

STANDING together

against domestic violence

Process Map of Multi-Agency Agreements

at the

**Specialist Domestic Violence Court,
West London Magistrates Court**

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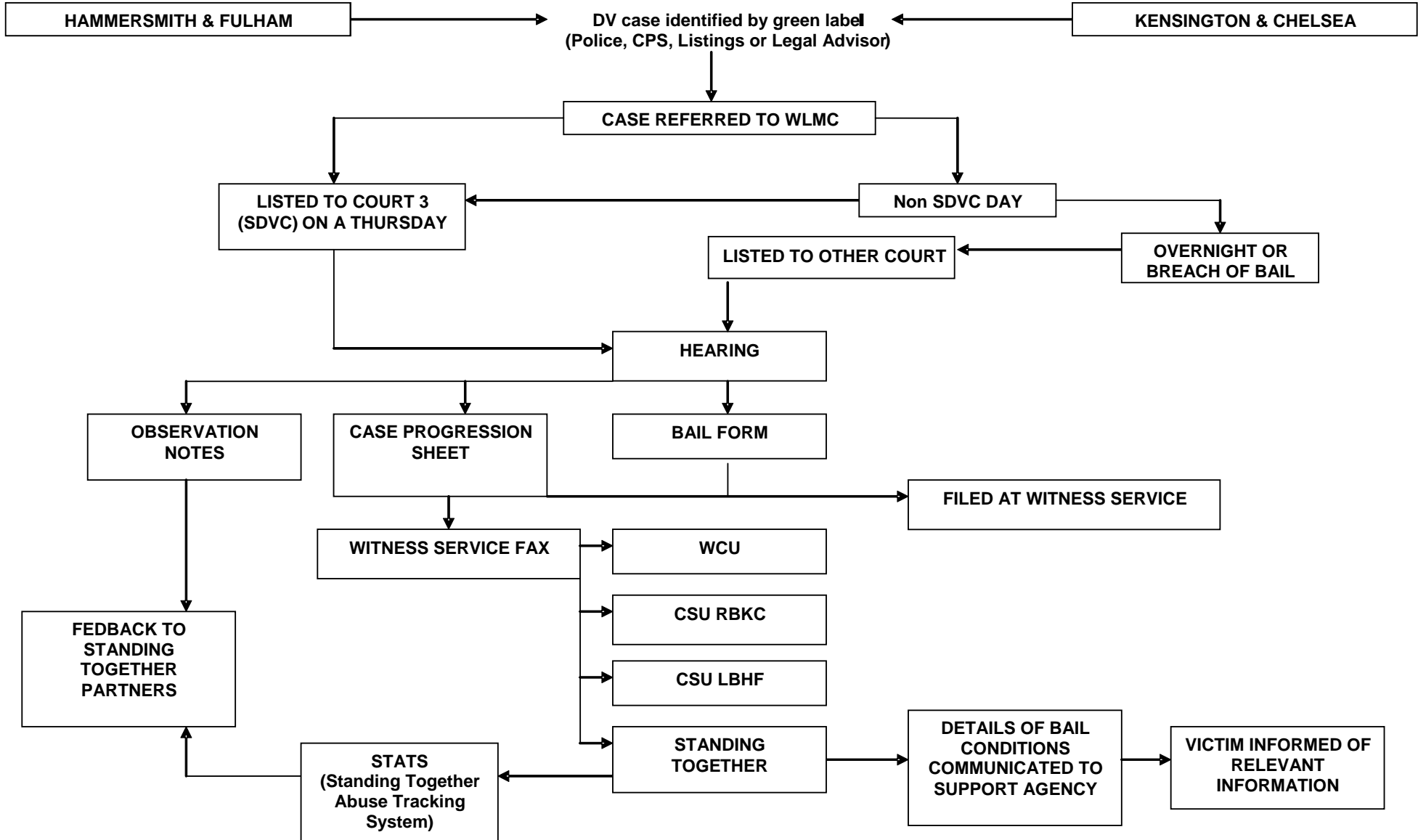
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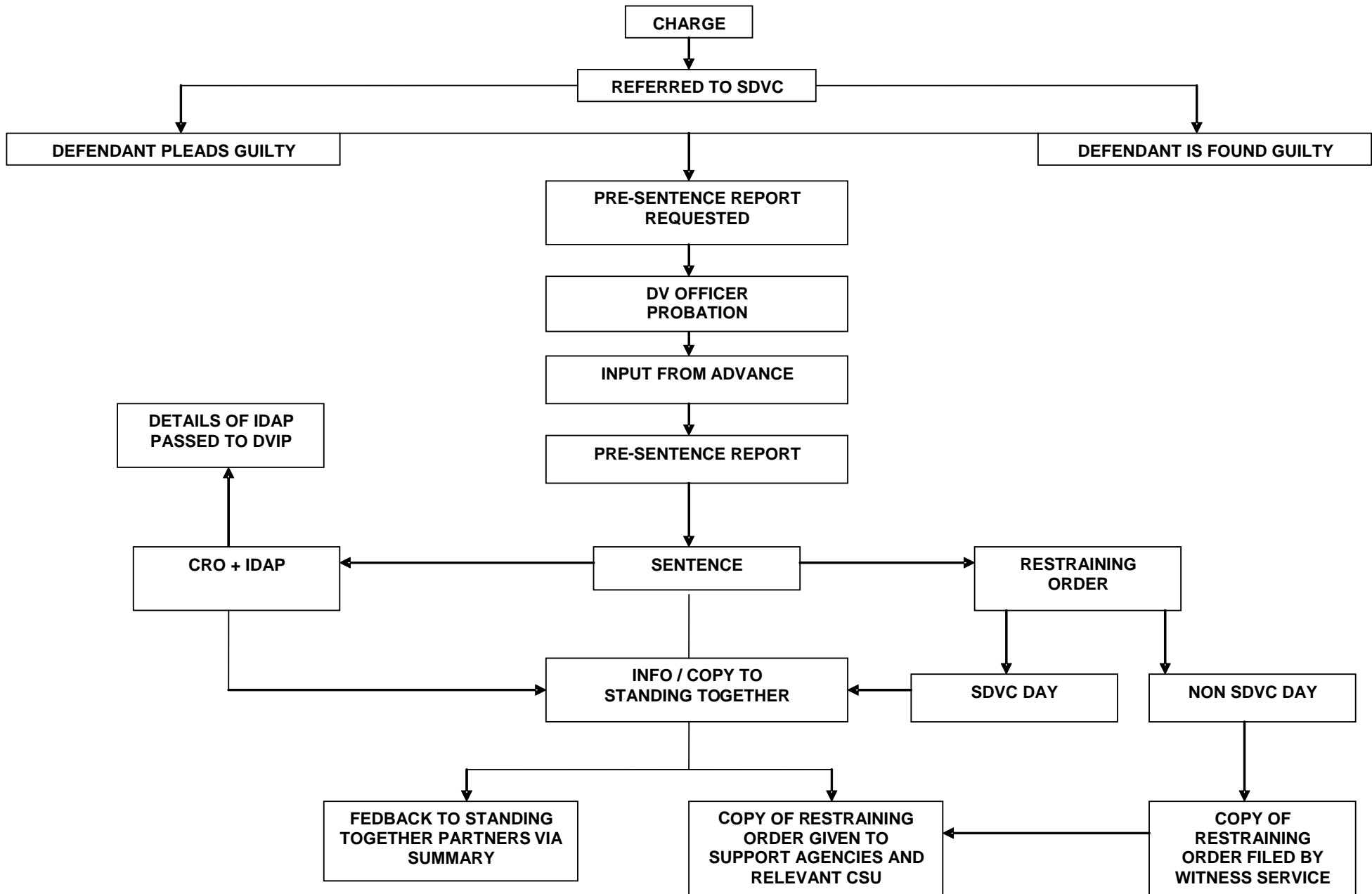
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COURT PROCESS – INFORMATION TRAIL

TO BE VIEWED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROCESS MAP NOTES



COURT PROCESS (SENTENCING) – INFORMATION TRAIL



Process map of the SDVC at West London

As agreed in the SDVC protocol, intimate partner violence cases from the Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea boroughs, appearing in West London Magistrates Court, are listed in Court 3, every Thursday. Court 3 has a secure dock and TV link facilities. [See *The Court Process* below for DV cases that appear on non-DV days].

Types of Cases Heard

- Bail applications
- Pleas and mode of trial
- Pre-Trial Reviews (PTR)
- Committals (either for sentencing or trial at Crown Court)
- Sentencing
- Summary Trials – usually listed in the afternoon in the SDVC

Note: In cases where there are concerns over the defendant's mental health the case may be remitted to appear at Horseferry Road Magistrates Court.

Cases are identified by a green DV label being placed on the cover of the Police, CPS and Court files. This identification of DV is done by any of the following: Arresting Officer, officer in the case, Custody Sergeant, Criminal Justice and Witness Care Units, CPS, Listing Officer or Legal Advisor.

For more information on flagging see component three of the Home Office SDVC Programme Resource Manual 2006.

The Court Process

- Cases identified as DV are listed in to the SDVC on the next available Thursday. Overnight DV cases and breach of bail cases may be heard on other days. These will be remanded to the next Thursday to bring them into the SDVC cycle – unless they are indictable only offences and will be sent straight to Crown Court or are breach bail conditions cases in which they must be dealt with within 24 hours of arrest.

Personnel

- DV CPS Prosecutors are rotated to cover the SDVC.
- A Bench and Legal Advisor trained in DV by Standing Together is assigned to the SDVC - District Judges, Magistrates, Legal Advisors are trained in the SDVC protocol and DV Awareness.
- A Probation representative and list caller is also present.

Who else attends the SDVC each week?

- A Metropolitan Police Officer from the H&F Community Safety Unit attends to provide assistance to the Prosecutor and to the Court.
- Outreach Workers from Eaves Women's Aid or Victim Support Service [VSS] make contact with and support women attending court from Kensington and Chelsea.
- Advocates from ADVANCE support and make contact with women attending court from Hammersmith and Fulham.

- Standing Together's representative monitors adherence to the court protocol, record results (including bail conditions) and notes practice issues.

Witness/Victim Support

- ADVANCE, Eaves and Victim Support Service make contact with and support women at court, when it is safe to do so.
- On non-SDVC days where a woman is already being supported by an agency the worker may attend court to offer support.
- Where women attend court on days other than a SDVC day and are not being supported by a worker, the Witness Service at WLMC will offer support and encourage a referral to the relevant support agency.
- Outreach Workers and Advocates can inform the Prosecutor or the CSU Police Officer of any concerns in relation to bail conditions, update on family/civil court proceedings and supply other information that may be useful to the case (with appropriate consent as required).
- A DV Witness Support Protocol governs how the different support agencies work together and support agencies meet quarterly [DVWSG meeting] to discuss issues. This meeting is a sub group of the Court Management Group and feeds in concerns through the Standing Together Co-ordinator who represents DVWSG members in this meeting.
- The numbers of individuals contacted/supported at court by the support agencies are monitored by Standing Together on a monthly basis and this information is fed back to operational partners in the court through the Court Management Group which meets quarterly.

Court results and information dispatch

A key factor to the SDVC is the prompt notification of victim/witnesses of court results and changes to bail conditions.

On SDVC days

- Where the victim/witness is being supported by Eaves, VSS or ADVANCE, the worker will contact the victim via telephone whilst at court to notify them of the result and bail conditions, explaining any decisions made to the victim.
- The pink bail form is passed by the Legal Advisor to the Standing Together representative and the bail conditions are recorded on to the Standing Together Case Monitoring Form relating to that defendant.
- The completed forms are then passed to the Witness Service who will fax them through to the relevant WCU and CSU.
- Copies of the faxed forms are also taken by the Standing Together representative and stored securely at the office.
- After faxing the forms, they are filed in a secure cabinet within the Witness Service Office [in WLMC].
- Case adjournments to non SDVC days (mostly trials) are entered into the SDVC diary (managed by Standing Together) to ensure all results are collected.

On Non-SDVC Days

- Cases which have been listed out of the SDVC (mostly for trials to help reduce delays) are entered on the Non SDVC Day DV Result Form. This is completed each week by the Standing Together representative (referring to the SDVC diary) and passed to the Witness Service who collect and record the results.

- Following the hearing the pink bail form is passed by the Legal Advisor to the Witness Service.
- The Witness Service add information to any existing file or make up a new file.
- Bail information and result of the hearing is then faxed to the relevant CSU, WCU and the Standing Together Office.
- If victim witness is known to be in contact with a support agency Standing Together will ring the agency to notify them of the result.

Sentencing

- Expedited Sentence Reports are not permitted to be used in the SDVC.
- District Judges are able to reserve cases for sentencing when they have heard the trial.
- At conviction a Full Court Report is requested to include an assessment for IDAP (Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme).
- Domestic Violence reports that are completed by the Askew Road Probation Office are prioritised and will be written by a specialist DV Probation Officer.
- When writing the court report, Askew Road Probation Officers are able to ADVANCE to establish if they are supporting the partner to assist with their assessment.
- The numbers of perpetrators sentenced to supervision with a condition to attend IDAP is collected on a monthly basis by Standing Together and this information is fed back to the Court Management Group.
- When a Restraining Order is imposed the court supply a copy to the Standing Together representative, (on non-SDVC days it is given to the Witness Service), so that this can be forwarded via the support agencies or via the relevant CSU to the victim.

Supporting structures

- Police CAD room alerts linked to high risk victim and offender details as part of the “Special Scheme” are agreed at the monthly Operations meeting facilitated by Standing Together and attended by representatives from Hammersmith and Fulham Police CSU, ADVANCE and the CPS DV Prosecutor.
- The SDVC is managed via a quarterly **Court Management Group** and has representatives from the courts operational partners.
- The **DVWSG** also meets quarterly and is attended by representatives of the witness/victim support agencies.
- These meetings are convened and serviced by Standing Together.

Data Sharing

- DV incidents are put on to their “STATS” database by Standing Together’s Data Development & Tracking Officer.
- The court result forms completed by Standing Together are used to update STATS.
- On a monthly basis the WLMC “Performance Team” forward details of every DV case heard in the WLMC to Standing Together.
- This information is then entered on to the Standing Together SDVC database and analysed for reports to the Court Management Group, Standing Together’s Steering Committee and Operations meetings. This information is also forwarded to project funders.
- Case information from WLMC is also used to track cases committed to Blackfriars Crown Court and cases remitted to other Magistrates Court e.g. Horseferry Road & Marylebone.

Evaluation

- Weekly and quarterly summaries of observations at the SDVC are written by Standing Together and distributed to the SDVC operational partners.
- The SDVC is reviewed annually; review reports are available from Standing Together.
- Verbal and written feedback from witness/victims who have used the SDVC is encouraged and gathered (where possible) via the DVWSG. Comments are recorded on the SDVC witness/victim feedback form or gathered by Standing Together's Project Officer. These comments are regularly analysed and are included in reviews of the SDVC in order to help improve practice.
- Other methods used have included a telephone survey of ADVANCE clients , a focus group of survivors observing and commenting on the SDVC, a safety audit of the court building with support workers.
- Survivor consultations are regularly organised and conducted by Standing Together to ensure that the survivor is placed at the centre of the change process so to generate effective procedural and institutional change.

GLOSSARY

CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRO	Community Rehabilitation Order
CSU LBHF	Community Safety Unit – London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
CSU RBKC	Community Safety Unit – Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
DV Officer	Domestic Violence Officer
DVIP	Domestic Violence Intervention Project
H&F	Hammersmith & Fulham
Hearings	Cases listed for hearings before trials
IDAP	Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme
Listings	Case Listings Department – West London Magistrates Court
Police	Metropolitan Police – Hammersmith & Fulham or Kensington & Chelsea
RO	Restraining Order
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court
Standing Together	Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
STATS	Standing Together Abuse Tracking System
WCU	Witness Care Unit
Witness Service	Witness Service – West London Magistrates Court
WLMC	West London Magistrates Court