghamshire.

Total Incidents and offences

England and Wales Activity

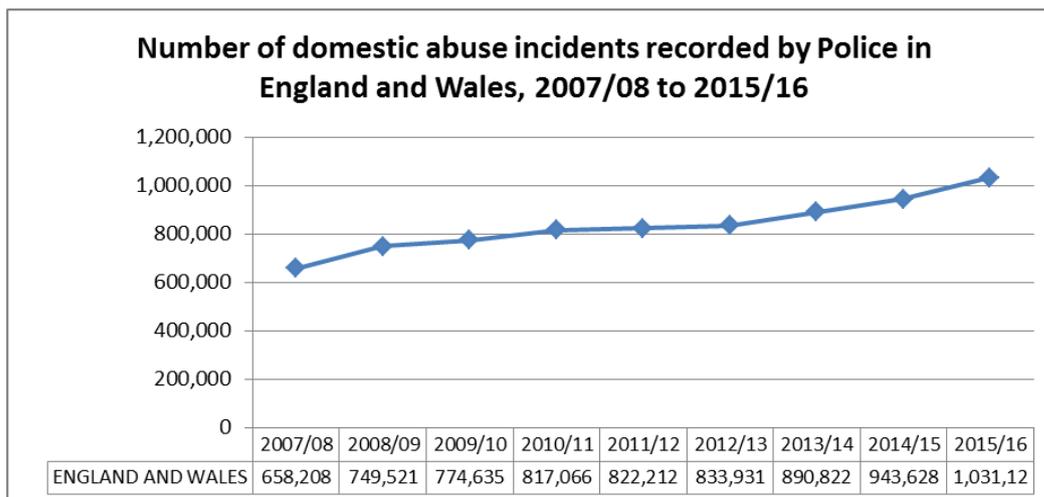
A total of 1,031,120 incidents and offences (a rate of 17.83 per 1,000 populations) were flagged domestic abuse incidents in England and Wales in 2015/16. This was higher than the 943,628 recorded in 2014/15 and the highest recorded activity in the last nine financial years. The table below shows the ONS police recorded activity data published in the CSEW data table 4.08, published in February 2016, with activity for 2015/16 added from the December 2016 ONS publication¹⁰.

⁷ CSEW, Appendix table 4.28: Who victim had told personally about the partner abuse experienced in the last 12 months, by sex, year ending March 2015 CSEW

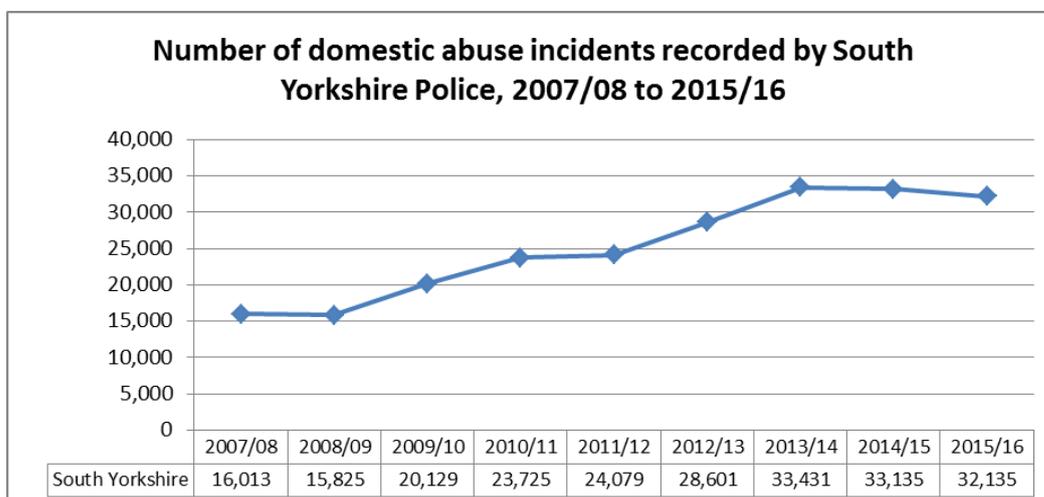
⁸ http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/articles/domestic_violence_-_the_facts_the_issues_the_future/ Yearshaw 1997, accessed at http://safer.sthelens.gov.uk/SITEMANV2/publications/40/0901316LeafletsforDVVictims_3.pdf

⁹ Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2016, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2016>, Published December 2016

¹⁰ Notes from the 4.08 CSEW data table are as follows: - 1. Source: Police incident data, Home Office, 2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics, 3. Domestic abuse incidents are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. 4. The police record domestic abuse incidents in accordance with the National Standard for Incident Recording; for further details, see Chapter 5 of the User Guide. However, it is known that there have been substantial differences in how the police record these incidents, with some forces changing their recording practices and processes over the time period shown. This is the main reason for some of the large changes seen between years, 5. Figures for year ending 2014 differ to those previously published due to revised data submitted by Wiltshire police

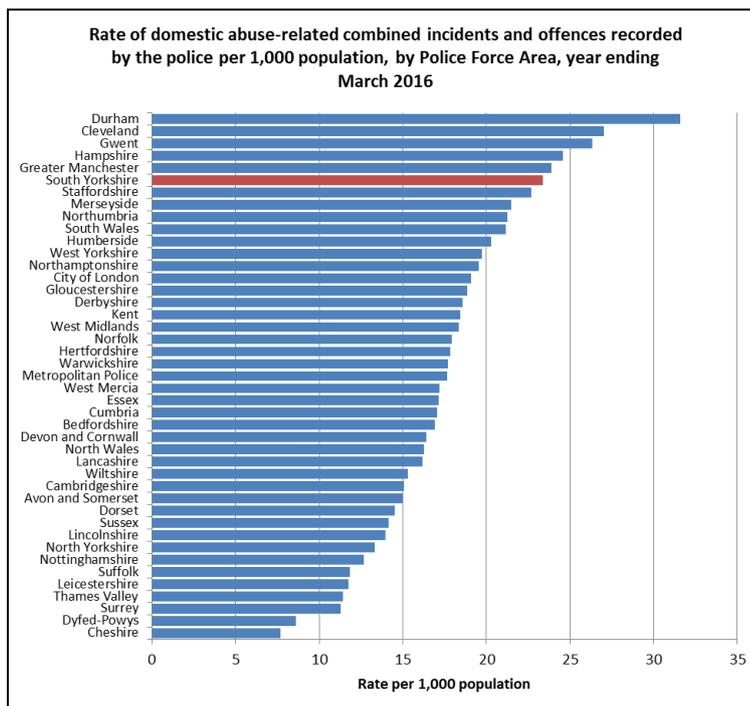


South Yorkshire Activity



A total of 32,135 incidents and offences were flagged as domestic abuse incidents by South Yorkshire Police in 2015/16, a rate of 23.4 for every 1,000 people. This was a higher rate than the 17.8 rate observed for England and Wales and also with comparator forces of Northumbria 21.2, West Yorkshire 19.7, and Nottinghamshire 12.6.

The table below shows that South Yorkshire was the 6th highest force area (out of 43) for number of incidents and offences (behind Durham, Cleveland, Gwent, Hampshire and Greater Manchester) in 2015/16.



Despite the higher than average recorded volume in South Yorkshire, the police force area experienced a 3% reduction (or 1,000 fewer incidents recorded) compared to the previous financial year, 2014/15.

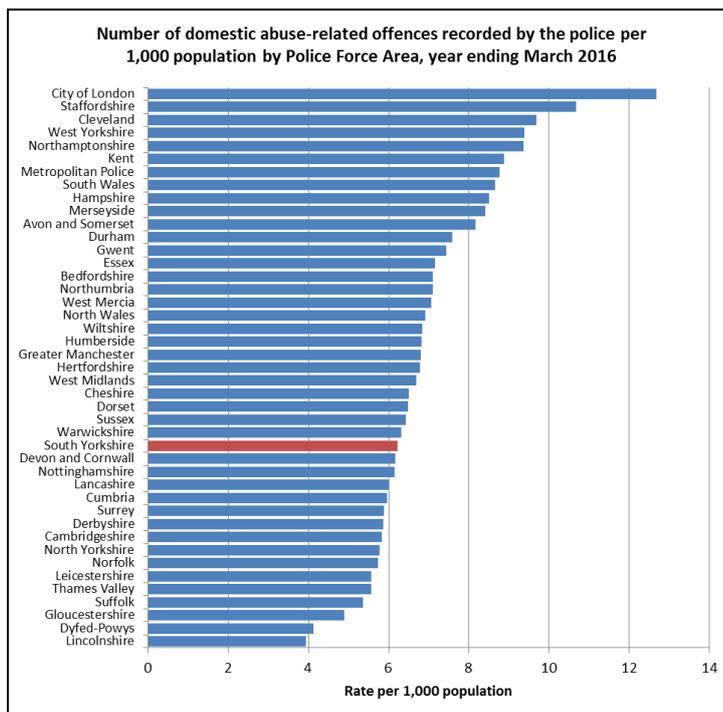
Domestic abuse related Incidents only

609,935 of all domestic abuse recorded activity in England and Wales were incidents only. These did not become offences and is likely that is not enough evidence to charge the perpetrator. The England and Wales incident rate was 10.54 per 1,000 populations.

Of the 32,135 incidents and offences recorded by South Yorkshire Police in the year ending March 2016, a total of 23,572 were incidents. This is a rate of 17.15 for every 1,000 people. It is the third highest rate in England and Wales and was the highest of all its comparator Police Forces (which had a range between 6.49 (Nottinghamshire) and 14.14 (Northumbria)).

Domestic abuse related offences only

Of the 32,135 incidents and offences recorded by South Yorkshire Police in the year ending March 2016, a total of 8,563 were offences. This is a rate of 6.2 for every 1,000 people. The rate is equal to Nottinghamshire 6.2 but is lower than the West Yorkshire 9.4, England and Wales 7.3, Northumbria 7.1. South Yorkshire is the 16th lowest force area (out of 43) for number of incidents and offences.



South Yorkshire has a high proportion of incidents than offences compared to other police force areas but a lower ratio of offences recorded. It means that out of the total incidents recorded around one in four (23%) become offences. This England and Wales average is significantly higher at 40.8% and the others comparator police force areas: - 48.7% in Nottinghamshire, 47.5% in West Yorkshire and 33.4% in Northumbria.

Despite being lower than other areas, the South Yorkshire 23% of offences is higher than it has been in previous years. Information from the OPPC finds that in 2013/14 only 18% of all incidents were crimes. The full explanation for the increase in the proportion of crimes to incidents is found in the foot note below¹¹. The main change is improvements to police recording of crime, which is a National Crime recording Standards requirement. The police are recording routinely incidents as offences at the scene of the incident rather than after the event. The aim is to have a higher proportion of offences as possible, because more perpetrators can be brought to justice.

Violent offences and domestic abuse

A significant proportion of domestic abuse offences are recorded under a violence offence category. 327,565 of violence offences¹² recorded in 2015/16 in England and Wales were domestic abuse related which is **32.9%** of the violence offences recorded. South Yorkshire is around the England and Wales average, at **30.8%** and is similar to the comparator police force areas of West Yorkshire (32.4%) and Northumbria (34.2%) but lower than Nottinghamshire's 37.7%, see figure below.

¹¹ 'This is due to the crimes now being recorded at the point of contact, previously officers were allowed to investigate the incident then record the crime, we found that not all crimes were being recorded in line with the National Crime Recording standards, by recording the crimes at the point of contact this has increased the number of crimes, although the number of incidents has decreased. Future figures should give a more accurate picture of crimes against reported incidents. These figures also refer to all reported incidents not just sexual offences. So whilst it looks like sexual offences have increased in real terms this may not be the case, the number of recorded incidents have increased due to improved recording practices'. Mr. Peter Horner, SCS PPU Policy and Compliance Unit Manager

¹² www.ons.gov.uk Government data tool for domestic abuse published December 2016

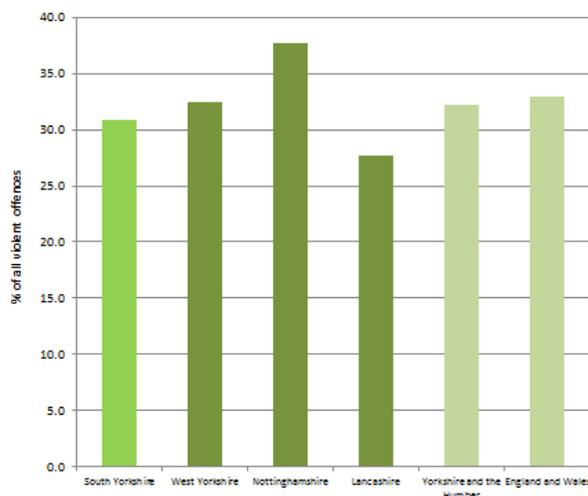
Violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were domestic abuse-related as a percentage of total violence against the person offences, year ending March 2016

This shows the percentage of all violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending March 2016.

Percentage of police recorded violence against the person offences that were domestic abuse-related, selected areas, year ending March 2016

	% of all violence against the person offences that were domestic abuse-related
	Percentage
South Yorkshire	30.8
West Yorkshire	32.4
Nottinghamshire	37.7
Lancashire	27.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	32.2
England and Wales	32.9

Percentage of police recorded violence against the person offences classified as domestic abuse-related, selected areas, year ending March 2016



Important Notes

Police recorded crime data are not classified as National Statistics.

Offences are crimes recorded under the NCRS that were flagged as domestic abuse-related.

[\[Click to view more...\]](#)

Total violence offences recorded as domestic abuse

In 2015/16 South Yorkshire Police recorded a total of **6,318¹³** VAP offences as domestic abuse-related, this equates to a rate of 4.6 per 1,000 populations. Compared with elsewhere the domestic abuse VAP rate for South Yorkshire is slightly lower than the England and Wales rate of 5.7 and lower than the comparator areas: Northumbria (5.2), Nottinghamshire (6.0) and West Yorkshire (7.1). See table below.

¹³ www.ons.gov.uk Government data tool for domestic abuse published December 2016

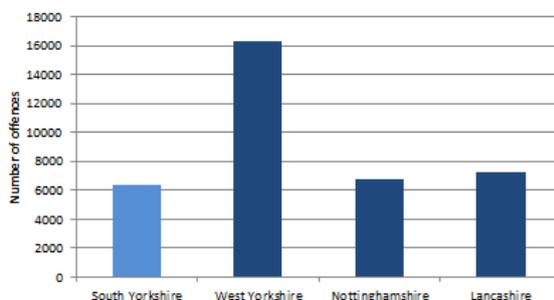
Violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were domestic abuse-related, year ending March 2016

This shows the number and rate of violence against the person offences recorded by the police, which were flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending March 2016.

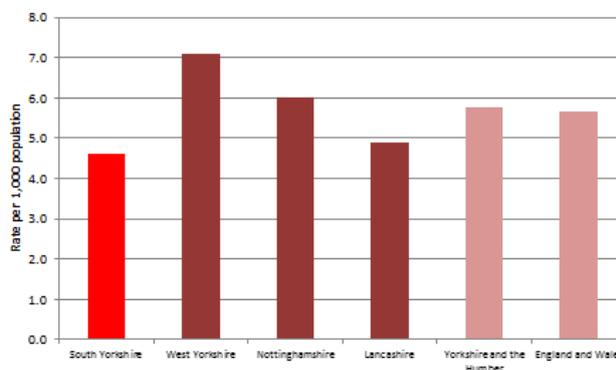
Number and rate of police recorded violence against the person offences that were domestic abuse-related, selected areas, year ending March 2016

	Number of offences	Rate per 1,000 population
South Yorkshire	6,318	4.6
West Yorkshire	16,291	7.1
Nottinghamshire	6,714	6.0
Lancashire	7,195	4.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	31,004	5.8
England and Wales	327,565	5.7

Number of domestic abuse-related police recorded violence against the person offences, selected areas, year ending March 2016



Rate of domestic abuse-related police recorded violence against the person offences, selected areas, year ending March 2016



Important Notes

Police recorded crime data are not classified as National Statistics.

Offences are crimes recorded under the NCRS that were flagged as domestic abuse-related.

[Click to view more...]

The Public Health England Outcome Framework has a measure for domestic abuse – 1.11 ‘Domestic abuse - Rate of domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police per 1,000 populations’. It currently (March 2017) shows 2014/15 activity and because the ONS data is more recent the PHE indicator is not discussed in detail. PHE data can be found at <http://www.phoutcomes.info/public-health-outcomes-framework>.

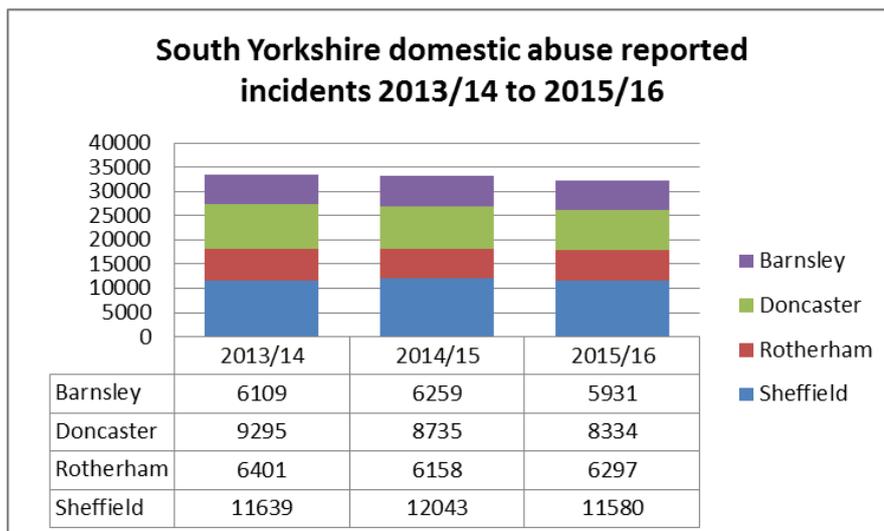
South Yorkshire data by Local Authority

Domestic abuse related incidents and crimes by volume by Local Authority

The national data does not provide data by local authority for domestic abuse. Local Sheffield data is produced by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and reviewed by the SDVC board and focuses on each local authority area in South Yorkshire. The data presented here is provided prior to publication of the national data; therefore when South Yorkshire activity as a whole is viewed, there is a small difference between to that published by ONS (-7 incidents) and the local data.

The Graph below shows the total reported incidents for the last three financial years based on local data provided by the OPPC for each of the four South Yorkshire Areas, Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster¹⁴.

¹⁴ Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) crime and incident level comparison, OPPC for the SDVC

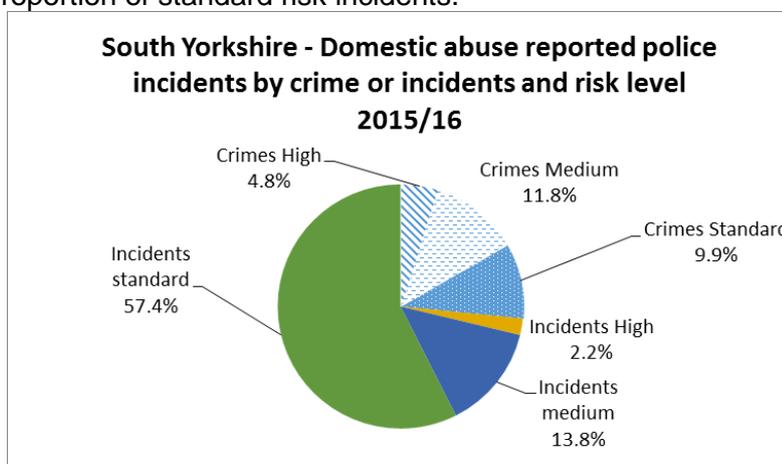


Sheffield has the highest volume of reported domestic abuse incidents in South Yorkshire (36%), Doncaster (26%), Rotherham (20%) and Barnsley (18%). In 2015/16 three of the four areas (with the exception of Rotherham) had a reduction in recorded volume compared with 2014/15.

The Risk level of Police reported domestic abuse incidents and offences in South Yorkshire¹⁵

- The majority of police reported incidents to the police are assessed as standard risk - 67% of all incidents reported to the police were standard risk (10% crimes and 57% incidents), 26% were assessed as medium risk (12% crimes and 14% incidents), and 7% high risk (5% crimes and 2% incidents).
- Incidents that become offences are more likely to be high risk. For example 18% of all offences are high risk compared to the 7% observed for overall incidents and crimes together
- The rate of high risk domestic abuse **offences** in South Yorkshire is 1.19 per 1,000 populations and for **incidents** is 0.54 per 1,000 populations.
- The rate of medium risk domestic abuse **offences** in South Yorkshire is 2.90 per 1,000 populations and for **incidents** is 3.4 per 1,000 populations
- The rate of standard risk domestic abuse **offences** in South Yorkshire is 2.44 per 1,000 populations and for **incidents** is 14.12 per 1,000 populations

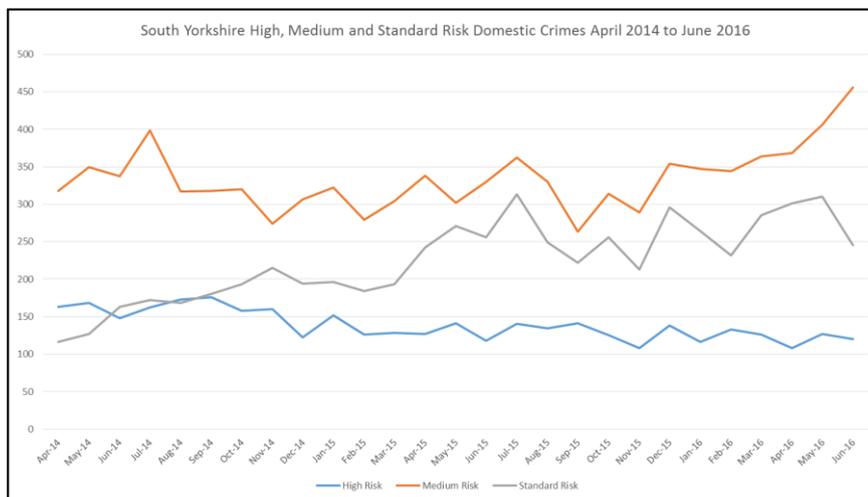
The figure below shows the total volume, divided into crimes and incidents by risk level. This clearly shows the high proportion of standard risk incidents.



¹⁵ Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) crime and incident level comparison, OPPC for the SDVC

South Yorkshire Risk level and offences

Of the 8,583 domestic abuse offences for South Yorkshire; 1,547 (18%) were high risk, 3,937 (46%) were medium risk and 3,099 (36%) were standard risk. The graph below shows the crime activity by risk level for 2015/16 and the trend since April 2014.



The graph shows a stable, almost slightly reducing volume of high risk offences, and since December 2015 a noticeable increase in the volume of medium risk cases becoming offences.

The PEEL Effectiveness 2016 report¹⁶ provides the following information on South Yorkshire:-

- South Yorkshire had a rate of **21 domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 populations to 30 June 2016**, which is higher than the England and Wales rate of 16 domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 populations.
- On 1 July 2016 South Yorkshire police had 1,117 active domestic abuse cases and 23% of these were high risk.
- For **every hundred domestic abuse related offences in the 12 months to June 2016 there were 49 arrests**.
- 40 of the 527 offenders (7.5%) on the Multi-agency Integrated Offender Management (IOM) in South Yorkshire (based on scoring and offender activity) were domestic abuse offenders (as of the 1 July 2016). This compared to the 5.6% observed nationally¹⁷.

¹⁶ HMIC PEEL: Effectiveness 2016: An Inspection of South Yorkshire Police <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-effectiveness-2016-south-yorkshire/>

¹⁷ HMIC PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016 - A national overview Page 68 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-effectiveness-2016/>

4.2. Sheffield Police Reported Domestic Abuse Activity – reported incidents & offences, risk, repeat victims, victim demographics and location

Overview

In 2015/16 Sheffield had a total of 11,580 domestic abuse incidents and crimes reported to the police.

This equated to 36% of the South Yorkshire total and is a rate of 20.95 per 1,000 populations.

The Sheffield 20.95 rate is lower than the South Yorkshire rate of 24.59 compared with the rates for Doncaster - 27.35 (higher), Barnsley - 25.62 (similar) and Rotherham - 24.44 (similar) per 1,000 populations in 2015/16).

Of the total 11,580 reported DA activity to the police in Sheffield;

3,126 (27%) became an offence

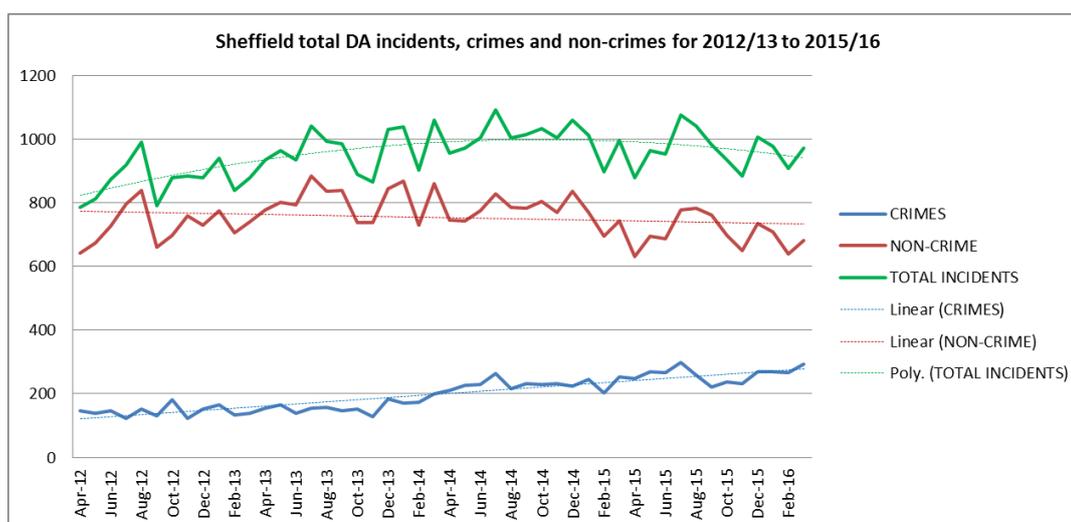
8,454 (67%) remained an incident

Sheffield domestic abuse reported police activity

27% or 3,126 of the 11,580 domestic abuse related incidents reported to the police during 2015/16 became an offence. The offence proportion in Sheffield is much lower than the England and Wales average of 41%¹⁸.

Sheffield has experienced an overall 4% decrease in domestic abuse related incidents in the last 12 month period. There has been a 9% decrease in incidents but a 13% increase in offences between 2014/15 and 2015/16. Note the trend lines on the Graph below.

The graph below shows the month on month activity for Sheffield, by total incidents and by crime and non-crimes for the last four financial years 2012/13 to 2015/16.



¹⁸ Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2016, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2016>, Published December 2016



In the last financial year (2015/16) Sheffield has averaged 31 domestic abuse related incidents that were reported to the police each day, or 8.5 crimes and 23 non-crimes. This means there is a considerable number of incidents to attend to each day that is domestic abuse related.

Domestic abuse incident and crimes rates by RISK in Sheffield

- The rate of high risk domestic abuse crimes in Sheffield is 1.00 per 1,000 populations and for incidents it is 0.49 per 1,000 populations (similar to the South Yorkshire rates).
- The rate of medium risk domestic abuse crimes in Sheffield is 2.97 per 1,000 populations and for incidents it is 3.46 per 1,000 populations (similar to the South Yorkshire rates).
- The rate of standard risk domestic abuse crimes in Sheffield is 1.72 per 1,000 populations and for incidents it is 11.31 per 1,000 populations (which are slightly lower than the South Yorkshire average rates).

Sheffield is the same as the rest of South Yorkshire where the majority of reported incidents are assessed as being standard risk:-

- 7.1% of all incidents reported to the police were high risk (4.8% crimes and 2.3% incidents).
- 30.7% of all incidents reported to the police were medium risk (14.2% crimes and 16.5% incidents).
- 62.2% of all incidents reported to the police were standard risk (8.2% crimes and 54.0% incidents).

Of the 3,140 domestic abuse crimes/offence for Sheffield a total of 552 were high risk, 1,640 were medium risk and 948 were standard risk.

This data does not give the number of victims in these incidents, but it does give some indication that the police should be referring around 550 cases per annum to MARAC (see section 13 High risk).

Sheffield - Total Victims and repeat victims of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police

A repeat victim is defined as an individual who has been the victim in two or more reported incidents to the police over a single 12 month period.

- The data for DA co-ordinators¹⁹ report shows that in 2015/16 the total number of repeat victims reporting incidents to the police was 4,288 and that each month's total incidents contains on average 357 repeat victims (range 330 to 384).

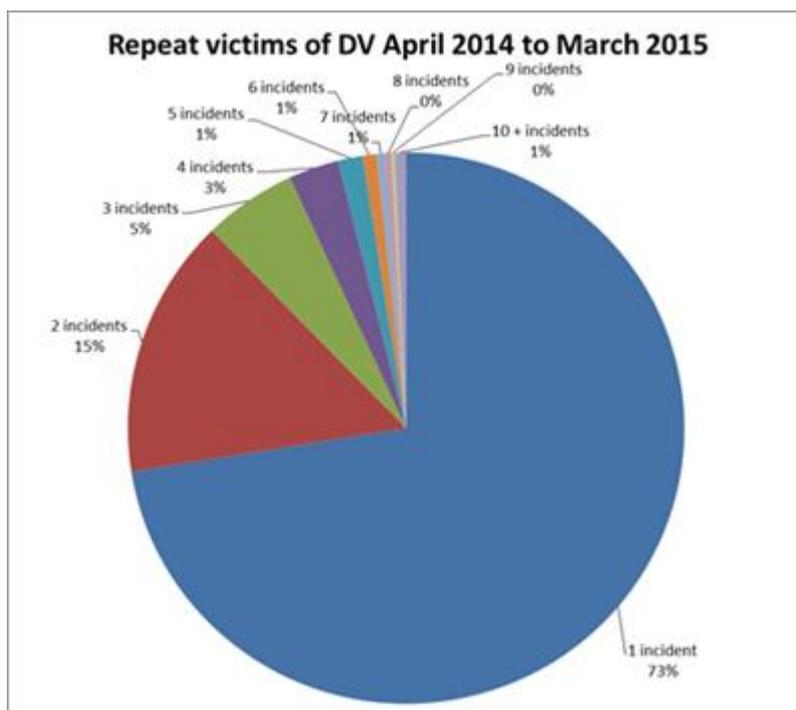
The data also shows that 37% of all incidents involved a repeat victim and this is stable, as the data shows the proportion has been either 36% or 37% in the last three financial years²⁰.

A Safer Communities report adds to the SDVC data, as it provides insight into the total number of reported incidents repeat victims are involved in. The number of incidents²¹ the repeat victims had reported to the police varied in the latest 12 month period, ranged between two to 32, see the chart below for full details.

¹⁹ Data for DA co-ordinators, South Yorkshire Police. 2015/16 report.

²⁰ Data for DA co-ordinators, South Yorkshire Police. 2013/14, 204/15 and 2015/16 report.

²¹ Lisa Street report, Safer Communities Partnership, 29 January 2016 – Domestic abuse statistics – repeat victimisation



Of the total repeat victims the following is found...

- 55% had been a victim in two reported incidents over the 12 month period
- 12% had been a victim in three or more reported incidents over the 12 month period,
- 3.9% had been a victim of five or more reported incidents.
- 0.5% had been a victim of ten or more reported incidents.

Notes

The victim may have been subject to domestic abuse on more occasion/s than those reported to the police. This data just shows us the occasion/s when a report to the police took place.

The data does not show the level of assessed risk for the incident, it is likely that not all repeat incidents will have been assessed as high.

As part of the needs assessment process the Police were asked what action they take with victims of a high number of domestic abuse recorded incidents and it was explained that *'Each district PPU Domestic Abuse Unit are provided with a list of the top 10 victims/offenders on a monthly basis to allow targeted support to prevent future incidents/offending. This could include actions being raised at MARAC meetings involving partner agencies, the criteria for high risk victims of abuse include repeat incidents and although a repeat victim may be referred to MARAC as high risk, this actually may not be the case, it is because of the number of incidents recorded regardless of the actual risk assessment allocated to the incident at the time'*²².

Victim Demographics in recorded police incidents

The update for Domestic Abuse needs assessment in 2015 provided further analysis of police recorded domestic incidents²³. This is the latest data available to DACT about demographics and therefore has been repeated here, as the data shows information that shows in reported police incidents a significantly higher proportion of female victims, a third are likely to be aged 20 to 29 years old, 18% are likely to be from an ethnic minority group and around 8% will have a physical injury.

²² Mr Peter Horner, SCS PPU Policy and Compliance Unit Manager, South Yorkshire Police, email dated 1 September 2016

²³ SYP Force Intelligence Analyst Unit, Analysis for DACT Needs Assessment 2013/14, Lisa Street

- 77% of Domestic complainants are female however this increased to 84% when looking at domestic offences.
- 33.5% of complainants are between the ages of 20-29. Females in this age group account for more than 75% of all complainants.
- 82% of complainants were recorded as white – north European, 8.4% Asian, 7% Black, 1% were white – south European, 0.9% middle eastern, and 0.5% were Chinese, Japanese, or other south east Asian.
- 9.2% had an injury recorded with the majority recorded as slight (870 or 7.5%). 22 were recorded as serious and 3 were fatal. See the table below.

Injury		2013/14	% of total
Injury	THREATS	183	1.6%
	SLIGHT	870	7.5%
	SERIOUS	22	0.2%
	FATAL	3	0.0%
	Injury total	1078	9.2%
No Injury		10577	90.8%
Total		11655	

Location of domestic abuse police incidents and offences in Sheffield

Data shows that domestic abuse happens in all wards in Sheffield, although there is less reported activity in some areas and there are noticeable correlations to areas of deprivation, low income and higher reports of domestic abuse.

The rate of **total** incident and crimes recorded for domestic abuse in 2015 varies by ward.

The Sheffield average rate 2015 was 24.5 per 1,000 populations²⁴ or an average of 400 reported incidents and crimes per ward. The rate varies by ward; from the lowest rate of 4.59 per 1,000 populations in Fulwood Ward to the highest rate of 49.79 per 1,000 populations in Southey Ward. Southey and Fulwood wards have remained the areas with the highest and the lowest rates for domestic abuse reported incidents and offences in the last two years (2014 and 2015).

Whilst Southey Ward has the highest rate, Burngreave is the ward with **the highest volume of incidents and crimes**. The five wards with the highest number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes were Burngreave Ward (889), Firth park (802), Southey Ward (761), Manor Castle Ward (679) and Gleadless Valley Ward (674). Together these five wards account for 33% of the total reported domestic abuse police incidents.

Crime rate only per 1,000 populations by ward

The Sheffield rate of police domestic abuse crimes in 2015 was 6.28 per 1,000 populations. The rate varies by ward from the lowest rate 1.66 per 1,000 populations in Fulwood Ward to the highest rate of 13.3 per 1,000 populations in Firth Park Ward, although Burngreave Ward had the highest volume of crimes.

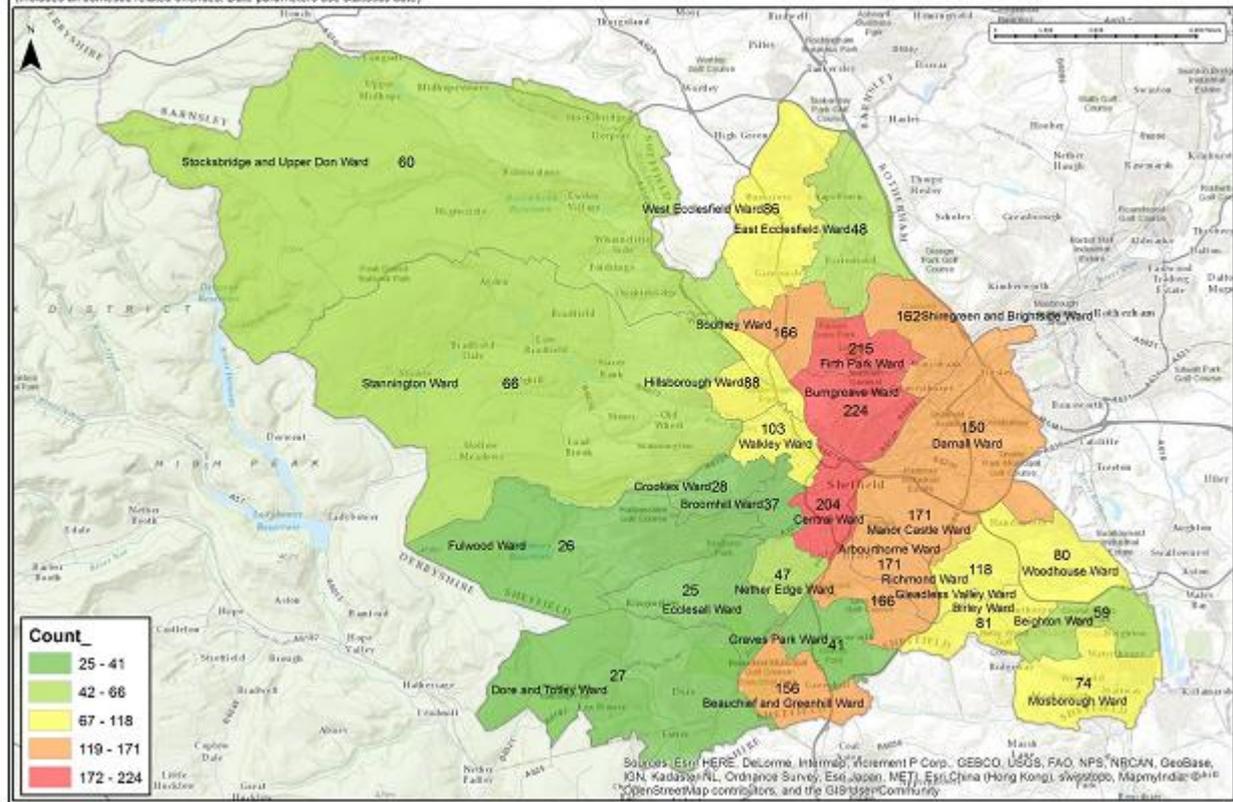
In 2015 the five wards with the highest volume of reported **domestic abuse crimes** were Burngreave Ward (224), Firth Park Ward (215), Central Ward (204), Manor Castle Ward (171) and Arbourthorne Ward (171). Together these five wards account for 34% of the total DV crimes in Sheffield. All five wards had a higher percentage of crimes to incidents in 2015 compared with 2014.

The Map below shows the total activity for crimes per ward in 2015. The areas of red and amber show that the Centre and north, east and south of the centre have the highest areas of DV crimes.

²⁴ The rates applied using the 16+ Sheffield population figures.

Domestic Related Crimes by Ward: 1st Jan - 31st Dec 2015

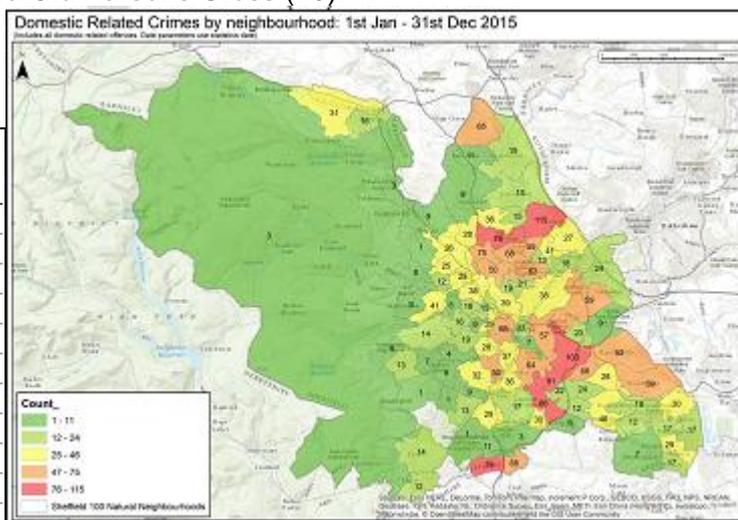
(Includes all domestic related offences. Date parameters use statistics date)



Crime rate by volume and Neighbourhood

Further detail into specific areas in Sheffield can be observed when the 100 neighbourhoods are observed. The top five neighbourhoods for DA crimes are Shiregreen (115), Manor (102), Arbourthorne (91), Gleadless Valley (86) and Old Parsons Cross (79).

CRIMES			
Top 20 Neighbourhoods			
Neighbourhood	2015	2014	Change
Shiregreen	115	75	40
Manor	103	96	7
Arbourthorne	91	65	26
Gleadless Valley	86	88	-2
Old Parson Cross	79	79	0
Lowdges	79	68	11
Southey Green	75	65	10
Longley	68	50	18
City Centre	68	80	-12
Woodthorpe	66	58	8



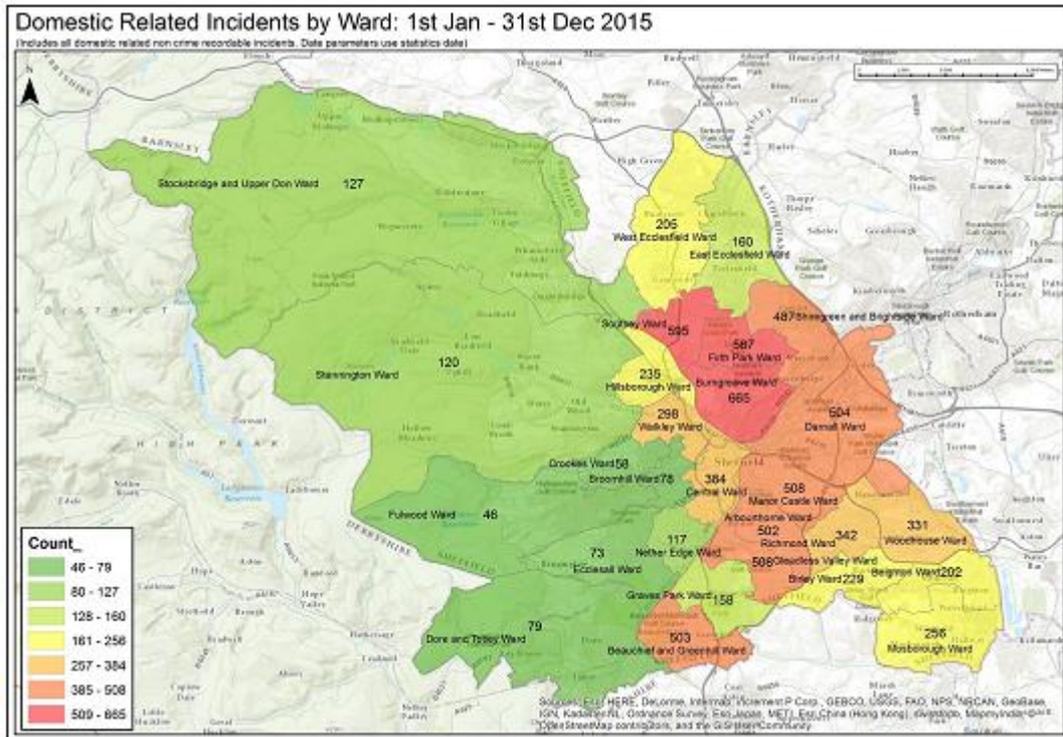
Incident rate only per 1,000 populations by ward

The Sheffield rate of police DV incidents in 2015 was 18.24 per 1,000 populations, which is a lower rate than in 2014 when the rate was 20.76 per 1,000 populations. The rate varies by ward from 2.94 per 1,000 populations in Fulwood Ward (lowest) to the highest rate of 38.9 per 1,000 populations in Southey Ward, although Burn greave Ward had a higher volume of incidents than Firth Park.

The five wards with the highest volume of domestic abuse incidents in 2015 were Burngreave Ward

(688), Southey Ward (595), Firth Park Ward (587), Manor Castle Ward (508) and Gleadless Valley Ward (508). Together these five wards account for 34% of the total DV non-crimes in Sheffield.

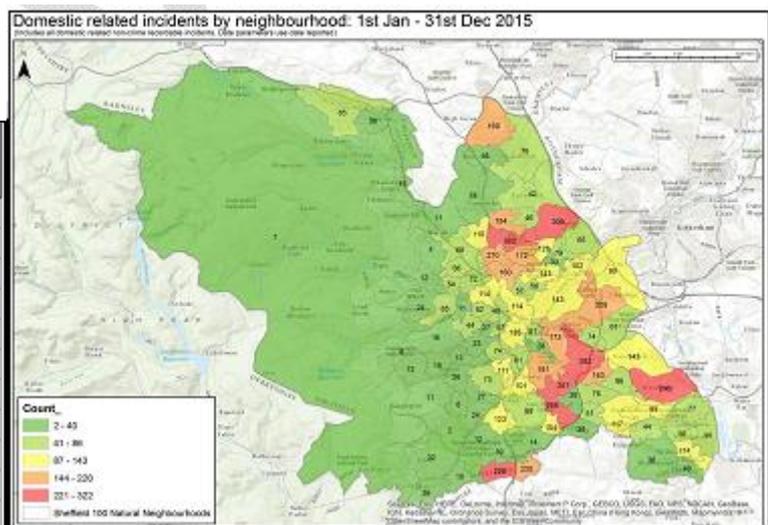
The map below shows the total activity for incidents per Ward in 2015. The areas of red and amber show that the Centre and north, east and south of the centre have the highest areas of DV crimes.



Incident rate by volume and neighbourhood

The top ten neighbourhoods for the highest volume of domestic abuse incidents are shown in the table below. The three with the highest are Old Parsons Cross, Shiregreen and Gleadless Valley.

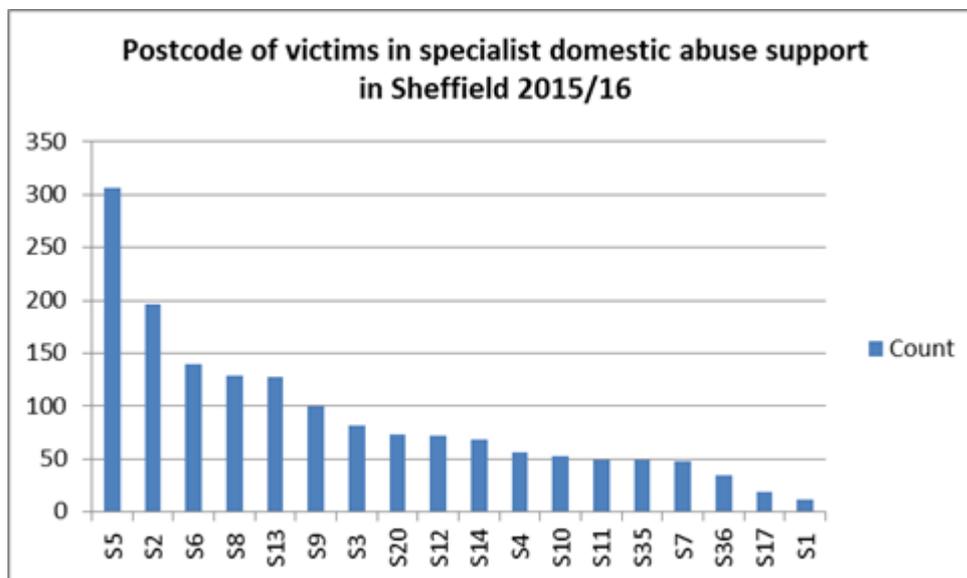
INCIDENTS			
Top 20 Neighbourhoods			
Neighbourhood	2015	2014	Change
Old Parson Cross	322	386	-64
Shiregreen	309	322	-13
Gleadless Valley	288	300	-12
Manor	282	322	-40
Arbourthorne	267	237	30
Woodhouse	245	271	-26
Lowedges	238	295	-57
Batemoor / Jordanthorpe	220	246	-26
Southey Green	210	229	-19
Darnall	209	235	-26



Shiregreen features in both the top three highest crime and incidents neighbourhoods whilst seven neighbourhoods feature in the top ten for crimes and incidents

Victims in Support by areas of residence in Sheffield

The postcodes of victims in specialist domestic abuse support in Sheffield during 2015/16 are found in the table below. The postcode areas with the highest victims in support are S5, S2, S6, S8, S13 and S9. Together these areas had 1,000 victims in support and accounted for 62% of all those in support.



The data shows that the areas where there is the highest police reported domestic abuse correlate with the areas with the highest number of people in support. Future opportunities arise for focus 'hotspot' interventions the police data and the service in support data can be used to identify the most appropriate areas.

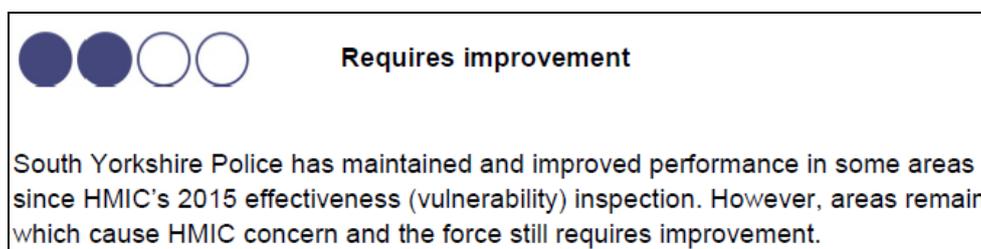
4.3 HMIC inspections of South Yorkshire police and local feedback

HMIC inspect all police forces on three areas in effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy each year as part of the PEEL inspection process. PEEL is the acronym for 'Police, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy'. South Yorkshire has an overall rating of 'requires improvement' and all three reports are rated as such²⁵.

Police Effectiveness – March 2017

The national overview of police effectiveness explains that *'(they) understand that demand has continued to increase in this area (domestic abuse). Between August 2013 and June 2016, the police recorded a 61 percent increase in domestic abuse crimes. Increases in other crime types involving vulnerable victims – for example, recorded sexual offences have doubled since 2013 – also add to the demand in this complex and specialist area of investigation'*²⁶.

The latest 'PEEL police effectiveness 2016 - An inspection of South Yorkshire police' was published March 2017²⁷. The overall judgement was that the effectiveness of the force 'requires improvement'.



Compared to our comparator police force areas; five are good (West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumbria, South wales & Kent), two (South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire) 'require improvement' and one (Bedfordshire) is inadequate²⁸.

Within the report there are four questions, and each is given a rating. Therefore the overall rating is an overview of the four questions. Three of the four areas reviewed in South Yorkshire were given a 'required improvement' rating. South Yorkshire is one of only three forces (Sussex and Staffordshire) with three out of four rated as such²⁹.

The third question is 'how effective the force is at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm and supporting victims'. This question is important as it focuses on the police response to vulnerable people, **including victims of domestic abuse**. South is rated as 'requires improvement' for this question.

The PEEL effectiveness report highlights areas for improvement but also provides insight into good practice in the force (not the figure shown above). **Areas of good practices identified specific to domestic abuse cases included:-**

1. South Yorkshire's domestic abuse arrest rate was 49.1% in the 12 months up to 30 June 2016 which is similar and in line with the 51.4% for England and Wales.

²⁵ http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/?view=table&sort=alpha&data=question&group_by_region=off#peel-data

²⁶ PEEL: police effectiveness 2016 – National overview, page 18

²⁷ PEEL police effectiveness 2016 - An inspection of South Yorkshire police <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-effectiveness-2016/>

²⁸ https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/?view=table&sort=alpha&data=pillar&group_by_region=off#peel-data

²⁹ PEEL: police effectiveness 2016 – National overview

2. South Yorkshire's domestic abuse charge rate was 28.1% in the 12 months up to 30 June 2016. This is higher than the 23.3% for England and Wales. Showing officers at the scene provide positive action (page 40).
3. Most victims are provided with a satisfactory service (page 28); victims are updated and regularly contacted.
4. The force is effective at identifying vulnerability.
5. Children involved in domestic abuse cases are being identified appropriately - referral form to social services, update the system with child details and updates the DASH risk assessment.
6. Force has an action plan in place to address 'requires improvement areas'.
7. The force had a more consistent use to call handling and dispatch of officers to attend scenes than in previous inspections.
8. The Force has a good strategic profile of domestic abuse. It gives a good understanding of the nature and scale of domestic abuse in South Yorkshire. The profile has 11 findings and 10 recommendations to address domestic abuse.
9. The Force has good analytical data which is used monthly to better understand vulnerabilities within communities in South Yorkshire including child sexual exploitation.
10. The Force has good supervision and investigation on child sexual exploitation cases.

Areas of practice **specific to domestic abuse cases** that 'require improvement' included:-

1. Missed opportunities to review evidence in domestic abuse files
2. Little use of IT systems such as body worn video cameras to record evidence directly from scenes to obtain images of injuries sustained by victims
3. Inconsistent safeguarding of victims, i.e. Safeguarding not undertaken in all cases where required (page 29/ 33)
4. Poor quality DASH risk assessments undertaken at the scene of the crime – often not complete and additional information was not provided. The report cited a recent DARA audit which suggested only a 60% compliance with DASH submission (page 40), (see Police section 4.5).
5. Referral and secondary assessment was negatively impacted on by the poor risk assessment as it did not have all the information and observations required, (see Police section 4.5).
6. Inconsistent handovers and referrals to external and partner agencies.
7. The workloads were high in vulnerable teams, improvements required to the recording of investigation plans and more supervision during investigation. There was too much reliance on paper recording systems.
8. The force does not make most use of ancillary orders/police sanctions to protect the victim. The use of DVPOs and Right to know/ ask scheme were below the national rate (see Police section 4.4).
9. Some investigations were completed by officers who do not have the required level of specialist training or accreditation for such offences.

The PEEL report for South Yorkshire highlights under the summary for the vulnerable question one area of concern which has two recommendations to address this and three areas of improvement. All are relevant to domestic abuse cases.

'Area of concern South Yorkshire Police is failing to safeguard vulnerable victims fully, but particularly victims of domestic abuse at initial response and during the subsequent investigation. The force routinely fails to provide adequate domestic abuse safeguarding referrals, and poor quality information is being recorded from crime scenes. The threshold the force has for the allocation of specialist detectives to work on high-risk investigations is very high and the level of workload is also high within that team, which means the timeliness of investigations and safeguarding may be compromised.'

***Recommendations** - To address this cause of concern, HMIC recommends that the force takes immediate steps to ensure that:*

- *Response officers become more proficient in completing DASH risk assessments at initial response and that there is sufficient supervision to ensure that opportunities to safeguard vulnerable victims are not missed.*



- *The force improves its investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims, particularly domestic abuse cases, by ensuring that officers and staff with the appropriate professional skills and experience investigate cases, and complex cases in particular, and have the capacity to provide the continuing safeguarding required, and that these investigations are supervised effectively and are recorded appropriately on force systems.*

Areas for improvement

- *The force should review its process for submitting child protection and vulnerable adult referrals to the MASH to minimise the bureaucracy of multiple submissions and ensure that partner organisations receive the right information in a timely way so that victims can be better supported.*
- *The force should reassure itself that referrals of children at risk of harm are being made in non-domestic abuse cases.*
- *The force should review its use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Clare's Law to ensure that it is making the best use of these powers to safeguard victims of domestic abuse.*

An earlier HMIC report in 2014 focused on domestic abuse '*Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*³⁰. The overall summary suggested that the police force response could be better³¹ and had 11 recommendations (improving risk assessment training, sharing best practice, improving consistency and data quality, have clear minimum standards on how to address each incident, review the risk assessment process, review DHR processes, PCCs to factor in the report findings when commissioning DA support services and increasing cross organisation partnership work).

The required action plan <http://www.southyorks.police.uk/help-and-advice/z-crime-types/domestic-abuse> had 120 actions. The police response to the PEEL report by June 2016 reported that the majority or 113 were complete³².

The report also³³ provides insight into the work the police undertake in incidents, strategic positioning and perpetrator engagement:-

- All Domestic Homicide Review actions and other relevant reports are presented to the Policy Unit and the SDVC membership list so all key stakeholders are informed.
- All police officers are trained by the Royal Collage of Policing, all front line staff have been trained in coercive control³⁴ and all are trained in the ACPO DASH risk assessment tool.
- All DASH assessments completed are reviewed by a second team of domestic abuse specialists to confirm the outcome of the assessment.
- There is a dedicated Safeguarding Adults Team of around 80 staff which includes a Domestic Abuse Referral and Assessment Team for Sheffield DA incidents. Details of children involved in or living in a household where a domestic abuse incident has been reported to the police are reported to the SCC JIT (Joint Investigation team) for further Children's Social Care assessment.
- MARAC is available in all four regions of South Yorkshire. This includes sharing the chairing of the Sheffield MARAC alongside DACT managers (rotation chair).
- The police are involved with the Local Authority domestic abuse partnership or equivalent (this is DACT for Sheffield) and chair the DACT co-ordinated Civil and Criminal Justice Group.
- Free training is being offered in South Yorkshire to front line staff and specialist domestic abuse officers by the National Centre for Domestic Abuse (to enable officers to support victims to get free or cheap civil orders)

³⁰ <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/>

³¹ Page 6

³² DI Craig Jackson, South Yorkshire Police response to HMIC PEEL inspection, June 2016. Permission has been given to Alison Higgins to include this information in the needs assessment.

³³ Information on the Police response provided in the DCI Craig Jackson report, protecting Vulnerable People, 'The outcome South Yorkshire police response to the HMIC PEEL inspection.

³⁴ DI Craig Jackson, South Yorkshire Police response to HMIC PEEL inspection.



- The police and OPCC sit on the SDVC board which explores best practice, DHR learning and attrition rates at court.
- The force has a DA priority arrest process for perpetrators of high risk victims. Investigations for these perpetrators are led by the Safeguarding Adult Teams and reviewed daily.
- Serial perpetrators and repeat offenders of all risk types are managed via the monthly Tactical Tasking and Coordination's Group alongside the weekly Threat, Risk and Harm group.

Despite these positive steps in the June 2016 action report, the recommendations from the PEEL effectiveness report in March 2017, suggests there are still improvements required.

Feedback from the service users and local experts

Ex and current service users of the specialist domestic abuse services discussed the police response they experienced as part of the needs assessment consultation process. Their feedback provides some insight into their fear of the perpetrator and their fear that the police response would have negative repercussions on the abusive relationship, making the violence worse. For example one victim wanted to talk to the police anonymously, but had not realised that the police had to talk to the perpetrator, thereby removing the anonymity of the call taking place.

Some victims explained that they didn't call the police for each incident because they knew '*there was not enough evidence*'. This can hide the issue; it may remove opportunities for victim support and perpetrator management and may impact on the perceived level of risk to the victim. We also know that some victims are more likely to call the police and report incidents.

A point raised by local support services in their experience of working with victims, is that police responses vary.

From talking to service users there was a feeling that more could be done to remove the fear of reporting incidents, there was a real need of victims to understand the criminal justice process and what they were 'signing up to' if there was enough evidence. This is extremely complex, as the police have a duty to uphold the law and take action with the perpetrator but there are current locally agreed pathways for providing the victim at each police incident with specialist support and based on the service user feedback, perhaps this needs to tie in with an understanding of what the victim wants when they call the police.

4.4 Police sanctions to protect the victim from the perpetrator

The VAWG actions on Police sanction

VAWG actions 13, 14 and 15 are specifically for the increase used of sanctions on perpetrators to prevent them gaining access to the victim (both after the incident and also for further enforcement when sanctions are breached). The full actions can be found on page one of the police section.

The following details the sanctions and provides the current use of the sanction locally compared with other areas.

Developments over the last couple of years have seen the introduction of new legislation that aims to increase the protection of victims from perpetrators. These include The Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (DADS/DVDs) otherwise known as 'Clare's Law', The Domestic Violence Prevention Notice (DVPN) and the Domestic Violence Prevention Order (DVPO).

The latest PEEL effectiveness report³⁵ recommends that South Yorkshire needs to increase its use of these sanctions (see the text from the report in the figure below:-

- The force should review its use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Clare's Law to ensure that it is making the best use of these powers to safeguard victims of domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse/Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS/ DADS) / Clare's Law³⁶

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, also known as 'Clare's Law' was rolled out to all Police forces on 8th March 2014 following a successful pilot scheme. There are two parts of the scheme:-

'right to ask' - The first gives members of the public the right to ask police when they are concerned that their partner may pose a risk to them or where they are concerned that the partner of a member of their family or a friend may pose a risk to that individual.

'right to know' - The second method of application is proactively taken by the police following receipt of 'indirect information' e.g. from another agency or information shared at MARAC, which raises a safety concern for a potential victim with a known domestic abuse perpetrator.

In both the 'right to ask' and 'right to know' situations an application is made and following this the Police and partner agencies (domestic abuse services, probation, social care services) will carry out checks and if the partner has a record of abusive offences, or there is other information to indicate that there may be a risk from the partner, the Police will consider sharing the information.

National and Police Force data

The Home Office's review of the first year of the DVDS scheme found that a total of 4,724 DVD applications were made over the nine month period between 8 March to 31 December 2014 and 1,938 disclosures were made following application³⁷. This means on average 41% of applications

³⁵ PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016 – South Yorkshire Police, page 47

³⁶ Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) – One year on – Home Office assessment of national rollout <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-assessment-of-national-roll-out>

³⁷ The report makes the following notes about the data – it acknowledges that the scheme was rolled out by police forces in a staggered

resulted in a disclosure during the first nine months of the DVD scheme. An additional 15 forces provided data between 1st January and 31st July 2015) and there was a similar 42% disclosure rate for these forces observed.

The report shows there is was a significant variation between all police force areas on the percentage of DVDS disclosures. The average was 41% disclosures following application during the first nine months of the scheme with a range between Gloucestershire, 11% and Durham, 92%). South Yorkshire Police was towards the lower end of the range (fourth lowest of all 43 police force areas³⁸) with 18% disclosures (124 DVDS reported applications and 23 disclosures).

The PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016 – South Yorkshire Police report finds that South Yorkshire Police used the ‘Right to Ask 45 times and ‘Right to Know’ 31 times in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, see table below for details which also provides comparator police forces (although full details are sparse). Nationally there is little difference between the ratio of Right to Know and Right to Ask (5.5 and 5.6 per 100,000 populations) however the Right to Ask is used more in South Yorkshire than the Right to Know and this is similar to Nottinghamshire and Bedfordshire (rated as requires improvement and inadequate respectively) however **Lancashire and South Wales (both rates as Good) have more Right to Know requests, which is the professionals using the sanction on behalf of the victim.**

	Right to Ask		Right to Know	
	Number	Rate per 100k	Number	Rate per 100k
National		5.5		5.6
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	45		31	
West Yorkshire	30		62	
Lancashire	209	19.6	343	23.2
South Wales	57	4.4	55	4.2
Notts	37		21	
Beds	17		9	
Kent	54			
Data Source: Data is taken from the PEEL effectiveness reports for each police				

Sheffield data

The latest 12 month data for Sheffield (Jan to Dec 2015) had 73 referrals and a 23% disclosure rate in the 12 month period³⁹. The SDVC data does not contain the split of ‘right to know’ compared to the ‘right to ask’, therefore it is recommended that this is reviewed in the data source and changes made to the SDVC report.

The IDVA service advises all services users that at any time in the future, the disclosure scheme can be used when they enter a new relationship⁴⁰.

The DVDS activity is reported in the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) quarterly report produced by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and reported to the SDVC board.

The HMIC report specifically states that *‘it is important that members of the public and officers are aware of its (DVDS) purpose and the application process. Both external and internal force communications and awareness-raising activity is important here’*⁴¹.

way, so activity and number of applications by force will vary, and as the request for DVD data was voluntary, only those forces reported their activity to the home office are included.

³⁸ Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) – One year on – Home Office assessment of national rollout – Appendix A <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-assessment-of-national-roll-out>

³⁹ SDVC Steering Group report, Oliver Murphy, South Yorkshire Police, 4 March 2016 – Performance Update

⁴⁰ Theresa Ward, Action, at the Civil and criminal justice meeting October 2016

⁴¹ HMIC *Increasingly everyone’s business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse* December 2015, page 61

Action – Continue to review the DADS scheme, request with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner if the data for DADS can be broken down between ‘right to know’ and ‘right to ask’. Ensure that all services working with victims are aware of DADs and the process involved with the aim of increasing the use of the scheme

The Domestic Violence Prevention Notice (DVPN) and the Domestic Violence Prevention Order (DVPO) became nationwide sanctions on 8th March 2014⁴². These two sanctions allow the victim to be protected immediately once the police attend a domestic abuse related incident and if both are authorised can give the victim protection for up to 28 days. The DVPN is the first part of the process and the DVPO is the second part of the process. The second part does not always follow the first.

- **A Domestic Violence Prevention Notice DVPN** is an ‘*emergency non molestation and eviction notice*’ is served to the alleged perpetrator by the police. It allows the police to prevent the alleged perpetrator from being in contact with the victim or accessing the property where the victim lives for a limited period of time of 48 hours, following a domestic abuse reported police incident. The notice is served by the police following attendance at an incident and authorised by a rank of superintendent or higher. It does not need victim consent and is active immediately.
- **A Domestic Violence Prevention Order (DVPO)** is a decision taken by a magistrate’s court within 48 hours of the DVPN being served. The process is that the police officer, after serving the alleged perpetrator with a DVPO, then applies to the magistrate’s court and following a court hearing a decision is made. If the decision is made to grant the request then a DVPO is issued and the order lasts for between 14 and 28 days. The order continues the same decision as the DVPN and again prevents the alleged perpetrator from being in contact with the victim or accessing the property. The difference however is that if the Order is breached, a civil Contempt of Court offence has been committed⁴³ and enforcement takes place. The alleged perpetrator can be committed to two months in prison or fined up to £5,000.

The HMIC report⁴⁴ update states explicitly that ‘*Forces should ensure they are making the best use of this preventative measure and that their processes are streamlined and clearly understood by all staff*’.

The Home Office’s review of the first year⁴⁵, considered the data from the first nine months of the DVPO being in force. A total of 3,337 DVPNs were authorised by Superintendents, leading to 3,072 DVPO granted by the Courts. This means on average 92% of DVPNs were extended by the Court and became DVPO’s, meaning the perpetrator could not return to the victim’s property for up to 28 days following the incident.

The first year’s report shows there is a significant variation between all police force areas on the percentage of DVPNs that were extended by the Court and became DVPO’s during the first nine months of the scheme. For example the highest percentage was 100% and the lowest was 58%.

South Yorkshire DVPO data

The DVPO start date for South Yorkshire was 2 June 2014. Between June and December 2014 South Yorkshire Police authorised 51 DVPNs and 41 of these were then granted an extension to a DVPO by

⁴² Domestic Violence Prevention Order (DVPO) – One year on – Home office assessment of the national roll-out <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders-assessment-of-national-roll-out>

⁴³ Breach of a DVPO is a civil contempt of court, treated as a breach under the Civil Order under Section 63 of the Magistrates Court Act. Section 57 (a) of the Act allows for the transfer of civil proceedings.

⁴⁴ HMIC *Increasingly everyone’s business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse* December 2015, page 58

⁴⁵ Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO) One year on – Home Office assessment of national roll-out <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders-assessment-of-national-roll-out>

the Court or a rate of 80%. This disclosure rate is much lower than the 92% average for all 43 forces and ranks 31 out of 43 police force areas.

The SDVC report produced by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner found in the latest 12 month data (Jan to Dec 2015) that South Yorkshire authorised a total of 48 notices. This is lower than the 51 authorised in the first seven months of the scheme reported nationally. Of the 51 DVPNs authorised in 2015 for South Yorkshire, 27 became DVPOs or 54%, again the percentage was lower than that observed in the first seven months of the process.

Similar finds are found in the more recent data contained in the HMIC PEEL effectiveness report. For date in the 12 months to June 2016 the DVPO sanction is used in South Yorkshire the least out of the comparator areas and it also has the lowest authorisation rate; 72 applications and 55 authorised (76% of the total applications), see table below.

	DVPO		
	Applications	Authorised	% authorised
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	72	55	76%
West Yorkshire	84	60	71%
Northumbria		174	
South Wales	91	85	93%
Notts	97	85	88%
Beds		20	
Kent	176	155	88%
Data Source: Data is taken from the PEEL effectiveness reports for each police force			

Sheffield DVPO & DVPN data

Since the start of the DVPO in October 2014 Sheffield has issued 33 DVPOs and 30 were granted, however Sheffield is third behind Barnsley and Doncaster who issue more⁴⁶.

Sheffield had a higher conversion rate than the South Yorkshire average; 71% of DVPNs become DVPOs compared to the 54% average.

It appears from the data that the use of DVPOs is small compared to the number of domestic abuse related incidents. For example there were over 11,600 police domestic abuse incidents reported by Sheffield victims to the police in 2015⁴⁷, of which just fewer than 3,000 were determined as crimes⁴⁸, but there were only 17 DVPNs authorised in Sheffield by the police in the same time period.

Discussions at the Civil and Criminal Justice meeting in October 2016, with the police revealed that the process is time consuming, and involves the police and the court. Therefore the two have to be in agreement for the notice to be converted into an order. These issues explain why it is not used routinely on all case. In addition, the police also stated that a restraining order is often used instead.

The need for an increased use of the DVPO is supported by service users, who when consulted with at the SURG, had all feared the return of the perpetrator to the property following a police incident. Victims were fearful of what the perpetrator may do to them following police intervention. One victim in particular explained how the perpetrator had returned within hours of the incident to the property and this made her less likely to contact the police over future incidents. This resulted in her only contacting the police when the incidents were extremely violent.

In addition discussions with local experts found that they had observed the following issues:-

⁴⁶ Mr Peter Horner, SCS PPU Policy and Compliance Unit Manager, South Yorkshire Police, email dated 1 September 2016

⁴⁷ Stats for DV Co-ordinators 2014/15 and 2015/16 data for Sheffield to give full annual calendar year of 2015.

⁴⁸ Copy of stats for Co-ordinators 2015/16, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner provided to DACT on 4th May 2016



- The IDVA service routinely discusses the option of a DVPN/O and also Clare's Law with victims, whilst other support services suggested their knowledge of these areas required further understanding and they do not discuss this option routinely with victims. There was a suggestion that perhaps exploring this further with wider support services would be advantageous.
- There is an inconsistency in the issuing of DVPN/Os in some cases, sometimes the tagging of cases (recommending to officers that a DVPN is used at the next incident) doesn't always happen and results in the DVPN process not being used.
- The impact of weekends and the pressures for the police to free up cells, which may mean that perpetrators are released on police bail before the DVPN/O can be issued.
- Breaching a DVPN/O is enforceable, therefore any delay in the process or lack of use can remove enforceable repercussions should the perpetrator return to the victim.

The use of the DVPO/N was explained to the service user group and this was welcomed by the group. Given the enthusiasm of the service users it could be suggested that current victims would be supportive of the use of this order.

The DVPN and DVPO activity is reported in the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) quarterly report produced by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and reported to the SDVC board.

The police were asked what would encourage an increased use of the DVPO, and it was explained that further police training of front line staff⁴⁹ was required.

Action – Review how Sheffield can continue to raise awareness of the DVPN and DVPO including exploring more training for front line police staff and further training for staff in the specialist and wider support services.

⁴⁹ Mr Peter Horner, SCS PPU Policy and Compliance Unit Manager, South Yorkshire Police, email dated 1 September 2016



4.5 DASH risk assessment and Police referral to specialist domestic abuse support

DASH risk assessment

The police should risk assesses each incident using the ACPO DASH risk assessment questions, which is the agreed assessment tool in Sheffield and South Yorkshire.

All victims assessed as high risk should be referred to MARAC.

There are agreed processes in place for the police to refer into MARAC and the IDVA service.

The effectiveness of this process was suggested as 'requiring improvement' by PEEL, in March 2017. DASH forms were considered to be of poor quality, there was a lack of effective supervision to work with officers to improve the quality and DASHs were submitted without the attending officer's additional commentary or observations. The PEEL report cited a DARA audits that had reviewed DASH assessments and there was a suggestion that a DASH was only completed in 60% of occasions.

Interestingly, in 2016/17 the number of police referrals to MARAC has reduced, to an average of 116⁵⁰ referrals per quarter (349 in three quarters) from 145 per quarter in 2015/16⁵¹, when a total of 583 were made over the year, and 441 were referred in the first three quarters. This is a significant decrease between the two years; with around 30 less MARAC referrals per quarter and therefore a forecasted 120 less per year.

There is no indication from the police recorded activity of domestic abuse incidents that MARAC referrals should have reduced as much as they have (indeed the OPPC report which found that Sheffield had 7.1% of all police recorded incidents determined as high risk suggests that the referrals to MARAC should align). The PEEL report suggests completion of the DASH may explain the reason for the reduction.

Action – Review the police use of the DASH risk assessment with the Police and IDVA service with a view of increasing referrals to MARAC.

Police, MARAC and High risk victims

- See the Section on high risk and MARAC for further details

The police referral / triage of medium and standard risk victims to domestic abuse support services

The police have agreed links and protocols in place to refer victims of domestic abuse incidents **assessed as standard or medium risk** to the DACT commissioned Domestic Abuse helpline. All victims who consent to their personal details being shared with the helpline service provider are subsequently referred for proactive contact. Victims are contacted by the domestic abuse specialist provider and risk assessment, safety advice and an onward referral into formal support services can be made. **Police referrals to the medium and standard risk service have reduced in the last year and there is a need to ensure the triage process remains a priority and continues to be offered at all opportunities.**

⁵⁰ Police referrals to High risk service PMF 2016/17 Q1 to Q3 data submitted by Action to DACT

⁵¹ Police referrals to High risk service PMF 2016/17 Q1 to Q4 data submitted by Action to DACT



- See Section 12 for details on POLICE medium and standard risk referrals into support AND Section 13 for High Risk.

Victim Support Service

The police can also refer victims to Victim Support, to *'receive emotional and practical help to people who have been affected by crime'*⁵².

Action - There is ongoing work to clarify the police referral pathway for victims of domestic abuse to the triage system in the Medium and Standard Risk service and to Victim Support as a new contract will be in place for Victim Support Services from February 2017. The work also needs to take into consideration the service users feedback and the fear and support needs of the victim at the time and how it could address these issue further.

⁵² Victim Support <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/yorkshire-and-humber/south-yorkshire>