



**Protocol between
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
and
Hammersmith and Fulham Metropolitan Police**

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INTRODUCTION

Standing Together Against Domestic Violence (herein referred to as Standing Together) is a multi-agency co-ordinated response to domestic violence in Hammersmith and Fulham. The aim is to improve the safety of survivors and their children and to hold abusers accountable from their initial point of contact with the police and through-out the criminal justice system.

While acknowledging that each agency maintains its independence, Standing Together aims to ensure that all the agencies involved work in an integrated and co-ordinated way to achieve the objectives of the project. Each agency has committed themselves to liaise closely with other member agencies, sharing information and providing the best possible service to survivors and their families within the role, responsibility and resources of individual agencies and ensuring that any gaps in service are identified and addressed.

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Standing Together participants use the term domestic violence to include any form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse within or after an intimate relationship. Current research and the experiences of a wide range of agencies responding to domestic violence indicate that overwhelmingly it is women who experience abuse and almost always, it is the male partners or ex-partners who are the perpetrators. The project will therefore focus on the needs of women survivors for services. However, it is acknowledged that domestic violence also takes place within same sex relationships and that women can abuse men. The Project aims to respond appropriately to the needs of male survivors for services.

STANDING TOGETHER PARTNERS

Partner agencies of Standing Together are as follows:

- ADVANCE advocacy service
- Awareness In Practice — Specialist Training agency
- Crown Prosecution Service — West London Branch
- Charing Cross Hospital — Accident and Emergency Department
- Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) — Women's Support Service and Violence Prevention Programme
- Hammersmith and Fulham Community Law Centre
- Hammersmith and Fulham Police
- Hammersmith Women's Aid
- London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham — Social Services Department and the Community Safety Unit
- Probation Service — London Probation Area
- Blackfriars Crown Court — Observer Status
- West London Magistrates Court — Observer Status

(1) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Standing Together aims to:

- Increase the safety of survivors of domestic violence in the short and longer term.
- To increase the safety of children who live with domestic violence.
- To hold abusers accountable and responsible for their actions.
- To ensure that the onus of holding the abuser accountable lies with statutory and other agencies rather than with the survivor.
- Whilst acknowledging that each agency maintains its independence, to ensure that all the agencies involved in Standing Together work in an integrated and co-ordinated way with each other to achieve these objectives.
- To provide accountability to the public, to survivors and to other agencies for the way in which domestic violence is handled.
- To test and develop effective policies, procedures and practical measures which can be integrated into the ongoing work of agencies during and after the Pilot.

1.2 Standing Together Responsibilities

Standing Together will:

- Improve communication flow among participating agencies.
- Provide co-ordination between participating agencies.
- Ensure consultation with member agencies on all matters of policy in relation to the work of Standing Together.
- Provide overall administration for Steering Group meetings.
- Mail out minutes of Standing Together Committee Meetings.
- Convene regular meetings of Steering Committee and any other meetings necessary.
- Provide agencies with annual reports.
- Keep all agencies informed of decisions taken by Steering Committee.
- Provide data to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the community response.
- Analyse information produced and provide feedback to agency and/or Steering Committee.
- Provide member agencies with up-to-date information on cases (when necessary).
- Alert practitioners to cases that have become stalled within the system.
- When possible, alert practitioners to extremely dangerous abusers and alert victim advocates to high-risk situations.
- Inform practitioners of case outcomes.
- Allow a review of actions taken by individual practitioners and agencies to ensure compliance with agreed-upon policies and protocols.

1.3 Hammersmith and Fulham Police Responsibilities

Hammersmith and Fulham Police will:

- Obtain the best evidence possible at the scene of a domestic violence incident by taking, for example, photographs of the victim and/or the scene.
- Take a detailed statement from victim/witnesses of domestic violence.
- Offer a referral to ADVANCE advocacy service to all victims of domestic violence, including leaving a card where possible. Note: The leaving of a card is not in itself a referral.
- Obtain victim consent, allowing personal details to be passed to ADVANCE and record the victim's consent (or refusal) on CRIS.
- Obtain victim consent allowing personal details to be recorded on the STATS system.
- Complete Form 78's and refer to Child Protection Team or Social Services where necessary.
- Liaise on case details with ADVANCE.
- Make an assessment of victim's willingness to attend court and inform the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) immediately if decision is changed.
- Send the CPS case files in accordance with agreed deadlines when a charge has been made.
- Carry out additional investigation at the instigation of the CPS.
- Liase with the CPS as necessary concerning an update on all cases.
- Send to CPS monthly case list so that CPS can identify cases that have not been flagged as domestic violence.
- Participate in monthly Operations meetings and bi-monthly Steering Committee meetings convened by Standing Together.
- Act in accordance with their 'Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information' policy.

(2) INFORMATION SHARING

- 2.1** Standing Together has entered into an information sharing agreement with all the member agencies, which are accountable to the Steering Committee. This agreement highlights the roles and responsibilities of each agency, what information they will share and with which agency they will share this information.

For the purposes of up-dating information on a regular basis, Standing Together may need, from time to time, to revise and amend the information sharing protocols by agreement between all parties.

2.2 Purpose of Information Sharing

- To improve the safety of victims and their children.
- For monitoring and accountability within the Project and to monitor that agencies involved are following their protocols.
- To collate all information on each case going through the Criminal Justice System and also at the point at which it is referred out to other agencies.
- To hold abusers accountable and to identify at what stage the offender is within the system using manual and electronic tracking to identify risk where possible.
- To identify any problems with the Project.

- To enable members to deliver effective services.

2.3 Standing Together Responsibilities

Standing Together will share all anonymous data and summary with:

- All members of the Standing Together Steering Committee.
- The public or funders only after consultation with Standing Together Steering Committee.
- Standing Together will also share data with any evaluation or researcher commissioned by the Standing Together Steering Committee.

The Tracker of Standing Together will:

- Be based at the Standing Together Office.
- Be responsible for keeping records of protocols, user permissions, requests for screen access and information.
- Be the liaison person for information exchange. Each piece of information will be exchanged verbally for speed, confirmed in writing or inputted directly onto STATS.
- Receive, record and bring to the attention of the Co-ordinator, requests for information about individual cases from members of Standing Together who are not STATS users and from other agencies.
- Not share persons' names with a member agency unless the member agency is handling their case and will not share information with perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Co-ordinator of Standing Together will:

- Receive and bring to the attention of the Steering Committee procedures or policy changes where necessary to support the aims of the Project.
- Will approve or reject requests for information about individual cases. Case information will only be given in exceptional circumstances (see Standing Together guidelines).

2.4 Hammersmith and Fulham Police responsibilities

Hammersmith and Fulham Police will:

- Share all anonymous data with Standing Together and with any evaluation or researcher commissioned by Standing Together.
- Give the Standing Together Tracker all information in a report form or otherwise as stated in section 2.5 below.
- Provide the Standing Together Tracker with direct access to the CRIS system.
- Provide a Tracker who will input and update all data on a daily basis to all the relevant screens on STATS as agreed with Standing Together in accordance with the STATS protocol.
- Inform the Co-ordinator of any problems that arise between themselves and other agencies.

- Exchange all relevant information with the CPS and the Probation Service (London Probation Area) in accordance with existing agreements.
- Give ADVANCE Advocates (after having obtained and recorded consent from the victim, but not the suspect) the following:
 - Name of offender, location of offender, charge details, details of release and bail conditions, history of violence, history of child abuse, history of any orders or breaches, name of officer in case, court dates, any other relevant details to help enhance safety planning for the victim.
 - Name of victim, address of victim, phone number of victim, number of children, relevant details of the incident, crime reference number, ethnic origin, any other relevant details to help enhance safety planning for the victim.
- Have ongoing contact with ADVANCE as the case proceeds through the criminal justice system.

2.5 Information to be shared on a monthly basis

Police will share the following information on a monthly basis either in

- (i) report form**
- (ii) via the CRIS system or**
- (iii) onto STATS in accordance with the objectives of Standing Together:**

- The number of domestic violence incidents involving partner/ex-partner.
- The number of domestic violence crimes involving partner/ex-partner.
- The number of domestic violence crimes by classification.
- The number of cases where a victim is subject to domestic crime more than once from the same perpetrator, at any time.
- The number and percentage of cases referred by police to ADVANCE.
- The number of referrals from Social Services to police where domestic violence is an issue.
- The number and percentage of reported crimes where suspects are arrested.
- The number and percentage of reported crimes where suspects are charged.
- The number of cautions issued.
- The number of accused who are involved in another domestic violence incident against the same person whilst already on bail for domestic violence.
- The number of domestic violence charges where bail conditions are imposed by the Police.
- The number of accused who breach bail conditions.

(3) DESIGNATED OFFICER

The Metropolitan Police of Hammersmith and Fulham will appoint a designated officer or Tracker to control the flow of information and maintain the integrity of a data sharing system. It will be the responsibility of the Metropolitan Police of Hammersmith and Fulham to replace, with minimum delay, this post if the Police Tracker leaves.

The Standing Together Tracker will keep a central register of designated officers from each member agency that has screen access to STATS.

(4) DATA PROTECTION

Designated officers must follow the principles set out in the Data Protection Act when processing personal information or requesting information from other agencies.

The Data Protection principles state that personal information must be:

- Processed lawfully and fairly.
- Obtained for a lawful purpose.
- Relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is processed.
- Accurate and kept up to date.
- Retained no longer than is necessary for the required purpose.
- Processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects.
- Stored securely to prevent unauthorised access.

In addition, partners under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have duties to disclose information under Section 115.

(5) CONFIDENTIALITY

The Metropolitan Police of Hammersmith and Fulham has in place a 'Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information' policy which is followed by all staff within Hammersmith and Fulham Police and should be referred to when sharing information with other agencies.

Designated Officers will have screen access to STATS and will be responsible for inputting data onto the STATS system. They will not share any data relating to Standing Together or STATS with any unauthorised person. In the interest of security no STATS screens must be left visible for others to view. The Metropolitan Police of Hammersmith and Fulham will dispose of all confidential waste safely either by using a shredder or other secured means.

It must be noted that even if the Data Protection Act is not relevant, the common law presumption of confidentiality will still apply. Civil Proceedings for defamation can also be instigated.

We the undersigned have read and agree with this Protocol between Standing Together and Hammersmith and Fulham Metropolitan Police to carry out the roles and responsibilities and to share and provide the information outlined above. This agreement may be cancelled by either party in writing at anytime.

Signed for: Hammersmith and Fulham Metropolitan Police

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

Signed for: Standing Together Against Domestic Violence

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date: