

Domestic Abuse
our service to
you



This leaflet aims to explain the action Thames Valley Police will take when called to incidents involving domestic abuse.

Our approach to domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious problem which Thames Valley Police is determined to tackle. All complaints will be fully investigated and, unless there are very good reasons for not doing so, officers will arrest any individuals who are found to be abusing their partners - even if the victim refuses to make a statement or give evidence in court. This applies equally to men and women, and individuals in a same sex relationship.

How to contact us

We want you to report domestic abuse to us because no one has the right to treat another individual in this way; because the chances are the person committing the abuse is also committing a crime; because the abuse could escalate and put you in serious danger, and because we want to prevent it happening to you again.

If you are in immediate danger, call 999. If you are not in immediate danger, you can call our non-emergency number on 101 or visit a local police station. For details of where our stations are and when they are open call 101 or visit our website at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

What we will do

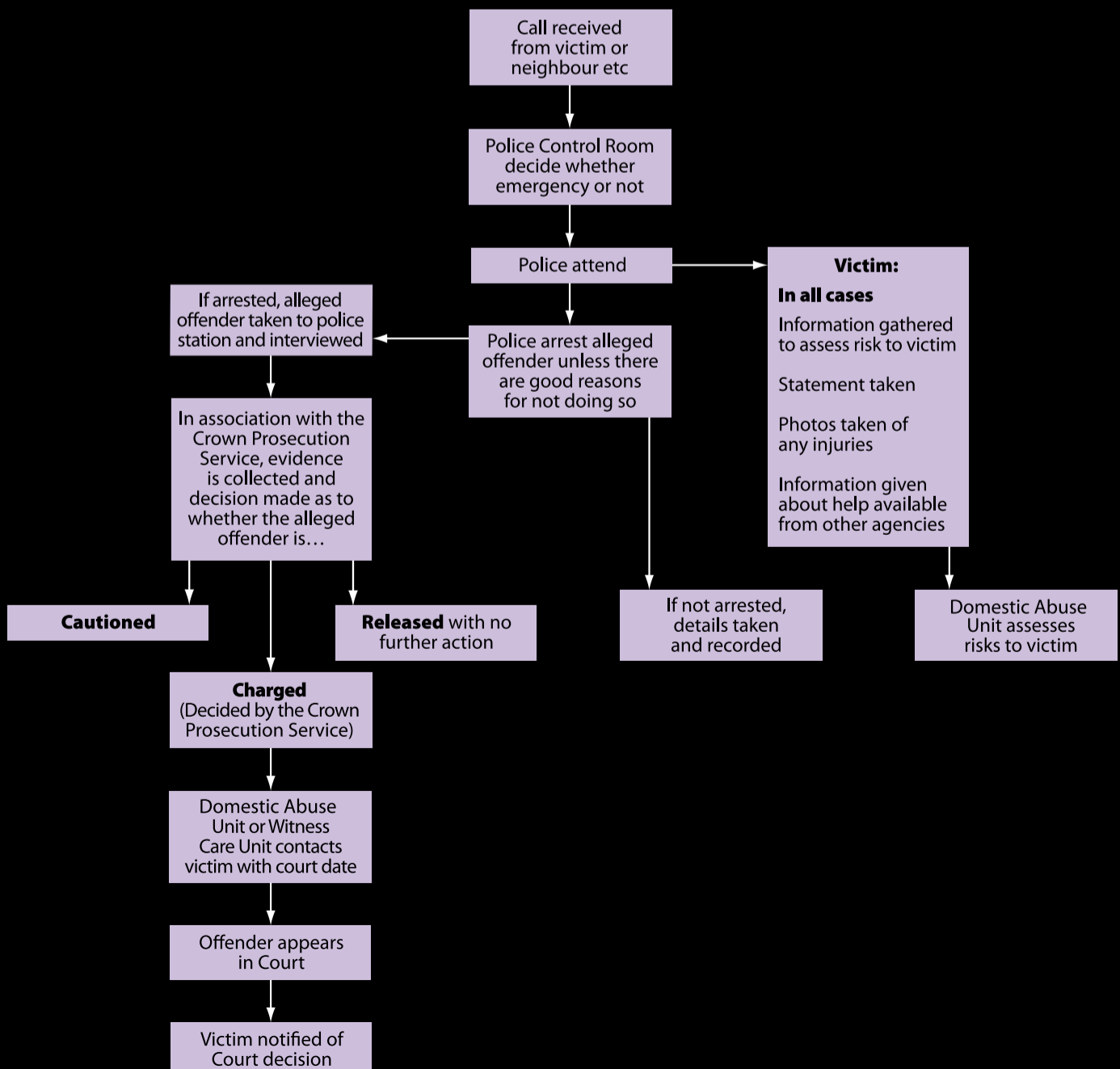
Thames Valley Police attends all domestic abuse incidents.

When an incident is reported to us it is graded according to the response required. If urgent attendance is thought to be necessary, officers will attend immediately. However, it may be more appropriate for officers to visit at an arranged time.

Once we have spoken to you, we will look into the incident further and if a crime has taken place there will be a full investigation. Whatever action we take, we will keep you fully informed. You should be told if the offender is arrested, charged, bailed or the subject of an out-of-court resolution such as a caution or a reprimand.

The officer who responds to your call will notify staff who are specially trained in domestic abuse and will deal with your case sensitively. They will assess the risks to you, and to your children if appropriate. They may contact you to offer further guidance, support and advice.

GUIDANCE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE – POLICE PROCEDURE



Children

If you have children, Thames Valley Police has a responsibility to tell children's services but they won't necessarily get involved in your case. If they do, they may be able to help and assist you with a wide range of support services.

Victim Support

If a crime has been committed we will pass information about you to Victim Support so that they can offer you emotional help and support, unless you specifically ask us not to do so.

If a crime has not taken place and you feel that some support would be helpful we can still pass your information to Victim Support with your consent. In more rural areas, we may ask specially trained outreach workers to contact you, but we will phone and ask for your consent first.

Going to court

If your case goes to court the following should happen:

- You will be contacted by the Witness Care Unit. They will be your single point of contact throughout the court process, providing you with practical support and information
- If you are required to give evidence, on the day you will be offered support from Victim Support's Witness Service, which is confidential.

Other help available

There are a number of voluntary organisations that provide help and advice to victims of domestic abuse in the Thames Valley Police area (which includes Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). These are detailed on our website at **www.thamesvalley.police.uk**

Women's Aid and Refuge also run a freephone 24-hour national domestic violence helpline on 0808 2000 247.

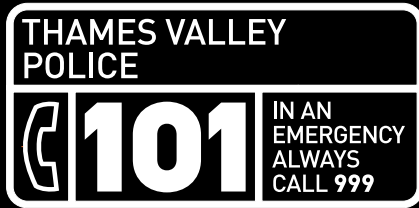
What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse involves a range of abusive and violent behaviour where a person exerts control over another person. It is the physical, emotional, financial or mental abuse by one person over another with whom there is, or has been, a relationship. It can involve partners, ex-partners and also family members.

Domestic abuse may be physical and include slapping, punching, kicking and strangulation which may lead to minor or serious injuries, and sometimes death.

It can be sexual, including forced sex, sexual assaults and degradation. It can also be emotional and mental including constant criticism, ridicule and comments which make you feel humiliated and worthless. It may involve threats and intimidation to harm you or take the children and keeping you short of money.

Domestic abuse is rarely a one-off event and it often escalates in frequency and severity over time.



*This number should be used for all non-emergency calls to Thames Valley Police.
In an emergency call 999. It is an emergency if a crime is being committed,
or is about to be committed, or there is a risk of injury.*

www.thamesvalley.police.uk

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