

Risk assessment and risk management by police

Step 5: Embed police risk assessment in a multiagency framework

The police should take an active role in establishing a strong multiagency framework for effectively responding to intimate partner violence. Elements to consider when establishing such a framework include the following:

- identifying all relevant actors that should be involved in addition to the police – specialist victim services, social services, child protection, health services, housing, prosecutors, probation officers, and other relevant actors;
- clearly defining the role and responsibilities of each agency and ensuring that these are well understood across the system;
- establishing a coordinating structure to plan and convene meetings and to ensure that agreed procedures and goals are acted on and monitored;
- developing a common understanding of risk assessment aims and objectives among all actors, and using shared risk assessment tools that facilitate the use of a common language and a shared understanding of risk;
- sharing information among agencies in a timely manner considering all the necessary elements to ensure privacy and confidentiality in accordance with locally agreed protocols and national standards (on developing procedures for information management and confidentiality, see [Step 6](#));
- establishing protocols and partnership agreements among different actors in order to ensure that victims have access to specialist support services as appropriate and according to their specific needs through an agreed referral system;
- establishing monitoring and evaluation systems to improve the accountability of all agencies involved and allow stakeholders to participate in and make decisions about improvements (on monitoring and evaluating risk assessment practices and outcomes, see [Step 7](#)).

The police are often the first point of contact for the victim and are called upon to respond to their immediate safety needs and take appropriate action to manage the perpetrator according to police mandates. However, strategies to ensure victim safety and perpetrator accountability are likely to be most effective when they are implemented in the context of multiagency frameworks, rather than when they are primarily the responsibility of a single agency (see [Principle 2](#) on risk assessment).

Multi-agency coordination and cooperation are a critical element of effective risk assessment of intimate partner violence, as they:

- more effectively link police risk assessment (e.g. of standard, medium or high risk) to risk management strategies that respond to the individual needs of victims and their children;
- facilitate responses to violence against women and girls that are comprehensive, multidisciplinary, coordinated, systematic and sustained;
- ensure that police risk assessment enables women's access to essential services, increasing the likelihood that women and children will be safe.

The police are a key partner and play a crucial role in multiagency responses to intimate partner violence. Police leadership needs to clearly communicate the importance of adopting a multiagency approach to intimate partner violence, thereby helping to embed it in police culture through the adoption of shared protocols and institutional partnership agreements. Furthermore, police training and capacity building should include joint training with other relevant agencies. However, the decision on which agency will lead the multiagency framework will depend on how local and national contexts are organised and how roles and responsibilities among the relevant agencies are shared.

The benefits of strong engagement by the police in multiagency frameworks are twofold. Police can receive information from partners to facilitate timely risk identification and assessment.

In addition, multiagency arrangements help to ensure that other agencies assume responsibilities that are not within the mandate of the police, such as the provision of psychological support, counselling services and economic assistance.

Multi-agency mechanisms within the EU range from the adoption of formal or informal referral mechanisms involving different actors (103) to the presence of multidisciplinary teams and/or conferences, mandated by legislation and/or by policy documentation on risk assessment (e.g. multiagency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)).