

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES

STEPS TOWARDS CHANGE

Liz Kelly and Nicole Westmarland



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PROJECT MIRABAL FINAL REPORT

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All social research projects rely on three core components: participants, funders and research teams.

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An electronic copy of this report and other Project Mirabal publications are available at:
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/criva/projectmirabal>

INTRODUCTION

As we complete this study there is more conversation about what is to be done with perpetrators of domestic violence than for some time – a conversation which ricochets across police, social services, women’s support services, multi-agency groups, policymakers, commissioners, media commentators and academics. At issue are two key questions:

- **Do** domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs) actually work in reducing men’s violence and abuse and increasing the freedom of women and children?
- **How** do we hold more perpetrators to account, since even if DVPPs do work, their limited capacity means the majority of men do not access them and criminal justice interventions alone are clearly not creating the change that all stakeholders seek?

This report can offer evidence with respect to the first question and will engage with the second.

The starting point for Project Mirabal¹ was our contention that we had reached an impasse in both research and policy on perpetrator programmes. On the one hand are repeated calls for interventions that call perpetrators to account, whilst on the other a deep scepticism about both routes for so doing - perpetrator programmes and criminal justice sanctions. This scepticism results in such programmes being held to far more stringent levels of scrutiny and measures of success than criminal justice interventions, intensified in the era of outcomes and cost led public policy. This is the context in which this report is set.

SETTING THE CONTEXT AND THE QUESTION

Despite over 40 years of new responses to domestic violence there is little evidence that this has produced a sustained reduction in its extent. Most interventions in the Global North continue to focus on women and children, securing their safety through removing them from harm (via refuges and rehousing).

Far less attention has been given to domestic violence

perpetrators despite research showing many repeat their violence in future relationships (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). The preferred route in much, but not all, of the global north, has been holding them to account through the criminal justice system. In the UK despite large increases in the numbers being charged and prosecuted over the last decade (CPS, 2014), the majority of reports do not result in criminal justice sanctions, and we have minimal evidence that arrest and/or prosecution changes men’s practice.

Worldwide, research on policing practices in relation to domestic violence perpetrators is extremely limited (Westmarland et al., 2014).

Domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs) emerged in the 1980s, not as alternatives to criminal justice interventions, but rather as an experiment in whether men can be engaged in a process of change and as symbolically important from an accountability perspective. In their original incarnations they were seen as one part of a wider Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic violence. Whilst few places can claim to have established a CCR similar to that in Duluth, Minnesota (Pence and Paymar, 1996), many well established programmes in the UK are now deeply embedded in local adaptations of a CCR, the foundation of government domestic violence policy for almost a decade (Home Office, 2009). Our primary research questions, therefore, were not only to what extent are programmes effective in changing the behaviour of individual men, but what they contribute to a CCR.

Project Mirabal has documented the history of DVPPs in the UK (see Phillips et al, 2013), the early programmes worked with both self-referred and court-referred men.

However, over time, court referrals became mandates, with consequences for non-compliance. Thus from the mid-1990s, men mandated by the criminal court have attended programmes run by the probation and prison services (the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme - IDAP), with the community based programmes this study addresses taking men referred through other routes.

1. The name was chosen by the research team. It refers to the three Mirabal sisters murdered in Dominican Republic, who became symbols of popular and feminist resistance to violence in South America where the date they were killed – November 25th – was designated a day to protest violence against women. This day gained global recognition in 1999 when it was endorsed by the UN.

There has been limited financial support for DVPPs, with most areas lacking a community based project (Coy et al, 2009), and resources constraining capacity in those which do exist.

Police in at least three local areas, following a critical report in early 2014 by HMIC (HMIC, 2014) and criticisms of practice in a number of Domestic Homicide Reviews, have begun conversations about how they might enhance interventions with domestic violence perpetrators. One area – Hampshire – is piloting a short intervention with men who have been cautioned delivered by a specialist DVPP. The National Offender Management (NOMS) is exploring a new business model, opening their programmes to men who have not been processed through the CJS. Two social enterprise initiatives, including CAADA, declared an interest in 2014 developing new approaches, premised on the fact that most perpetrators are not on DVPPs and that shorter interventions may offer more options through the payment by results agenda. The landscape is, therefore, one of certain change but uncertainty for the DVPPs and probation projects which have built practice based knowledge on work with perpetrators: over the course of our project two of our sites closed and others changed their positioning and primary funders.

Project Mirabal is a programme of research, combining a multi-site longitudinal study of the impacts of perpetrator programmes with two linked PhDs. The project is unusual since it was initiated by a third sector membership organisation Respect², the national umbrella organisation for perpetrator programmes and allied services and the principal investigators selected through a competitive process to take the research forward. Since that time we raised the funds to undertake the research, refined the research questions and developed the methodology, whilst recognising that the issues we address have come from the ‘bottom up’. From the outset we promised a ground-breaking study, in which we would develop a new methodological approach to measure success, offering a starting point for what we term ‘third generation’ domestic violence perpetrator research methodology.

The international context is set by the ‘Istanbul Convention’ – the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence - which the UK has signed but not yet ratified. It makes explicit reference to perpetrator work: Article 16 requires states parties to ‘set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviours’ and in taking such measures parties ‘shall ensure that the safety of, and support for, the human rights of victims are of primary concern and that, where appropriate, these programmes are set up and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist services for victims’. The measures of success operationalised in this study are commended in the supporting paper for Article 16 (Hester and Lilley, 2014: p14).

WHAT WE THINK WE KNOW

Our literature review revealed 49 published studies of DVPPs, with most originating in the US, followed by Australia, and the UK. This knowledge base has provided methodological lessons, whilst simultaneously exposing gaps and limitations. There have been two previous ‘generations’ of studies. ‘First generation’ studies concentrated on behavioural responses to interventions with success defined as a reduction in the frequency and severity of violence measured by further criminal justice convictions and/or the self-reports of men. Whilst these studies demonstrated that those who completed programmes were less likely to re-offend in the following 12 months, both in the US (Hamberger & Hastings, 1988) and in Britain (Brown and Williams, 1996; Claytor, 1996), the limitations of the measures of success resulted in strong methodological critique. Studies using women’s reports as an outcome measure found significant disparities in the assessment of change by male perpetrators and female survivors (see, for example, Burton et al., 1998; Dobash et al., 1997; Edleson and Grusznski, 1988; Gondolf, 1999).

2. Members include criminal justice and community based practitioners working in programmes, carrying out specialist court work with perpetrators and victims to reduce violence and promote safety.

'Second generation' research took one of two routes to address these shortcomings: an experimental research design that randomly assigned offenders to intervention and non-intervention conditions (Dunford, 2000; Feder and Dugan, 2002; Labriola et al., 2008); or a systemic, multi-site evaluation of established programmes (Gondolf, 2002). Experimental designs are often presented as the 'gold standard' and have in the main found limited programme effect (Gondolf, 2007). However, the ethics of such studies – leaving women and children outside potential support for the sake of study design (Bowen et al, 2002) – and the fact that professionals may refuse to implement them 'by the book' raises critical questions (Berk, 2005).

A further criticism is the implicit presumption that programmes can be studied independent of their context, when, in fact, they are frequently delivered as part of co-ordinated local responses (Klevens et al, 2008). The alternative quasi-experimental design allows for consideration of contextual factors. The most methodologically rigorous to date is Gondolf's (2002) multi-site evaluation, which found that programmes situated within a CCR can improve the safety of the majority of women. This study also found that data gathered more than a year after completion yields few new findings.

The findings, however, do not transfer simply to the UK since most men in the studies were court mandated and few US programmes offered the integrated support for partners and ex-partners that are now a key feature of UK service provision. Some commentators have called for more holistic approaches to research (Bowen and Gilchrist, 2004) which include study of: programme implementation and integrity; family relationships (MacLeod 2008); and more sophisticated measures of success (Bowen and Gilchrist, 2004). We have been mindful of these challenges in our 'third generation' study and seek to move away from the fatalistic 'nothing works' message to provide more nuanced findings which are useful to policy makers, funders and programmes themselves.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Whilst no single study could address all of the methodological challenges outlined above, Project Mirabal seeks to move on from the increasingly arid academic debate between the 'no effect' findings of the experimental studies and increased safety for women from the system based studies (Gondolf, 2007). By re-casting the research questions and taking new directions in analysis we offer a 'third generation' beginning from a re-definition of success (Westmarland et al, 2010). To move the agenda forward, Project Mirabal has four core components summarised below.

- ***Innovation in research methods and practice:*** develop more nuanced measures of effectiveness; integrate children's safety and well-being throughout the research; include interviews with men to begin to explore how change takes place; work with practitioners without compromising the independence and integrity of data collection and analysis; draw on contemporary gender theory in analysis.
- ***Locate community based perpetrator programmes within co-ordinated community responses to domestic violence:*** document the development of community based programmes in the UK; place research sites in local policy and practice contexts; examine what programmes add to a co-ordinated community response.
- ***Measure change among men on community based DVPPs: operationalise the six measures of success in both quantitative and qualitative data collection;*** compare change for men on programmes with a matched comparison group.
- ***Address two knowledge gaps through linked PhDs:*** the impact of DVPPs on children and young people; what programme integrity means for DVPPs.

Each will be touched on to some extent in this report, although we focus on some issues more than others, as they are the most urgent with respect to policy and practice.

RESEARCH METHODS

This programme of research required a complex layering of data collection and analysis to answer the research questions, summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Project Mirabal data

Element of research	Data collected
Locating DVPPs, CCR case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme data from 11 research sites • Secondary analysis of Redamos* and NOMs data • 64 interviews with DVPP staff and stakeholders across four locations
Longitudinal surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 women DVPP intervention group, 62 women comparison group • Five interviews phased over six time points (15 months)
Longitudinal in depth interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 men on programmes and 48 women (ex) partners • Time 1 (near start) and Time 2 (near end) interviews
DVPP Impact on children (PhD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey of 44 Respect members • Interviews with 13 DVPP staff • Interviews with 13 children aged 7-16
DVPP programme integrity (PhD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 interviews with early programme developers and stakeholders • Six month ethnographic study of the establishment of a o-location project • 22 interviews with current programme staff

*A bespoke database used by a number of Respect members

Ethical clearance was granted by the London Metropolitan University Research Ethics Review Board, with separate applications required to Barnardos and CAFCASS. A comprehensive safety protocol was developed covering both women participants and researchers (see Downes et al, 2014).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The main study was built around two core strands of data collection, locating DVPPs in their wider contexts and operationalising the six measures of success developed in the pilot study drawing on 70 interviews with men on programmes, women whose (ex)partners were on a DVPP, DVPP staff and funders (see Westmarland et al, 2010). The first two were particularly important for women, underlining that ending violence and abuse is a necessary, but insufficient, requirement for safety and freedom.

1. An improved relationship underpinned by respect and effective communication.
2. Expanded 'space for action' for women which restores their voice and ability to make choices, whilst improving their well-being.
3. Safety and freedom from violence and abuse for women and children.
4. Safe, positive and shared parenting.
5. Enhanced awareness of self and others for men, including an understanding of the impact that domestic violence has had on their partner and children.
6. For children, safer, healthier childhoods in which they feel heard and cared about.

Whilst developed in 2010, the measures chime with more recent policy changes, particularly the increasing use of DVPPs by children's services and the recent recognition by the Westminster government of the coercive control. Stopping violence and increasing women's safety is a limited measure, and bears little relationship to how women talk about living with abuse and moving on from the harms. The concept of 'well being' is woolly, but we know from previous research that it is the life limiting ongoing patterns of control that diminish both women and children. Whilst an average of 80 women die at the hands of their abusers each year in the UK, vastly more have their confidence

and sense of self destroyed through the everyday micro-management of their everyday lives (see also Stark, 2007). We theorised that these practices would be more difficult to change than physical and sexual assault.

In order to demonstrate that change was due to the DVPP intervention with men, the research design involved creating a matched comparison group of women receiving support about domestic violence but in an area where there was no community based DVPP. Freedom Programmes were chosen for this, since they are widely available and work only with victims.

The quantitative data collection followed the current orthodoxy of taking women's accounts as the most reliable in terms of men's use of violence and abuse: women whose partners were on a DVPP were designated the intervention group, and those on Freedom Programmes the comparison group. Data analysis revealed the two groups were comparable across basic demographics, length of relationship and baseline levels of violence and abuse.

Where they did not match was that comparison group women were more likely to have children who had no contact at all with their father (40% in comparison versus 16% in intervention group). Where there was no contact, this was primarily because either the child or the perpetrator did not want it in the comparison group, whereas in the intervention group where contact was limited this was more likely to be the result of decisions by the family court or Children's Services. Most crucially, we found that women in the intervention group were far more likely to still be with the man who had abused them: nearly half were together before the man started on a programme and over a third were still together 15 months on.

This was the case for hardly any of the women in the comparison group – just 13 per cent at first interview and 9 per cent at 15 months. This finding suggests that women are in contact with Freedom Programmes and DVPPs at different points in the process of dealing with domestic violence. Thus whilst we do have comparison group data (which largely found there to be no significant differences in reductions in violence and abuse), the fact that they are not an equivalent comparison group rendered the comparative data difficult to interpret in a way where we could be sure of our explanations. For this reason we do not report this data here. If we had much higher numbers of men going through DVPPs and higher numbers of research participants, it would have been possible to control for these differences. However studies of this nature do not tend to recruit the numbers that would have been required and developing appropriate comparison or control groups unfortunately remains methodologically problematic (see also Kelly et al, 2013).

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Twelve Respect accredited DVPPs agreed to be part of Project Mirabal. This included recruiting women and men to participate, completing a detailed pro-forma about the project and, for four, taking part in a CCR case study. The DVPPs were geographically diverse, spanning much of England and with one each in Wales and Scotland. Some were projects within larger organisations (children's charities, couples counselling), others were free-standing NGOs, with two larger regional providers. The comparison group was drawn from thirteen Freedom Programmes – a widely available groupwork support for women run by local authorities and third sector domestic violence organisations - all located in areas where there was no community-based DVPP.

DVPP AND CCR DATA

A pro-forma was created in order to collate baseline data for each DVPP research site. It covered: funding and referral routes; numbers and roles of staff; the work undertaken (e.g. assessment, court reports, case management); involvement in multi-agency networks; other external work including training and prevention.

Four sites were selected for depth case studies, reflecting both geographic spread and different DVPP models with interviews (n=64) undertaken with staff and local stakeholders (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) members, Children's Services, police, probation, CAFCASSS, NHS staff, specialist domestic violence services, commissioners). Here we explored the history of the programme, work experience and knowledge of, and relationships with, local partners and agencies. Stakeholder interviews focused on knowledge, awareness and view of the DVPP and considered what the DVPP contributed to coordinated community responses in the area. Each case study was written up and shared with the DVPP concerned as part of the collaborative approach to knowledge production.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE CHANGE DATA

The survey was administered to women in the intervention and comparison groups five times relating to six time points, with time 0 (baseline) covering the three months before the programme started and time 1 being within the first 6-12 weeks of the programme. Thus, the data covers approximately a 15 month period. At each time point the six measures of success were addressed through a series of indicators. Sample attrition by the final data collection point was 30 per cent of the intervention group (there were 100 women at time 0 and 70 at time 5) and 11 per cent for the comparison group (62 women at time 0 and 55 at time 5).

There were few differences in demographics between the two groups: the majority of women (93%) self-identified as White with 3 per cent as Asian, 2 per cent Black and 2 per cent other. Participants were aged from 18 to 70 years old, with 50 per cent in the 18-30 age group. In terms of education over half had A/AS levels (24%) or a degree (28%) but just over a third (38%) were in paid employment. Of those not in employment a third were unemployed (35%), a similar proportion full time carers (32%) and a fifth (18%) unable to do paid work due to disability (10% were in 'other' situations with 5% in full-time education).

Although we originally hoped to conduct more sophisticated quantitative analysis, the sample size restricted us to only basic statistical tests. We conducted chi-squared tests to look for statistically significant differences between the intervention and the comparison group and found few. Our sample size added to the problem with our comparative group (i.e. that far fewer women were still with their partner in the comparison group compared to the intervention group) meant that we have been limited to presenting descriptive statistics.

The sample for the qualitative interviews included both men and women in contact with DVPPs, with Time 1 interviews taking place within six weeks of a man's start and Time 2 within six weeks of his end date regardless of whether he had completed the programme.

Recruitment of men was more successful than women with 64 men and 48 women taking part in the first interview. There was a high degree of sample attrition with 36 men (56%) men and 26 women (54%) completing the second interview.

Despite multiple attempts researchers were unable to make contact with some participants and others chose not to undertake a second interview. The measures of success were dealt with differently in the interviews, through an adaption of critical incident analysis.

Here participants were asked to recall a specific example for each, and to discuss not only what happened, but what they and other person said, how they felt at the time and afterwards, and how the other person might have been feeling.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, entered into and coded on NVIVO. Initial close reading of the transcripts suggested that simplistic yes/no codings would miss the complexity of the data on measures of success, and that the accounts offered by women and men suggested instead a series of possible steps towards change.

METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS

The numbers of men going through DVPPs were far less than anticipated, and the challenges of changing and insecure funding regimes meant the research could not be prioritised by all sites. Recruitment from Freedom Programmes was easier, undoubtedly facilitated by the regular and ongoing face to face contact they have with women.

Reflecting on the positions of some women whose partners were on DVPPs, and the Time 2 interviews, raises questions about the now accepted orthodoxy that women's accounts should be the acid test of DVPP outcomes. Women who were no longer in relationship with the man, especially those where the relationship ended some time ago and his attendance was linked to an application for child contact, were not in a position to assess change on some dimensions. Other women who had separated chose not take part since they were seeking to move on. The fact that some men at Time 2 admitted to violence and abuse also challenges the positioning of them as inherently unreliable, untrustworthy informants. It was the combination and comparison of qualitative interviews with women and men that yielded new insights, including on how some men and women change and others do not.

FINDINGS

NOT JUST A PROGRAMME: DVPPS IN CONTEXTS

The image of a DVPP is that they provide a group work programme for violent men, but as this section will show they do far more than this. Eleven sites completed a pro-forma on the work undertaken over the previous 12 months and how embedded they were in the local CCR (see later section on this topic).

Two sites were larger organisations offering regional provision, with work taking place in hubs as well as in a main office; the other nine worked in more bounded areas, although all had men travelling considerable distances to attend sessions, given the dearth of provision.

Sixteen referral pathways into a DVPP were identified through the site pro-formas, but three predominated: Children's Services (n=559), CAFCASS (n=300) and 341 categorised as a 'self-referral'.³ This shows how strongly connected DVPPs are now with Children's Services. Also instructive are the tiny number of referrals from police, GPs and mental health services – a total of just two from each source across the eleven sites

Whilst funding sources remain diverse, DVPPs are increasingly reliant on contracts with Children's Services, local authorities and CAFCASS, with trusts and foundations offering more flexible resources. Only two had funding from health sources and five charge men who self-refer and can pay. Various reporting requirements from funders have made the creation of a common outcomes framework difficult to implement. Some are now required to report monthly, suggesting that a dynamic framework such as the 'steps towards change' that this project uses is necessary. On referral, not every man will be accepted. An assessment process explores readiness and suitability for the intervention offered by DVPPs.

Some are judged unsuitable either because they continue to deny that they have ever been abusive or are assessed as too dangerous to work with: in each case referrers will be informed about the reasons and in some instances case management systems employed and other potential intervention routes explored. In other cases a place may be offered, but only after additional processes have been completed (criminal proceedings) or undertaken (work on substance misuse). Respect accredited DVPPs work from the principle that they should not be used as either an alternative to CJS proceedings or as an argument for mitigation of sentence.

All research sites had an associated women's support service. Over the 12 months covered by the pro-forma there were 959 referrals, of which 884 were successfully contacted and support accepted by 732. Much of the support undertaken by telephone and comprises developing support plans (n=508) and safety plans (n=302). Almost a quarter were seen face to face (n=209), but a far lower number accessed group work (n=80). Women were also encouraged to access additional support, with 17 possible pathways identified.

A further aspect of DVPP work seldom documented are the reports on and assessments of perpetrators – both those accepted onto programmes and those not. Across the ten sites where data was available a total of 649 reports were undertaken:

- 315 for family court proceedings;
- 191 for Children's Services;
- 58 for CAFCASS;
- 44 for criminal court cases;
- 41 for child protection conferences.

The volume and variation of these specialist reports is a substantial contribution to evidence based decision making by agencies that are intervening in domestic violence

3. This is a contested category: for some DVPPs it is only used for those who have no involvement with statutory services for others merely that the first contact is made by the man rather than another agency.

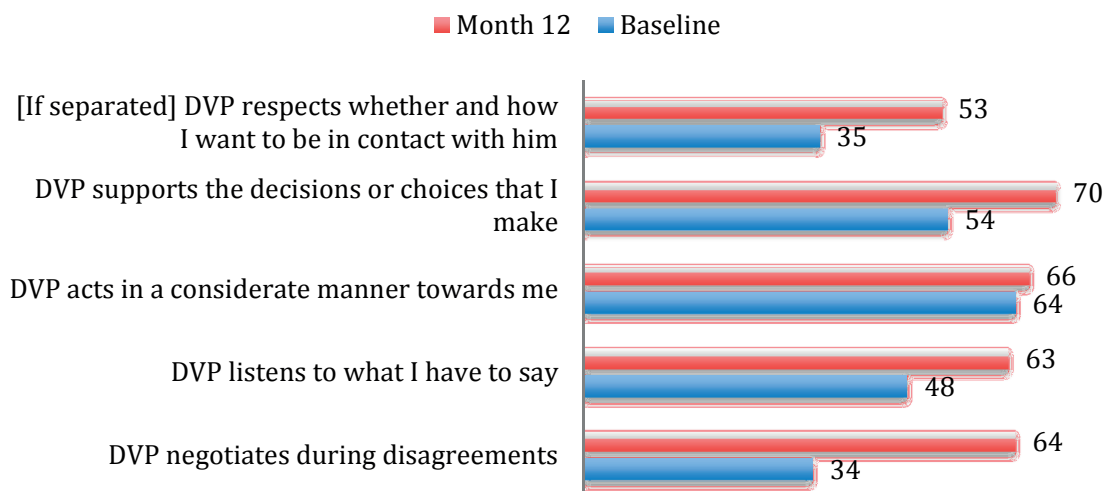
MOVEMENT TOWARDS CHANGE

In this section we present findings from the quantitative survey on the six measures of success – presented as change from baseline to the final interview 12 months after a man started on a DVPP. Each measure is discussed in turn with data on the survey indicators followed by discussion of the qualitative interview material which offer illustrations of how men did, or did not, take steps towards change. Each of the measures reveal how the dynamics of both abuse and change are gendered: that those men who changed did so through developing different ways of being men in relationships with women and children.

MEASURE ONE – RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

The survey included five indicators, all framed in the positive direction sought, to assess change on this measure: an improved relationship between men on programmes and their (ex)partners is underpinned by respect and effective communication. Figure 1 shows that there were increases from the baseline to 12 months after starting the programme⁴, albeit that some changes were minimal (e.g. acting in a considerate way). The greater changes, however, took place in those indicators which were lower at baseline (negotiating during disagreements, respecting whether and how women want to be in contact, listening to women).

Figure 1. Respectful communication (% yes)



All the movement here was in the direction of positive change.

⁴ Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 48 and 95. At 12 months the sample size ranges between 34 and 62. DVP means 'domestic violence perpetrator'.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS – MEASURE 1

In the pilot study the possibility of being able to talk about difficult issues, negotiate, talk about feelings and listen to and hear women's voices were the most frequently mentioned desired changes for women whose partners were on a DVPP. Rather than this, abusive men use everyday interactions to assert their views, have the last word and at times silence those of women and children. The possible steps towards change analysed in the qualitative data were:

- respects and hears the woman's views;
- engagement with disagreements;
- de-escalation;
- negotiation of shared interaction rules.

RESPECTS AND HEARS THE WOMAN'S VIEWS

Abusive men attempt to enforce acceptance of their views, opinions, standards, emotions and needs, creating what women and children experience as disrespectful one-way communication. This can take a number of forms: presumption of automatic respect; speaking to women as if they were children; issuing orders and demands; refusal to countenance criticism; presumption of entitlement to make all the decisions in the relationship/family; needing to win an argument; interrupting, listening and/or a disinterest in the views of others. The principle of this style of communication is that women and children should recognise and adhere to the man's perspectives. That women refused, at times for some and always for others, was one of the core dynamics in abuse. Many women spoke about the ways that over time their voices and everyday actions were narrowed and that they adapted to his views.

Some men made positive changes, demonstrating that they could acknowledge and respect women's views by being more approachable, leaving space and time for her to speak, listening to her such that she felt heard, actively asking for her opinion.

Fundamentally this required that men thought before speaking, a shift contingent both on recognising the power they had previously assumed and choosing not to use it.

I think she feels perhaps more comfortable being able to respond back to me [...] at the programme we talk about the pyramid of power, whereas I was probably sitting at the top, and now things are a bit more equal [...] [Partner] hopefully feels that push back now, without me going off the handle and getting abusive (Bart⁵, Time 2).

ENGAGEMENT WITH DISAGREEMENTS

Once interaction was established in which mode both women and children became anxious about disagreements, which in turn meant that problems and issues were less likely to be voiced explicitly. Many men had also developed an array of strategies to avoid challenge: silence; postponing conversations; walking away; giving minimal responses; hiding issues from her or lying; inattention and distraction). It was in such situations that women commonly reported feeling like they were 'walking on eggshells', anxious about raising issues, sensing they should stay out of his way or simply agree with him all - of which required them to put on an inauthentic emotional front for 'an easy life'. One outcome was that many men and women used social media, mobile phones or third parties (i.e. family and friends) to vent and communicate their feelings.

5. All research participants have been assigned pseudonyms.

Just constantly on edge because he was like a ticking time-bomb, he could just... the slightest little thing he would fly off the handle so... I never felt totally relaxed and comfortable. A lot of the time I was frightened to even open my mouth to say 'It's sunny outside' or just something normal... frightened to say it because he could have kicked a table or put a hole in the wall or something (Hilary, Time 2).

Positive steps here involved the both the acknowledgement of and engagement with disagreements. This could involve behaviours such as making face-to-face talk and discussion part of everyday routine, talking about an issue or problem as soon as possible thereby avoiding the build-up of resentment, and developing the ability to talk honestly and openly about feelings and difficult or contentious issues.

He talks more... like if there's a problem sort of thing he talks more about it now... before he wouldn't, he'd just keep things to himself and that big argument I think it all just blew up sort of thing with him keeping things in but... he doesn't now... we talk if he's got something on his mind (Anya, Time 2).

Whilst not all men made these shifts, where they had women attributed these changes to the DVPP, that the group process had not just made them aware of how they had used communication to dominate but also ways that they might behave differently.

DE-ESCALATION

The ever present potential for escalation led to avoidance of disagreement; a heartfelt wish to be able to have an ordinary 'healthy' or 'fair' argument was strongly articulated by women in the pilot study. The qualitative interviews in this study showed that escalation could involve: the use of voice (both volume and tone); negative self talk ('winding himself up'); derogatory insults, names and put downs; intimidating body language (stance, gestures, looks, getting 'in her face'); drawing an argument out ('going on and on'). Positive change for this step involved men speaking quietly, taking a step back, thinking about how their partner or ex-partner may perceive their words and actions, being aware of how they had used their body and voice to intimidate. It was here that some techniques learnt on the DVPP might be used, such as positive self-talk and 'Time Outs'.

It's like recognising the volcano and the feelings and emotions that build up to like an explosion so you're not getting up to a certain level, you're keeping yourself down low, you're not allowing yourself to get up to the higher points where you would explode... When the argument is starting to get a little bit heated, she can get a bit scared because she knows what could happen, but that's when we sort of bring in the other issue – safety factors I suppose where, you know, we're stopping it before it gets to that (Sebastian, Time 2).

NEGOTIATION OF SHARED INTERACTION RULES

This step was taken less often than some of the others, but involved explicit discussion and re-negotiation of the ways in which men had set the everyday interaction rules in the family and relationship. Here the man defines what counts as a significant problem or issue, when the argument is 'over', how it is argument is resolved. That his interaction rules were re-asserted counted as 'getting back to normal'.

Change here required negotiating shared ground-rules to manage communication that both parties were invested in, and where men made this step it often led to a reduction in the number, intensity and frequency of arguments. Everyday interactions were, instead, more likely to involve discussion, which in turn laid the foundations for the possibility of a 'healthy' or 'fair' argument. A number of key shifts enabled this. If separated that the man respected the woman's wishes about contact (i.e. no contact, to be civil, content focused only on child contact arrangements). If together, it involved the creation of shared agreements, rules and boundaries and a willingness to admit mistakes and manage his own emotions. A number of men recognised that this was an ongoing project.

It's not to say that okay, I've been on this course now I'm cured. It's a work in progress, it's not like a light switch that you can turn on and off... it's a thought pattern or a thought process which you need changing completely and it takes time to change it. (Damian, Time 2)

SUMMARY

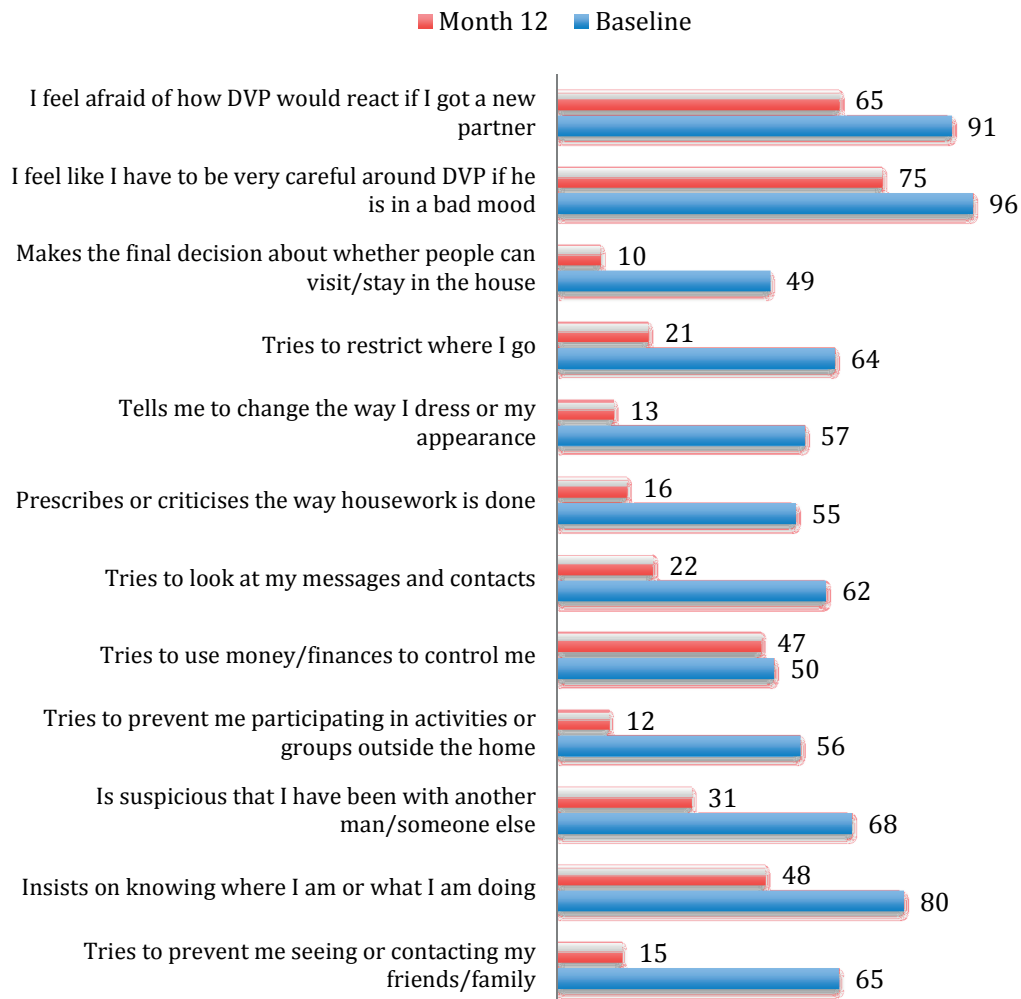
The tools learnt on a DVPP enabled some men to recognise the ways in which the controlled and dominated communication and for some to begin to change this. All of the movement here was in the right direction, apart from two women in the qualitative sample who assessed men as worse. That said, there was considerable room for greater change if women were to feel and become recognised, heard and respected in the relationship.

MEASURE TWO – EXPANDED 'SPACE FOR ACTION'

This measure draws explicitly on the understanding that safety is insufficient to undo the harms of abuse, women need to have the freedom restored that abuse restricts. The survey had 12 indicators to assess change on this measure - for partners/ex-partners to have an expanded 'space for action' which empowers through restoring their voice and ability to make choices, whilst improving their well-being. All indicators showed reductions from baseline to 12 months after starting the programme compared to before the programme (see Figure 2)⁶. However, this was marginal for some indicators – in particular for 'tries to use money/finances to control me' (reduction of only 3%). Other indicators did see sizeable reductions, but none saw a complete stop to the abusive behaviours.

6. Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 45 and 96. 12 month sample size ranges between 37 and 61.

Figure 2. Space for action (% yes)



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS – MEASURE 2

This measure of success is complex in so far as control was used in distinctive ways, connected to the intimate knowledge the perpetrator has about each woman. Coercive control includes the micro-regulation of gender in which women are censured for failing to perform the man’s expectation of ‘proper’ femininity (Stark 2007). The intent of setting the limits of women’s behaviour serves to limit her space for action (Kelly, 2013), and it is this narrowing which many women in the pilot study resented and railed against.

The steps to change were more varied here since they related to the arenas of which men had targeted which might include: appearance; emotional life; work and education; everyday household work and childcare;

relations with others; financial control; movement and contact with others. Change was analysed in the interview data across four overarching themes:

- everyday household work and childcare;
- relations with others;
- freedom of movement;
- emotional life.

EVERYDAY HOUSEHOLD WORK AND CHILDCARE

Women described at Time 1 a multitude of ways in which their partners engaged in the micro-regulation of everyday life. Adele, for example explained that she did not even attempt to attend toddler groups because of what his reaction might be to her meeting other people. Many men attempted to impose particular standards and ways of undertaking for housework (in the survey data more than half - 55% - of women said their partners proscribed or criticised the way that housework was done). There were connections here with freedom of movement, whereby men would check on or restrict women's movement to ensure they were appropriately engaged. Natalie described how she would go about her normal chores but these would be interrupted by 'maybe seven phone calls, 60 texts'.

At Time 2 most, but not all, women reported more freedom and less anxiety and fear. Such shifts, however, were not always attributed to changes that the men had made, but that women themselves had expanded the space in which they acted. Adele was adamant that it was she who had drawn a line that he knew not to cross.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

Isolation has long been identified as an outcome of the control that violent men exert and many women reported limited contact with friends – especially male friends - and outside activities. This could be because these were explicitly not permitted, but much more common was that women themselves restricted what they did and who they saw in order to avoid the reactions from their partners. Naomi, for example, talked of how humiliated she had felt when coerced to come home early from an evening out with friends in order to take her partner to the supermarket to buy food for his dinner. Whilst some women offered examples of resisting such control, they were reduced to lying about where they were. This was not possible for women who were subjected to intensive surveillance, including listening to phone calls and checking emails. Jealous surveillance was a common theme, with men

imagining any interaction with other men meant women were having affairs: Sophie, for example, was made to dress in a 'frumpy' manner if she went out, but was encouraged to dress in a 'sexy' manner for him at home.

At Time 2 change could be seen in the increased contacts many women had with friends and family, and some even complained that their partners pushed them to 'go out', when they did not necessarily want or feel able to.

I think in a point he gets frustrated with me because where I've sort of got so used to a degree of just being in and not doing anything and not mixing with people because I just thought I can't be doing with the arguments, now he's actually saying 'Well you need to meet up with your friends, you need to do this, you need to get out more'. And I'm sort of making the excuses now like 'Oh I can't be bothered' or 'I'll do it tomorrow' or something. But I think it's just because I've got so used to being in, it's almost like you become a hermit and you get anxieties and that and you don't even realise they are there (Jill, Time 2).

Jill then reports that she did meet a friend spontaneously for coffee that week, but caught herself thinking she had to get back to ensure the household work was all done.

Some men, however, continued to interfere with women's relations with others. Martha, who had separated from the man, reported at Time 2 that her ex-partner continued to turn up at family and community events 'causing commotion'.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The surveillance noted above mean that women were, at times, not even able to do the most basic things, such as shopping, without having to account for their time.

I had to go shopping with him because otherwise it would be timed – ‘how long you’ve been’, ‘Where’ve you been, been up to [nearby town]?’... I mean once we were decorating the bedroom and we ran out of paint. I went to [town] for some paint and I just called into Asda, it was his birthday the week after, it was the only opportunity that I had to get him something without him being there, ‘cause even calling home from work he knew what time I was due in from work and if I was five minutes late ‘Late aren’t you?’ So I called in, I pulled up the car on the front and he was sat on the wall with a cup of tea and he just looked like my Dad, you know, like I was twelve years of age and I’d come in late (Sophie, Time 1).

At Time 2 Sophie talked of being able to come and go as she pleased, see existing and make new friends, and was doing well in her career, changes that she attributed as much to her own changed perspective as differences in her partner. Other women reported being less able to take up the potential increased space, fearing that if they tested this abuse may result.

HEALTHY EMOTIONAL LIFE

That women were made to feel responsible for the emotional wellbeing of their partner took an immense toll of their energy and vitality, exacerbated if the man had issues with substance misuse history or health problem. Discourses of love and romance were used by men to claim women’s presence, time and energy.

Whilst a reduction in men’s violence and control created more emotional space, several women discussed uncertainty and hesitance about moving into it, whether they could trust that having input and care from others would be accepted.

I think I’ve still got that issue with pulling back all the time. But I think that’s more that’s probably more me - too scared to make that first step to see if you know that kind of dip your toe in the water to see how hot it is type thing from last time because there hasn’t been an occasion where I’ve been on a night out or I’ve been alone with me friends for a long amount of time ... So I think that’s something that I am going to have to take a step forward and see if our relationship can move on to that... and if I do go out, is he going to react in a normal way that every normal partner should react? (Jessica, Time 2).

Some women found that the more they did what they wanted – regardless of changes their partner was making - the easier it became over time and the stronger they felt in themselves.

He sulked. Like a kid. But I just let him get on with it, I thought, “Well no,” you know, just like my children, I’m not gonna respond to negative behaviour [...] And the more I done that, the more confident I got, and the more stronger I got, and – and sort of left his negative behaviour behind, and I moved forward in myself (Adele, Time 2).

SUMMARY

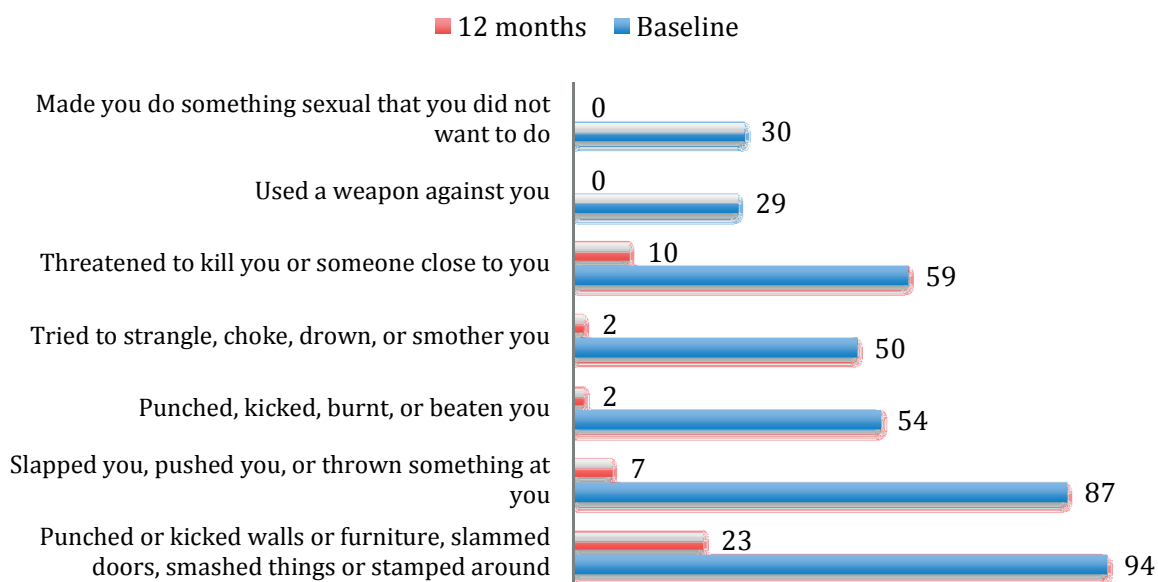
Both the quantitative and the qualitative data showed improvements in women’s space for action. However, the qualitative interviews revealed that women often related that change more to actions they personally had taken – for example ability to establish boundaries, confidence to make decisions. For some women, although the potential to broaden out space for action was potentially possible, they remained cautious about ‘testing’ this or felt anxious about doing things they had spent so long not doing.

MEASURE THREE – SAFETY AND FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The survey contained 18 indicators to assess change on this measure: all showed dramatic and significant reduction, particularly the case for the physical and sexual violence indicators.

Figure 3⁷ shows the change between baseline and 12 months after starting the programme for the seven physical and sexual violence indicators, with two reduced to zero (made you do something sexual that you did not want to do, used a weapon against you). Whilst there were repetitions for the other indicators they all reduced from a higher initial baseline: the most frequent still occurring - punched or kicked walls or furniture, slammed doors, smashed things or stamped – was present in almost a quarter of cases (23%), but had previously happened in nearly all cases (94%).

Figure 3. Physical and sexual violence (% yes)

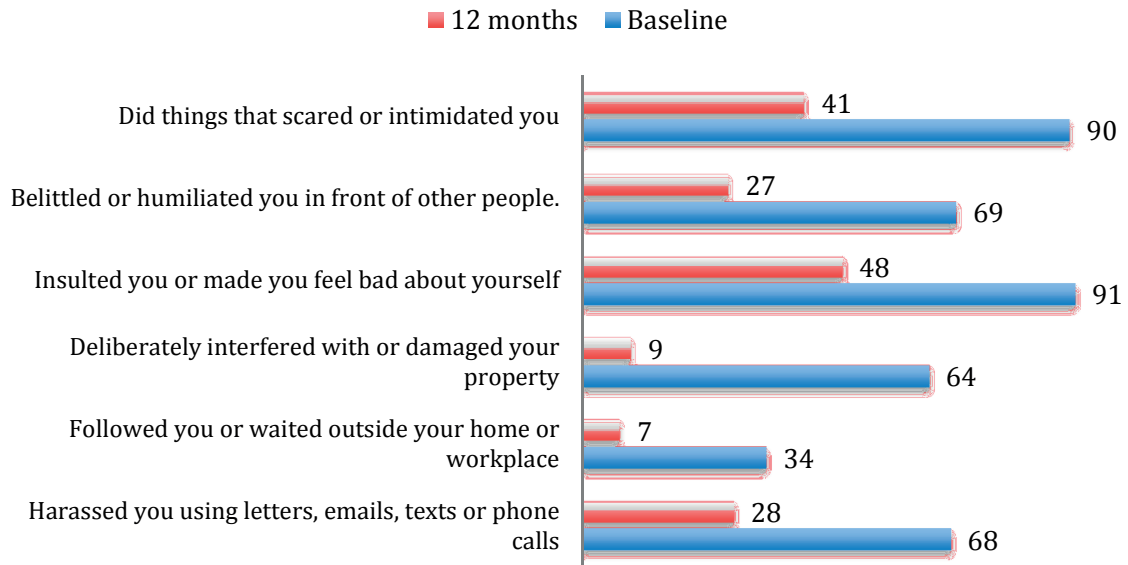


Women were also asked whether they were injured as a result of the violence and abuse, and whether the injury was serious enough to seek/need health care. At baseline, 61 per cent reported injury (sample size 99), of whom most (71%) had sought (or needed) health care: this reduced to just two per cent 12 months after starting a programme (sample size 52), none of whom sought health care.

The extent to which children saw/overheard violence also dropped substantially: from at baseline 80 per cent (12% once, 68% more than once – sample size 82) to eight per cent (all once – sample size 36).

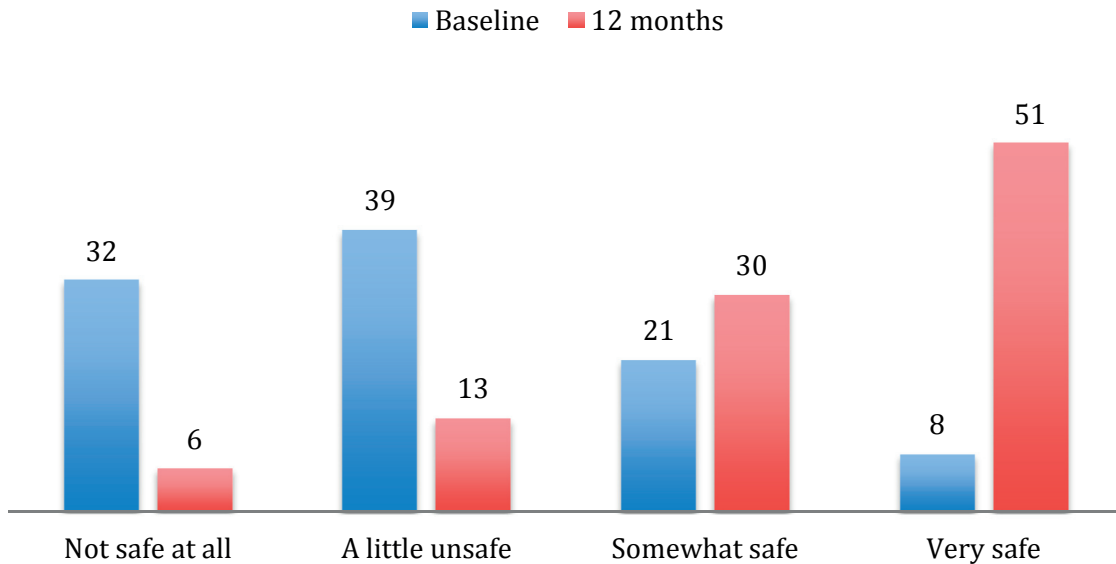
Figure 4⁸ shows that whilst harassment and other abusive acts also reduced significantly, some of these behaviours did continue for a proportion of women. The everyday diminishment that have been documented as part of coercive control - intimidation, belittling and humiliation, insults - were both more common at base line and more likely to persist. This data does not, however, support the oft made contention that DVPPs result in men shifting from physical violence to other forms of abuse, rather that these more frequent forms abuse, which are embedded in everyday interactions, are more difficult to change.

Figure 4. Harassment and other abusive acts (% yes)



Despite the continued harassment and abuse for some, far more women reported feeling safe by 12 months on: Figure 5 shows just over half reported feeling very safe by the 12-month point compared to less than one in ten at baseline (51% compared to 8%).

Figure 5. How safe do you feel? (%)



7. Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 94 and 97. 12 month sample size ranges between 61 and 62.

8. Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 96 and 97. 12 month sample size ranges between 62 and 67.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS - MEASURE THREE

Change was assessed in the qualitative data through six possible steps towards change.

- expanded understanding of violence;
- no/less violence;
- no/less abuse;
- doing his own emotion work;
- understanding and appropriate use of tools provided by DVPPs;
- applying learning to other contexts.

EXPANDED UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE

DVPPs undoubtedly change men's understanding of what violence is: their talk about violence talk at Time 1 tended to focus on what they termed 'the incident' and littered by self-excusing 'justs' and halting accounts of what they had done. At Time 2 this was replaced by more thoughtful recognition and reflection.

When I first spoke to you... I'd say 'It was only a push' but ... I've learnt a push is still violence... like it's not just me a lot of the others who go like 'Oh well I only push, I only pushed her to get out the door'. But I've learnt on the course a push is still like as bad as a punch or a slap or whatever. (Felix, Time 2)

How I am around her, what words I use, how I treat her, how my tone of voice is, how controlling I am. These little things that I thought were only little, they are huge but I never thought of that. I thought I was just doing what every other bloke did, ya know and it's just not. (Matthew, Time 2)

REDUCED VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Whilst some men were keen to stress that there had been no violence at all since being on the programme, a claim that most interviewed women supported, many were open and honest in admitting that there been occasions where they had 'slipped'. In a few cases this involved an assault, yet more often the examples reflected a greater ability to talk about violence and understand its dimensions.

... since I started the programme there was one occasion where I, I wasn't – I didn't mean to be violent – well, obviously that's a stupid thing to say. There was a situation where I was wanting to take a Time Out. She and I had lots of problems trying to get Time Outs organised – I didn't explain it to her clearly enough, or – I don't know, she didn't like – she didn't let me take them. And, there was one time where I said 'I need to take a Time Out' and she stood in front of me, in front of the door, telling me off or whatever she was doing, I can't specifically remember, trying to be heard. So I thought she was fully one side of the door and she wasn't, and I shut the door on her foot... so that's violent (Bary, Time 2).

Simon, on a simplistic binary yes/no measure of success, would be considered a failure, since he recalls three times when he has been abusive, but by his account this is 23 times less than before the DVPP and he reports attempts to take responsibility for his behaviour.

Three times over six months where it has been majorly aggressive or abusive, whereas before the course it was probably once a week... It's gone down and it was continuing to go down because instead of having an argument... even if she was angry or mad or something I would always try and use my techniques on myself, which was keep myself calm, try and talk and find out how she was feeling and approach it in a different way (Simon, Time 2).

Women's accounts, in the main, reflected reductions in violence and abuse.

I think there's been both – still quite a lot of verbal abuse, and at times, but much more seldom physical aggression. But I would say both of them have reduced, physical aggression especially (Alice, Time 2).

He's a massive improvement, it's just sometimes he can't quite stop himself before he gets angry. It's like a lot of the time he will be able to and it'll work but there's just some times that he still loses it (Frances, Time 2).

DOING HIS OWN EMOTION WORK

'Self talk' came up frequently in men's accounts. Whilst linked to thinking before they spoke or acted, this was also an exercise in reflexivity – in asking themselves questions about what might be going on for themselves and their partner. Here male entitlement – that their interpretation was right – was interrupted. The clearest example here was how many men at Time 2 shifted from the accusation that their partners 'wind them up' to recognising that this was what they were doing themselves. Being aware of, and taking responsibility for, their own emotional states was a reflection of programme content and impact.

Peter talks about failing to do this on one occasion, but in the process demonstrates what he knows he could and should have done.

So I went downstairs. And I sat downstairs, and instead of going 'Right, here's the Time Out now' I just started running over the injustice of it all, it's not fair, nrrh, and wound myself up, and had to go back upstairs and have more words (Peter, Time 2).

Sebastian shows that this shift enables him to not only talk about his feelings – something a number of women complained that men still failed to do – but to listen too.

We can talk till the cows come home about everything and now I'm more capable of talking about my own feelings and emotions, whereas [partner] always been able to do that, and now I'm listening a lot more (Sebastian, Time 2).

Where women stayed with men they noticed these changes.

In the beginning yes but as I said it's habit. It's a habit that he has had to un-learn over time but now that's all gone, it's all changed. I mean he does have his moments where he'll go off and sulk but then I'll confront him. I'll say to him 'Did I do something that irritated you?' or 'Did I do something you didn't like?' You need to tell me these things don't just walk away' and more often than not he says 'No I'm here because I'm angry at myself' (Delia, Time 2).

UNDERSTANDING AND APPROPRIATE USE OF TOOLS

There were many references to the concepts and tools men had learnt – with self talk (see above) and 'Time Out' being referred to most frequently. Taking a Time Out is perhaps the most recognised of the techniques (see Wistow et al., forthcoming). Many had also learnt to pay attention to their embodied emotions, to recognise when they were moving into the antecedents of abuse. The tools which are taught are forms of self-awareness, taking responsibility for the choices that are always part of using violence.

The breathing and the counting down from ten, definitely... I shut my eyes and count down from ten and then I just seem to calm down... Something so simple, I wish I could have done it years ago (Ken, Time 2).

Whilst the tools appear 'so simple', men did not adopt them until they had also changed their self-perception and recognised the impacts their behaviour had on other people, as Hazel illustrates.

There's only been two incidents that I can recall that he's been physically violent, where he's pushed me and not letting me get out the kitchen door. And when it is like that I'll back down and... and then I think he realises once he's done it, once he's pushed me... So he sort of stands back and he knows he's overstepped a mark, whereas before he started the course he wouldn't know that he'd overstepped that mark, it's a massive difference. And then he will take himself out. On those two occasions I didn't even say Time Out he said 'I need a Time Out, I'm going' and gone (Hazel, Time 2).

APPLYING LESSONS TO OTHER CONTEXTS

Fewer men made this step, but the contexts they did it in were primarily in work contexts or in their relationships with other men. There were several who had used violence repeatedly in many contexts, for whom it had been 'a way of life'. That the DVPP had interrupted this is a significant achievement.

I've seen people on the course and they will get abusive or angry and I look at their face and you can see it in their face and it's not nice. I reflect on that, I look at them and then I look at myself... It's cementing the change because I don't want to be like that again. I don't want to be at work and start bawling and shouting and calling someone a fucking idiot because they are telling me what to do and start getting aggressive. I don't mean like punching their face in but they must be scared because of the way my face goes, the way I must look, it's horrible (Dexter, Time 2).

To be fair, the longer I've been on the course... the more knowledge that I've gathered and gained on how I was and how I reacted... So I'm basically eradicating it slowly if you know what I mean? A couple of months ago somebody knocked my wing-mirror off while [partner was in the car and, maybe last year I would have reacted, I would have stopped the car, made a u-turn and chased this person who knocked my wing-mirror off. But the first thing I thought of was 'Is she okay?', the first thing I thought was our safety and I thought 'Well everything's fine, it's okay, it's just a wing-mirror that's replaceable' and [partner] was surprised of that... she did notice the change in me (Ivan, Time 1).

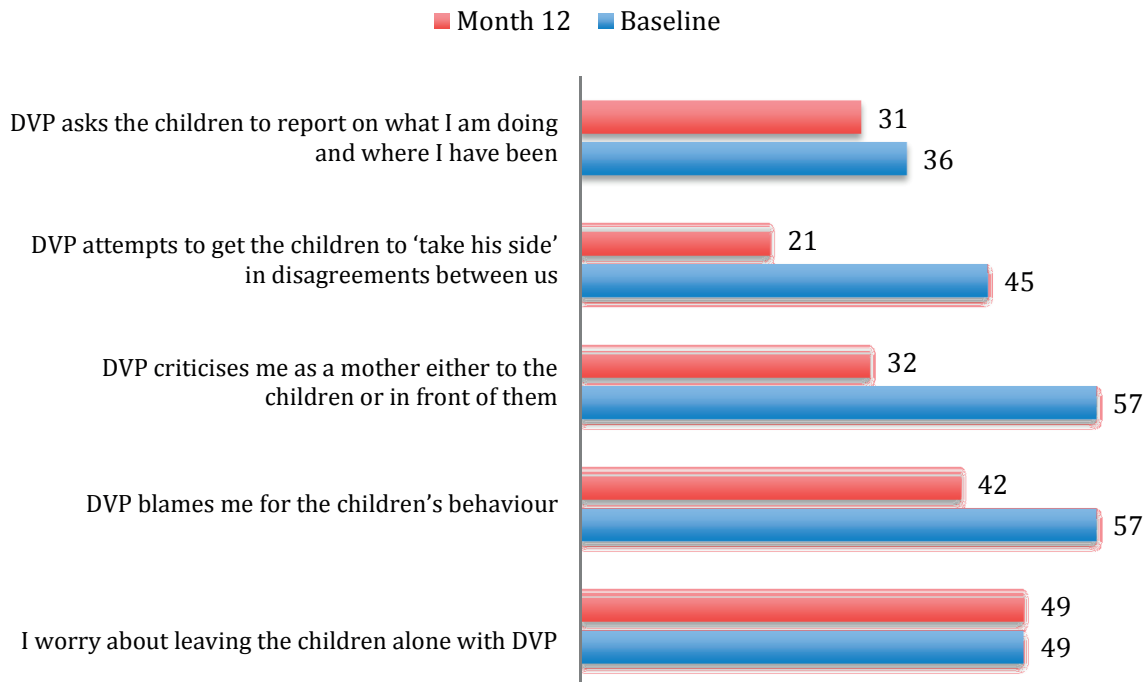
SUMMARY

In terms of violence and abuse the survey data showed large decreases in violence, with smaller but still significant decreases in abuse. Women and men's accounts in the in depth interviews were very different at Time 1, with women able to give detailed accounts of violence, and men's halting and equivocal. At Time 2 men were far less likely to talk in terms of 'the incident' or use 'just' as a qualifier. Interestingly they were also more likely to report incidents of violence and abuse whilst on the programme than some of the women, reflecting their expanded understandings. That said, the majority of women and men interviewed reported no physical violence at Time 2, echoing the survey findings, and where violence had occurred it was rated less frequent and/or less serious. The reduction in abuse was less consistent, but even here there was a marked reduction in frequency for most. Whilst three women did assess men's abusive behaviour as worse, the oft quoted contention that DVPPs make men more manipulative abusers was not supported.

MEASURE 4 - SHARED PARENTING

The survey contained five indicators to assess change on this measure – safe, positive and shared parenting. All showed at least minimal improvements at 12 months after starting the programme (see Figure 6⁹). However, the change was minimal for some measures – especially women worrying about leaving children alone with the man. Other indicators – for example ‘DVP attempts to get the children to ‘take his side’ in disagreements between us’ reduced much more (from 45% at baseline compared with 21% at 12 months).

Figure 6. Fathering (% yes)



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS - MEASURE FOUR

The potential steps towards change analysed here were:

- parenting style changed/improved ;
- more attention to and communication with children;
- more time playing with children;
- increased awareness of children's fears and anxiety.

Men being able to demonstrate change for this measure was complicated by the fact that more than half of the Time 2 sample (n=20 of 36) had not had contact with children whilst they were on the programme or had limited contact. It is only possible to change parenting if one is engaged in it, thus only men who had contact

with children could demonstrate the first three steps. This question also revealed the complexities of the lives of women, men and children: ten of the men and eight of the women were living in melded families; some men and a few women had serious issues with drugs and/or alcohol and/or mental health issues. A number also had complex family histories including child abuse and witnessing abuse of their mothers. All had implications for their parenting. Some men were seen as always being good fathers by women, others were deemed 'part time' or 'absent' and still others as disciplinarians.

9. Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 61 and 76. 12 month sample size ranges between 35 and 47.

PARENTING STYLE HAS IMPROVED

There was a marked difference between the men who saw themselves as a good parent at Time 1 and those who at Time 2 who could talk about how they had changed their perspective.

I think I'm a better parent because I'm more understanding of how it can go wrong and how the abuse can affect everything ... I can't change what happened in the past, that happened and everyone that was involved in it must be hurt by it, I can only change the future... to be there to support and encourage my daughter... sure they [other abusive men] would be a better parent by being on this programme because you see the impact and I see the heartbreak (Kieran, Time 2).

MORE ATTENTION TO AND COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN, MORE TIME PLAYING

Accounts from women and men suggest that these two steps tended to overlap and are therefore presented here together. A number of men had to learn to play and communicate in order to spend time with children, learning to be with them, take their cues from a child.

I was always working, never really there. When I was there I was sleeping, or having a beer. Didn't really get involved, never sat on the floor with him, played with him (Ryan, Time 1).

Some recognised that they had sought to control children in the past, and a number spoke of the enjoyment that stopping this had brought, albeit tempered for some by the limits of contact.

I'm certainly more patient, more caring, considerate... more about play, his feelings, more about him. You can do that cleverly through the techniques that I used of letting them think that they make decisions, giving them choices as children rather than saying 'You are doing this' giving them choices, clever ways to help them make the choices but you are not saying 'You're doing this, you're doing it because I am the boss and while your living with me' (Brendan, Time 2).

Listening to children, paying attention to them - fundamental prerequisites of engaged parenting - was also something a number of men had learnt to do.

That I've changed would be the fact that I never used to listen. I used to give it the noddy dog head, 'Alright no problems.' I never listened... all the time... now I do... They could be telling me they'd just got a really high level on their Angry Birds game. It could be nothing, it's nothing to me, but it's them and their self-achievement, and for the sake of a minute then it makes to them all the difference... my little boy used to always have to do 'Daddy I'm talking to you' put his hands on my face and turn me round (Dominic, Time 2).

INCREASED AWARENESS OF CHILDREN'S FEARS AND ANXIETY

At Time 1 many men sought to minimise the impact of their behaviour on children, and assumed a position of having been the provider and protector in the family. At Time 2, some had considerably more awareness about the fears and anxiety that their children may hold, and how they needed to take responsibility for recognising and addressing this.

When I call him up and I'm having a chat to him, I think how it's going to affect him and how it's gonna make him feel, as opposed to just cracking on with it regardless... I think the programme's just a case of making you - like how your actions impact on others and how they perceive it, and putting yourself in their shoes and being understanding of how they feel and their needs as well, as opposed to just being narcissistic and just caring about yourself and everything revolves around you, which it doesn't, you know, there's other people out there. (Rowan, Time 2)

SUMMARY

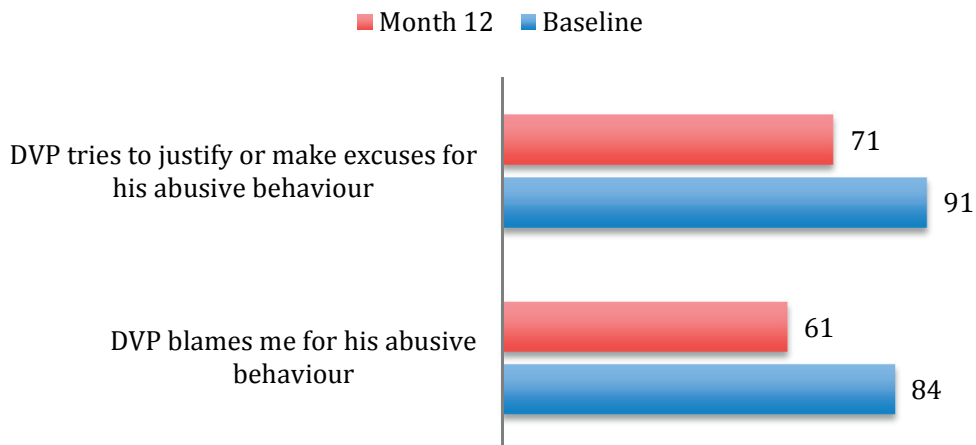
Whilst more difficult to assess than other measures for some of the men, specifically those who had no or limited child contact, there were changes in positive directions here. They were predicated on men understanding the impacts of their behaviour on children and many noted how powerful sessions were when they were asked to put themselves in the position of children living with domestic violence. That CAFCASS require men to complete a DVPP programme before considering contact raises a conundrum – that they are not able to explore new ways of fathering whilst exploring these issues within group work.

MEASURE FIVE – AWARENESS OF SELF AND OTHERS

The survey included six indicators to assess change on this measure – enhanced awareness of self and others for men on programmes, including an understanding of the impact that domestic violence has had on their partner and children.

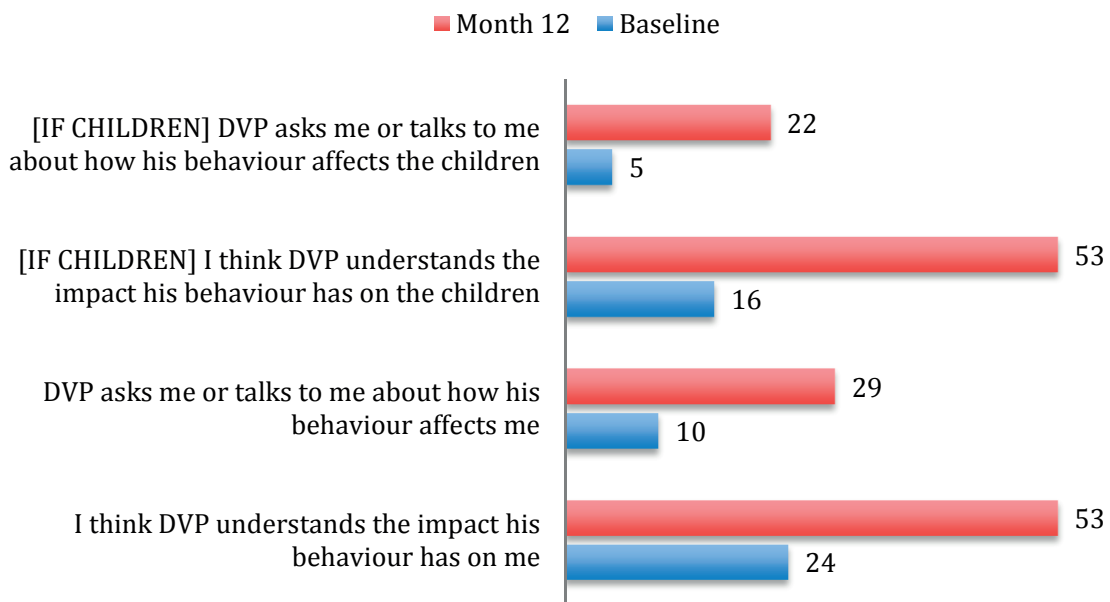
Again, all indicators showed improvements as reported by the women (ex)partners of the men 12 months after he started the programme. Two Figures (7 and 8¹⁰) are presented here, since for some indicators an increase represents improvement and for others decreases do. Both are women’s perceptions whether the man had increased awareness of self and other, although the extent to which men seek to find out how others are feeling is a measure of their behaviour. Although Figure 8 shows a decrease in men excusing their behaviour or blaming women, these still remain strong at 12 months after beginning on the DVPP, suggesting more work remains to be done on men taking responsibility for their behaviour.

Figure 7. awareness of self and others (% yes - decrease represents improvement)



10. Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 77 and 94. 12 month sample size ranges between 47 and 62.

Figure 8. awareness of self and others (% yes - increase represents improvement)



The data in Figure 8 are more positive, with stronger increases in perceived understandings of how their behaviours affect women and others around him.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS – MEASURE FIVE

That men minimise and deflect responsibility for their practices has been a consistent finding in research (Dobash et al 2000, Hearn, 1998).

Such deflections were present in some Time 1 interviews with men, and a strong theme in women’s Time 1 accounts. The steps towards analysed here were:

less ‘all about him’;

- made a felt apology;
- aware of the ripples out and disruptions of lives;
- aware that it affects how other see and respond to him.

LESS 'ALL ABOUT HIM'

Some men were aware of the impact of their actions at Time 1, but either did not care (more likely where drugs/alcohol/CAFCASS involved) or rationalised it through notions of male privilege.

*I thought I was infallible, till then (Justin, Time 2).
The thing is I didn't care. I had no empathy with her, I couldn't give a shit how she felt, it wasn't my problem as far as I was concerned (Todd, Time 2).*

Never even crossed my mind that (sighs) – the impact of my behaviour and the effect it has on other people, because again I always had this thought that king of the castle type person. And it never really crossed my mind until now... I was probably aware of it in the back of my head somewhere, but chose to ignore it (Sebastian, Time 2).

Some men were aware of the impact of their actions at Time 1, but either did not care (more likely where drugs/alcohol/CAFCASS involved) or rationalised it through notions of male privilege.

Women were more likely to say that men were unaware that their behaviour was a problem for others.

I don't think he was aware at all... it was all about him, him, him (Adele, Time 1)

He's incredibly self-centred, it's all about him (Elaine Time 1)

I don't even think he did. The taking over with the cooking and stuff, he thought he was being helpful. Not controlling. I don't think he acknowledged the fact of making me feel about this big. I think he thought that he was just having his opinion, and that I wouldn't be affected by his opinion, that I wouldn't feel bad and I wouldn't feel affected. (Grace, Time 1)

I say that completely genuinely and I wholeheartedly believe that he never thought that he was doing anything wrong (Holly, Time 1)

'It's all about me/him' was a shared theme in both men's and women's interviews, alongside notions of entitlement and as in Grace's account that men's critique's of women's inadequacies were simply helpful guidance.

There was less consistent and depth change here than in some of the steps discussed to date, especially for the women, and two reported that their partners were worse. Whilst most had stopped using violence, their awareness of what they had done and most importantly willingness to act on this in more holistic way was still missing: it was still all about them.

I feel it's hurt me more than anybody, to be honest. (Gregory, Time 1) ... she has no idea what pain that causes in me, mentally, it's – it's tremendous. It's very hurtful, for me, knowing that I've done it, but somebody reminding you about it, she has no idea what pain that causes for me (Gregory, Time 2).

On the more positive side some men and some women reported significant changes, particularly when men had previously positioned themselves as infallible. Examples were offered of the depth of feeling evident when the man 'got it' at a DVPP session. A small number of men had made themselves accountable to a wider group of friends and family by admitting both what they had done and its impacts on others.

... you surround them by a wall of deceit, lies and control, don't you, it's only till somebody's opened that door that they step out of that and realise, you know, it's not all in their head (Bart, Time 1).

Reading reports you see the effects that you've had. You read them and it's not nice, it's hard, it's hard not to get upset about it, you do get upset about it but it's hard to try and say 'Right I'm trying to put things right, I acknowledge what I've done' but also work towards becoming a better person, husband, dad or whatever it maybe. I see it really is everybody that's affected. At the beginning you think it's just you, [son] and [partner] that is affected but it's not it affects everybody... I'm aware of other people's needs and I'm aware of how important they are and it's not just what I want it's what they want, seeing things from other peoples perspective and points of view massively more. I realise it's not all about me (Brendan, Time 2).

Then he started owning up to everything that he had done and he was shocked at how bad he had been in the emotional sense and the sexual sense and he actually faced himself and he said to me 'oh my god I can't believe I was a monster' ... He's gone from night to day literally, he has changed and being on the programme it's bringing up a lot of stuff that he has not been able to face up to... it's huge, I can't explain how huge the changes are (Delia, Time 1).

It just makes me feel safer because he's recognising things when he comes back from the group. And he's in a different manner when he comes home (Jessica, Time 2).

Like just the way you talk back to somebody or the tone of voice you use. It might not seem big to us but it can seem quite big to them [children] (Lola, Time 2).

Here again we see changes that might be considered 'small', insignificant, compared to the usual measure of ending physical violence, but that to women and children the tone of voice, sense that what you feel matters were crucial steps to change.

A FELT APOLOGY

For a number of women having a felt apology – which was qualitatively different from the momentary one which men acknowledged having made in the past – mattered.

I can say sorry one minute and then take it back the minute after. (Dexter, Time 1).

The thing is with him he's always so apologetic. Like 'sorry' just falls off the tongue (Frances, Time 1)

For those men willing to countenance this it was often when they were emotionally jolted by certain aspects of the programme which led them to recognise the enormity of what others, and by implication themselves, had done. It was a minority of men who were able to make this step in ways that deemed authentic and meaningful to women. Indeed several women whose ex- partners had been required by CAFCASS to apologise to children pondered why the men had not considered that they too deserved one. We see this as a practice challenge for DVPPs and CAFCASS.

AWARE OF THE RIPPLES OUT AND DISRUPTIONS OF LIVES

For a small number of men their awareness in this sense was on an instrumental level, due to having been arrested and charged. A larger group they had reflected on the ways in which their actions rippled out into wider groups.

It impacts everyone... like we did a ripple effect thing on one of the nights. It was just like circles and you do the ripples and we were writing down who you thought was affected by it... like neighbours... obviously the person that you were being abusive to... kids, your parents, your family (Max, Time 2).

So it affects a lot of – from – from work, the family to friends, [partner's] friends, even people overseas (Owen, Time 2).

This is another example of how the exercises developed by DVPPs, and the fact that they are done in a group context can facilitate awareness and through this the possibility of change.

AWARENESS OF HOW IT CHANGED HOW OTHERS SAW AND RESPONDED TO HIM

For a number of men the ways that others did – or might – see them if they knew about the violence was also a point of potential transition.

Right at the beginning I knew it had affected others - and when I couldn't see the children I knew it affected others, and when I spent a day in a police station I knew it had affected others, and when I saw my name on the front page of the local papers I knew it had affected others - when I've seen good friends of mine turn their back on me I know it had affected others... I think it makes people feel uncomfortable and makes them not like me to the same degree, and it blocks off a load of communication, a load of relaxed feelings, it makes my life more difficult and less fulfilling, and their lives – they just think less of me. Don't necessarily wanna be around me (Barry, Time 2).

I'd say with this course we did think about a lot of things. Even my staff are happier so something must be right (Dominic, Time 2).

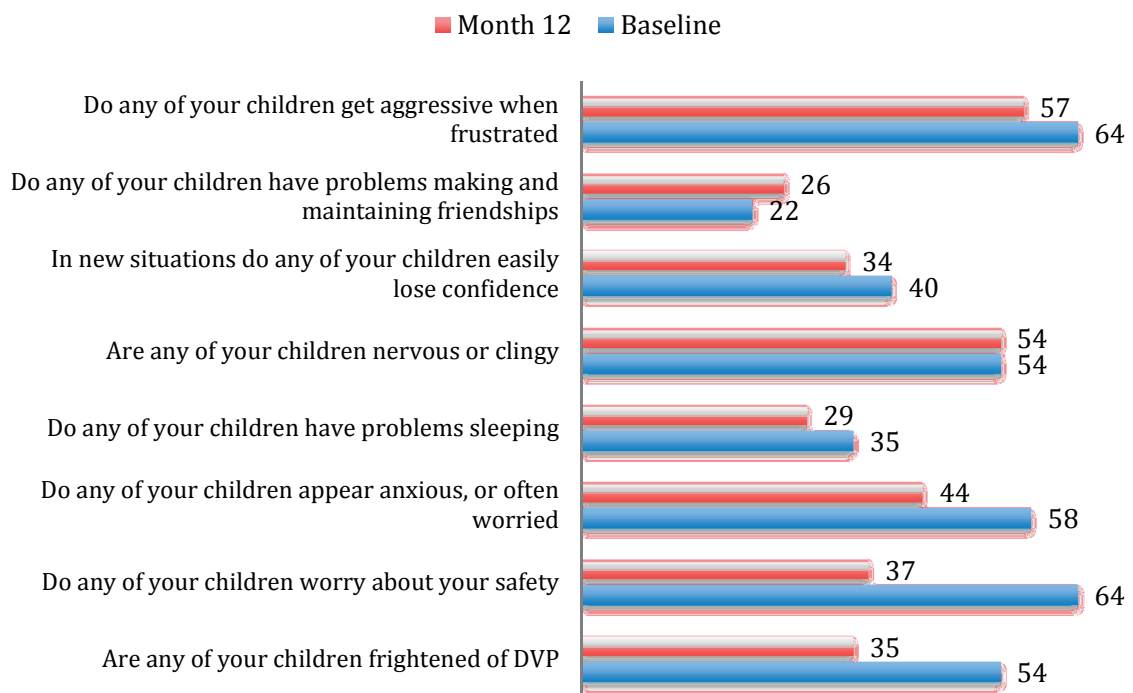
I think he sort of realises why people are the way they are with him now because obviously he did part of that in the course of, you know, 'Every Action has a Consequence'. So he is sort of aware of how his behaviour has affected people. Although sometimes he does resort back to his arrogance and that and I'm like 'Really?' (Jill, Time 2)

It is one thing to take part in an exercise which makes consequences visible; the step to change was to take responsibility for this, and want it to be otherwise. Interestingly, very few men had had open and honest conversations with others in their wider circles about being on the DVPP.

MEASURE SIX – SAFER, HEALTHIER CHILDHOODS

The survey had eight indicators to assess change on this measure - for children, safer, healthier childhoods in which they feel heard and cared about. All but two showed improvements and change was minimal for several. The indicator where children were faring worse was ‘do any of your children have problems making and maintain friendships (increased from 22% at baseline to 26% 12 months on). Greater improvements were seen in the decrease in children worrying about their mother’s safety and being frightened of the perpetrator (see Figure 9¹¹). All of these findings suggest that impacts on children of living with domestic violence can be long lasting.

Figure 9. Safer, healthier childhoods (% - yes)



11. Baseline sample size for these indicators ranges between 77 and 82. 12 month sample size ranges between 51 and 56.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS – MEASURE SIX

It was more possible to establish steps to change here which were possible regardless of the extent of contact with children, albeit that contact was more likely to facilitate changed perspectives and practices. The steps analysed were:

- recognition that children were affected regardless of age;
- recognition of the climate of fear that children were living in;
- responding to children's needs;
- awareness of how they had controlled children.

A caveat is important here – drawing on women's accounts with respect to men's attitudes to and practices of fatherhood was problematic, because of the issues outlined at the beginning of this section: some of their ex-partners had not seen the children for several years, or were the subject of more recent no/limited contact orders. Women were, therefore, more likely than men to report no or very limited changes in whether childhoods were safer and healthier. In a number of cases all women knew was from CAFCASS reports, which were seen as giving minimal reassurance as to his capacity to be a safe and thoughtful parent. This meant it was often not possible for women to respond to the research questions which required discussing a particular example in which men's behaviour was the same or different.

RECOGNITION THAT CHILDREN WERE AFFECTED REGARDLESS OF AGE

Some men at Time 2 showed an enhanced awareness of what living with abuse can mean for children, even babies.

I think through the programme I learnt the fact that [son] didn't have to be in the same room. He didn't probably have to be in the same house (Brendan, Time 2). That it doesn't matter how old the bairn is really... when there's arguing it doesn't matter whether their asleep or not they are still going to hear it and it's still going to... it's definitely going to affect them (Desmond, Time 2).

That the child had been a baby continued to be a point of disavowal of harm for a few men.

She's not affected now and obviously she's too young to remember what's happened previously. She's not had any effects, no (Max, Time 2).

That this was used as an excuse was a frustration to many women. Programme content, therefore, encouraged and enabled some men to recognise that it was the atmosphere of tension and anxiety which matter, not just whether children witnessed or heard abuse, but the status of 'baby' continued to be a block for many, and frequency and form of abuse for others.

Well if she had never ever seen it, she might have heard it and I'm not sure that she did hear it but I never ever argued physically in front of her... but if I was shouting and bawling at her mam and she heard, she must have thought 'God why is my dad shouting and bawling, why is he going mad at my mam?' ... It wasn't every single day or every hour or something; it was just once or twice. I've never seen a change in her at all (Ken, Time 2).

RECOGNITION OF THE CLIMATE OF FEAR THAT CHILDREN WERE LIVING IN

Stewart was the only man at Time 1 to use a phrase that came up often in women's accounts - 'treading on eggshells' – indicating that he understood the fact that abuse creates a climate within households which is always present .

Of course it would have an impact. I expect they felt like they was treading on eggshells, not quite sure what was coming up next, shall we say. And like I say I just didn't give a crap at the time. But of course it impacted on them (Stewart, Time 1).

By Time 2, more men were recognising this climate of fear that their behaviour created.

They would have been really, really confused. They would have been scared. They would have been angry. They would have been thinking what's coming next, what's gonna happen? There would have been a lot of that (Dominic, Time 2).

Women had much more extensive commentaries on the impacts on children living with fear and anxiety.

At school. Emotionally, physically, my daughter weren't sleeping nights, she'd wet beds. Her education at school was really, really poor, she's not learning, she's really, really behind. She rebelled at home – you could just see, she looked withdrawn, and she always looked ill and pale... it got to a point where she was just doing her own thing... it really badly affected my little girl. I think it affected her more because she lived with us, she was there constantly. My other two, again, behaviour problems. Withdrawal, my daughter used to get out the house whenever she can, she never was – never was in, so I never get to see her really... I'd have them crying on me, and they'd be round me, sort of saying, "Protect me!" and [daughter] used to ring the police as well, my eldest, she used to get so frightened that she would just ring me... you could just see the fear in their faces, you could see, and ... I think they more disappeared, sort of got out of the way and shut doors. (Adele, Time 2)

What we see here are layers of response, most of which none of the men referred to at all: that children sought protection; phoned the police and withdrew from being around them. Adele was also more outspoken about what enabling her children to feel and be safe now required.

I don't think they've ever felt safe, I don't believe a child will ever feel safe in violence, but I think they get more relief when the arguments are over ... But now, now, I'd say they feel safe. They're reassured and they know that I've told them, I said, "You always come first, I will never, ever put a man before you again, and I will always choose you." And they know that. And they know what, the rules are as well. I told them. Ever lays a finger on me, or – or you, or damages the flat, I said, then he's out. There's no more second chances. This is it. (Adele, Time 2)

RESPONDING TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Men who were more willing to accept responsibility were also more likely to reflect on having been selfish in the past, to have not taken the needs of children as children into account. In the aftermath of living with abuse these needs included accepting that children might be anxious and fearful.

... he [son] is a bit frightened of me... He's a bit – a bit distant from me... I just give him – I just give him a lot more – a lot more attention than what I used to give him... Obviously his needs come first, not my needs (Fred, Time 2).

I think you've just got to be aware that he can be affected and just make sure it doesn't happen in the future. Just let him know that he's loved and mummy and daddy are alright kinda thing (Todd, Time 2).

AWARENESS OF HOW THEY CONTROLLED CHILDREN

Far fewer men took the step of admitting that they had been controlling children – through their moods, behaviour and unrealistic expectations. This was often couched in references to being 'stubborn', 'arrogant' and Barry makes an explicit link to masculinity: 'overly traditional in my male opinion'. His account reveals that control is intended force others to accept your version of events, rules, expectations.

It's less arrogant. I mean what I just said just now, about learning things from experience, I had a sort of more old fashioned, obstinate... I was just overly arrogant... overly traditional in my male opinion – that it was OK to be like that... Obstinate confident?... And that's effectively what control is, it's forcing your own opinion upon others. Your own expectation of behaviour, wants, needs, on others (Barry, Time 2).

I think a lot – I think the key to a lot of the impact was that I was stubborn, and I was controlling (Fred, Time 2).

Some control happened through the performances of dominance which taught children to disrespect their mother. A minority of men saw that changes were needed were not just in themselves, but also work with children to undo this.

That they don't forget. They don't forget, and now they're thinking that it's okay to scream and shout at their Mam... So I'm now going through the same learning curve with my little man as I went through quite recently. So I think they've got to remember that you can't do that, you can't do that, you've got to speak with respect to people, and you'll get it back (Dominic, Time 2).

If he is looking up to me as a father figure then he sees me telling his mum to eff off he'll think daddy does it that's fine and that's just not fine for a young child to watch and grow up like because that's what he will end up doing 'cause he'll think 'that's my great daddy so it's alright for me to do it as well' (Matthew, Time 2).

Here men were recognising that they had used an abusive masculinity with their children, which involved devaluing and disrespecting their partner, the children's mother.

SUMMARY

The expanded concept of violence which DVPPs enable in men extended, for the most part, to understandings of how children are affected. Change here was less strong, however, than for some of the other measures signalling the potential for practice developments in DVPPs.

HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

The in depth interviews gave us a number of insights into how change happens for some men. There are some accounts of DVPPs which suggest that at a certain point men experience a 'light bulb' moment, when they 'get it'. We reflected this in one of our questions, but few men thought that this was an accurate representation. Nor does it fit with our measures of success, since they require layers of new understandings, reflection and translation into behaviour. Change is better understood as a series of sparks, different for each man, and not all of which are activated. Kieran offered an image/metaphor that represents change as a non-linear process which took time.

I don't think there was a moment... during the programme they all say like the penny drops, as it were, all of a sudden this light-bulb moment and there never is... it's like a little fairground machine where you put a coin in and it bounces off various little pegs and it's only working its way to the bottom. The programme is like that... I know that I will be remembering it when I'm in my 70s and my 80s... But it's never like this light-bulb moment. I always say it's like this little coin that you drop in and it bounces around for ages and it sort of argues with yourself and all of a sudden dink it's in the bottom before you know it (Kieran, Time 2).

Whilst the penny is bouncing around and men are 'arguing with themselves', techniques such as 'Time Out' (see Wistow et al, forthcoming), counting to ten and 'positive self-talk' were important – they provided simple methods through which men could interrupt embodied patterns of abuse. Whilst we did document examples of misuse of these, many more men attempted to use the techniques as taught on the programme. Of particular interest is positive self-talk, since it functions to encourage men to think about, analyse and be responsible for their own emotional states. It is this strategy that enabled a number of them to admit at Time 2 that it was not women who 'wound them up' but an internal process within themselves. Those who took on board the DVPP messages were then able to see in themselves, and others, that it was possible to wind themselves down, or not get to that pitch in the first place.

TROUBLING ABOUT GENDER

One of the current contentions in the UK is whether a focus on gender in perpetrator work is 'ideological' and 'inflexible' (see Archer et al., 2012; Debonnaire and Todd, 2012). These arguments tend to draw on simplistic notions of gender – that not all perpetrators are male and not all victims female. Contemporary gender theory is far more sophisticated, exploring how we embody and 'do' gender in our everyday activities and social relations. This type of gender theory sits underneath Evan Stark's (2007) concept of coercive control, and Eva Lundgren (2004) argues that men are creating a particular masculinity through their use of violence whilst attempting to enforce their view of what a woman should be. Both suggest that tensions about how men and women should be in a heterosexual relationship and as parents sit at the heart of much violence and abuse. The data in our measures of success and the reflections of women and men support this perspective.

Women and men were asked in the Time 1 interview to reflect on how gender shaped their lives: the question 'what does it mean to you to be a wo/man?' was, however, often met with bewilderment and uncertainty. Many said they had never been asked about, or explicitly thought about, this before. There was more ease exploring the concept of equality: here a broad consensus emerged in which gender inequality was considered a thing of the past. At this surface level most articulated a belief in gender equality and individual freedom, but at a deeper level concepts of gender operated much more subtly through taken-for-granted ways of being within the routines of everyday life. For men the key attributes they identified reflected a traditional masculinity: being a protector, a provider and a father who was the legitimate head of the family.

I believe what's expected of a man is that he's supposed to be masculine, take care of his family, protect his family (Roger, Time 1).

This notion that men were responsible for security and safety in families was echoed in many women's accounts.

I expected him to have a typical role as a man like to treat his kids nicely and just to keep us secure and safe, I think that's the one thing that I wanted from him (Gina, Time 1).

For a number of men this fed into a sense that they should, and did, 'know best' what was good for the family, the standards by which they lived, which simultaneously positioned women as deficient or in need of 'help' or 'guidance'. The notion of provider served to legitimise a sense of entitlement to decide on relationship and parenting norms. It was women challenging and contesting these unwritten rules which sat at the heart of men's perceived need to control, which when manifested through violence and abuse destroyed the very safety and security they were supposed to ensure.

Several men, at Time 1, were able to reflect on the limitations of traditional models of masculinity – that to appear strong, rational and in control of his family life led to a life of isolation and an inability to admit mistakes to others.

Because particularly as a man you do feel isolated... there is this perception that you can't talk about your emotions. As a woman you could perhaps sit in a pub or a bar or a restaurant and have a good cry with your friends about something... as a man you perhaps would feel a bit silly, or judged if you sat there and broke down in tears, and said this is going on or that's going wrong (Kieran, Time 1).

DVPPs are, therefore, working with these taken for norms and models of masculinity and the ways they play out in the lives of individual men.

The most common way in which interviewees (both men and women) spoke about being a woman emphasised a core responsibility to nurture the family, partner and domestic space. This required women to identify primarily as a partner and/or mother and perform a relational and care-focused femininity: undertaking emotional work and domestic labour to ensure family harmony.

I just wanted her to be basically – a mother to my son and then like stay at home, do the house tidying, do the shopping, and then basically – basically like look after me (Fred, Time 1).

I know in my relationship I was seen as a lower class of person, and I was expected to do the housework and have that role of... domesticated. And I think in that relationship I did believe that I should be like that (Lily, Time 1).

Despite disclaimers that this notion of being a woman was 'old fashioned', and did not fit with earlier claims to support equality, the power of such expectations remained strong for both women and men. The implicit weakness and fragility in turn legitimated men's 'help' and 'guidance' to 'improve' women by controlling particular things – what Stark (2007) terms the micro-management of everyday life. This gradually shrinks what Kelly (2012) terms women's 'space for action'. The extreme point of this process, as Lundgren (2004) notes, is that a woman can come to feel that she is a 'no-thing', and we had several painful recollections which echoed this diminishment.

It was quite intense, because it sort of progressed and I just found myself getting smaller as a person, and didn't want to speak any more, I was walking around on eggshells, and I was going within myself and being withdrawn, and depressed (Adele, Time 1).

There is an irony here, since many women associated femininity with strength and responsibility, describing themselves as well educated, career-orientated, financially secure, strong mothers and friends, confident, attractive and secure in their bodies, independent. It is the tension between women's sense of themselves and the potentials of womanhood and men's presumed role of provider and guider that is one of the key dynamics within domestic violence: contestations about gender in heterosexual relationships.

... it's just systematic manipulation and abuse of one's authority in the home... [she] was stopping me doing what I wanted to do (Aidan, Time 1).

The unrecognised male privilege many men exercised meant they did not have to control themselves, that they could indulge their emotions/feelings without thinking about the consequences for others, and be unpredictable, which ensured everyone else in the household paid attention first to how they were, what they might need/want. Changing these habits and expectations necessitated doing their own emotion work, as noted earlier in this report.

Men who made the most steps towards change had spent considerable time rethinking and remaking themselves as men within their relationships and in terms of their parenting. The changes women reported making were similarly a rejection of the diminished femininity they had been coerced into adopting.

Partner violence has at its core a household gender regime (Morris, 2009) in which men expect to have the final say, set the terms of the relationship and how women and children are to behave. So many of these rules and expectations are implicit and taken for granted – what DVPPs do, especially in the groupwork context, is bring them into language and invite men to put them under scrutiny. Those who chose to take a clear look began to unravel notions of male privilege and entitlement and were more likely to take steps towards change.

LOOKING INSIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR SERVICES

This section explores the centrality of process to programme integrity alongside what men on programmes and female (ex) partners had to say about the service they received.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

Despite repeated and unanswered calls for data on ‘programme integrity’ to inform outcome evaluations (Bowen and Gilchrist, 2004; Gendreau et al., 1999; Moncher and Prinz, 1991; Quay, 1977), there is little consensus in the literature about what programme integrity actually means, especially in relation to DVPPs. Instead, a dominant scientism prevails, reliant

on adherence to programme manuals which have ‘proven’ efficacy via randomised controlled trials (Dixon and Graham-Kevan, 2011). These criteria, and the ubiquitous notion of ‘evidence-based practice’ (EBP), are an ill-fit for British DVPPs which have developed organically and take a process-driven approach which requires both evidence based practice and practice-based evidence. All DVPPS have manuals and policies to provide a secure and shared practice framework, but they also draw constantly on professional judgement and expertise to work flexibly and responsively with the material that men bring to assessments and group work.

Interviews with 43 DVPP practitioners and stakeholders, 16 of whom were involved in the emergence and development of British DVPPs in the early 1990s, confirmed the process-driven approach of original and contemporary DVPP practice. Whilst the term ‘programme integrity’ is not in common usage in DVPP practice – and has connotations of rigidity and bureaucracy – all practitioners were able to identify the mechanisms which combine to ensure the integrity of service delivery. A case study of a DVPP service co-located within a local Children’s Services department, further explored the application of integrity mechanisms in a dynamic and adapting service.

Programme integrity – or perhaps more appropriately ‘service integrity’ – for DVPPs is better understood as adherence not to a manual, but to the principles/ethos of the service coupled to the aims and objectives of specific pieces of work. As noted earlier DVPPs do far more than deliver group-work and discussions of integrity need to encompass all that they do, including women’s support services and wider prevention work.

The ongoing organic development and flexibility of DVPP services means that, for practitioners, integrity is best ensured through the use of robust processes of monitoring, practice management, reflection, case management, and clinical supervision.

The Respect Accreditation Standard (2012) goes a long way towards ensuring that DVPPs operate within a service integrity framework. However, with programmes under evermore pressure from budget cuts and ideological challenges, it is increasingly important to articulate and maintain processes of ‘integrity’ for DVPPs.

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF DVPPS

We found considerable variability in the amount of time that women were supported for by women's support workers and the quality of this support. Some highly praised the women's support workers, but others had criticisms of the service they received. For example, we found variation in the level of information women received about the programme and the man's attendance. This ranged from a detailed briefing to more frequently basic knowledge about the programme structure and content.

I know they talk about how to control the temper, when to walk away, and things like that, like time out, go out for ten minutes, chill out, something like that. But other than that I ain't got the foggiest, I ain't got a Scooby-doo (Jenny, Time 1).

I know that obviously they work with men to stop them domestic violating their partners. I know it's 30 weeks long. I know there's a different one as well which is normally run by the police... And that's about all I know really (Simone, Time 1).

Whilst women's engagement is voluntary, the extent and depth of support also varied considerably, although in some cases this might be because a more local support service has been recommended to them. Many DVPPs struggle to fund the women's service and the resources are rarely sufficient to maintain regular contact with a large case load. That said there are challenges and potentials here that need more thought and investment if DVPPs – and not just violent men – are to be responsive to the needs of the women whose partners are on programmes.

HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

Women talked about hoping that the programme would help men to 'sort themselves out', and realise what they have done. That men recognised both what they done and the harms it had wrought was very important to the women, a foundation without which it was hard to imagine a positive future.

Well I hope that he will come to understand his behaviour and that he will change so that we can restore a relationship. That's the ultimate hope (Martha, Time 1).

Others had lower expectations, and simply sought some level of civility in arranging child contact.

If we could get to the point where he could just be civil to me. The thing I struggle with is yes he might get supervised contact with [child] in a couple of months after this course has finished but the supervised contact isn't going to last forever. I'm going to have to see him because I'm going to have to hand [child] over to him and I don't want to be back in that situation (Naomi, Time 1).

Some women were confident that their partner would change because of the programme, having already seen early shifts at Time 1. A minority were adamant that he would not: Sophie, for example, said only 'a miracle' would help, whereas others thought change was unlikely since in their view the men were 'going through the motions'. This was especially the case where men were required to attend to ensure or even establish ongoing child contact.

The most common response to this question though was one of deep felt hope.

That's a big one. I'm hopeful, I like to think he would, but I'm not gonna set myself up any goals. So – hopeful (Adele, Time 1).

MEN'S EXPERIENCES

In contrast to women, the majority of men were remarkably confident that they would successfully complete the programme: only five expressed a lack of confidence. Caveats for a further ten were connected to practicalities such as employment, travel and cost and if the potential for future child contact was removed.

Well, if I get me access back, if it helps me get my access back, I will finish the programme. But if they take me access off me, I'll just walk (Todd, Time 1).

When asked their motivations for continuing to attend the main reasons were: self-awareness/development; child contact; and somewhat less often 'to change'. Men for whom child contact was the reason for being on a DVPP were, in the main, purely instrumental about attendance – at least at the start, some changed their position on this but others did not.

It's the only motivator for me. I've got to, because I've been told to. I've been told I've got to do the programme. Because if I don't, I don't see my daughter. To me, that's blackmail (Stewart, Time 1).

Some, however, grasped this as an opportunity to change in relation to parenting and in relationships.

Well basically because I want to. I don't want to be hurting women and that. I don't want to be violent towards people and that. And I want to have some sort of relationship with my son and maybe some day have some sort of relationship with [ex-partner] again (Jeff, Time 1).

The differing motivations of men carried the potential for conflicts in the group work programme, especially where some were seen as not taking the content seriously.

ONE-TO-ONE AND GROUP WORK

Most reported positive experiences of one-to-one work and having good relationships with the men's workers. Some had had previous experience of talking one-on-one about their use of violence, in anger management sessions, with counsellors or psychologists. The DVPP sessions were described as particularly useful in preparation for group work which most were apprehensive about, although some reported even the initial on-to-one sessions were 'tough'.

Group work sessions were described as being informative and more useful in promoting change.

It's useful to share your own story, because any of the guys in the group will ask you questions and challenge you about stuff, or 'should you have done this?' or 'sounds like you're embellishing slightly', or 'that doesn't quite add up to what actually happened'. So you get a lot of different insights and different points of view. And more and they're all challenging you from stuff they've drawn out of the course as well, so that's hugely beneficial. (Peter, Time 1)

It was the input from both facilitators and other men which made the group context one that was conducive to change – the impact of being held to account by one's peers, and exploring different ways of being men, has been at the heart of why DVPPs use group work as the primary intervention. The interview data supported this model of work, including that it involves considerable challenge, straight talking and men having to dare to be and feel vulnerable. A few men noted that sessions could be repetitive, but reflected that this was necessary in order to embed changes.

THE IMPACT OF DVPPS ON CHILDREN

Whilst we have embedded children's safety and well-being across the research design, a linked and completed PhD by Susan Alderson sought the views of children themselves (see Alderson et al, 2012, 2013, forthcoming).

Only one other British study directly asked children about their views of DVPPs: Rayns (2010) carried out a practitioner-led project for the Children's Workforce Development Council. She interviewed 16 children and young people aged between 8-18 and found that although children had limited knowledge of perpetrator work, they thought their mother was safer and saw it as a helpful and appropriate intervention. Interestingly they did not necessarily feel safer themselves.

The 13 children who participated in Alderson's study completed a research book that explored what life was like before their father/father figure attended the DVPP, how they were told about his attendance, and how safe they felt now. Children were asked to draw faces and write words to represent how they felt about their father prior to him starting the DVPP: the most common response was sad, followed by confused, annoyed, and angry. Following men's involvement responses were more positive: 'happy', 'hopeful' and 'it would help him'. Importantly, children described spending time with father doing simple day to day activities – playing games, going to the park - without the threat of angry displays or violence. Many talked positively about newfound relationships, even if their parents had separated.

A ladder was used for children to locate how safe they felt; before the fathers were on the DVPP all used rungs one and two (very unsafe), at the time of interview one child circled rung five, whilst all the others choose rungs 9 and 10 (very safe and extremely safe). Whilst a small sample, these data suggest that DVPPs have the potential to improve children's safety and well-being. A crucial caveat needs to be made here, since all the children taking part were receiving support from a

children's worker – it is therefore a combination of direct work with men, women, and children that produced these outcomes.

This leads directly to another key finding – the need for more dedicated support services for the children of men on DVPPs. The survey of 44 Respect members revealed that very few offered this, with interventions with men and support for women operating as a proxy for improving children's lives. Whilst half of the DVPPs did some form of work with children, this was most commonly general preventative work in schools or more open support sessions. Only three worked directly with the children and young people whose fathers were attending the DVPP, through either one-to-one sessions or group work, depending on the needs and circumstances of the child.

Both the interviews with children and the measures of success related to childhood discussed earlier lead us to recommend that men should be actively encouraged, where safe and appropriate, to tell their children about their attendance. This is part of breaking the silence about domestic violence and will go some way to ensure that children do not think either the violence or parents separating is somehow 'their fault'. Some of the children and young people in our sample were only told about their fathers' attendance when approached about taking part in this study; others had known for some time but were sketchy about the detail – using terms such as 'on a course' or 'working with Dad'. The qualitative interviews revealed that both men and women created a 'protective silence' (Mullender et al, 2002) about men's attendance: some noted justifiably that their children were too young to understand, but most thought knowing would burden them. It is worth asking who is being protected here; it is not just shame and stigma that men are avoiding, but also being accountable to their children. CAFCASS require that men write to their children, take responsibility and apologise for their behaviour before child contact will be considered. Should not this honesty be required of all violent men and available to all children?

The impact of DVPPs on children remains understudied, with scope not only for further research but also practice, both the development of direct work with children and how men can become more accountable to their children.

DVPPS WITHIN CO-ORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSES

Coordinated approaches to domestic violence emphasise collaborative and integrated working between all relevant sectors and stakeholders (Lovett et al, 2011). The original Duluth Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Minnesota, USA envisaged a unified system of supports and sanctions – work with women and men - with the safety of victim-survivors at the centre (Shepard, 1999). What made this a coordinated community response was how the DAIP framed domestic violence: as the exercise of power and control, a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. Change, therefore, had to extend beyond individual cases to institutions and communities in order to transform norms and practices. Whilst the Duluth model now has global reach (Shepard, 1999), there is no consensus on what a CCR should look like or how it should be structured (Holder, 1999; Lovett et al, 2011).

The concept of a CCR was introduced to the UK through work undertaken by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham in 1989, leading to multi-agency groups through what became known as a Domestic Violence Forum (Holder, 1999). Several hundred now exist across England and Wales, with a different model in Scotland. DVPPs are members, and several were founders and key actors in the early developments (Burton et al., 1998). All of the research sites reported being members of the local forum and that they attended meetings regularly. The Home Office credits Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) as having expanded the CCR model beyond a criminal justice focus (Home Office, 2006). Robinson (2006) goes as far as to claim that MARACs are not part of, but are, the coordinated community response in England and Wales.

This is contested: a CCR was intended to shift emphasis from victim to perpetrator, from the individual to the community. MARACs in contrast focus on a small group of women designated high risk, skewing responses and resource allocation in a way that is fundamentally at odds with both the Duluth and original Home Office CCR model (Coy and Kelly, 2011). Again all the research sites reported attending MARACs, but not necessarily regularly.

There is little, if any, reference made to the specific contribution that DVPPs make to the CCR within existing research and practice-based literature, although one evaluation of an intervention to address abusive men's parenting (Coy et al, 2011) recommends increased recognition. This is consistent with research from the US which that the depth and extended contact that DVPPs have with perpetrators is yet to be effectively harnessed (Gondolf, 2002).

Respect accreditation standards state that DVPPs must evidence how they 'take a positive and active role in creating inter-agency cooperation and support the development of coordinated community responses to domestic violence' (Respect, 2012). A lengthy set of indicators detail how this can be demonstrated. All of the sites in the study were members of local DV/VAWG for a, and most reported attending regularly. The vast majority were part of MARACs, but capacity issues meant they were not always able to attend the weekly/fortnightly meetings, especially if their catchment covered several areas. Some also attended other networks such as MAPPAs. There was a widespread sense, however, that most were considered key partners when strategic decision making took place.

In the remainder of this section we draw on the depth case studies we undertook to address this research question.

DVPPS AND CCRS: CASE STUDIES

The four case study areas were selected to represent geographical spread and different models of work.

- **Ashville¹² DVPP** is a regional provider in the south of England. The case study focused on a co-location project within Children's Services in one area. Referrals were made by social workers but the project had a wider remit – to make perpetrators routinely visible and held accountable within child-in-need and child protection cases.
- **Cedartown DVPP** is located in the south of England, had previously been based within community safety (but with a high degree of independence), but relocated within the Children and Families section of a local authority during the research period. This limited referral pathways for a period; the self-referral route re-opened during the study, but only for men who were fathers.
- **Elmsville DVPP** in Scotland operated within what is called the 'Caledonian model' and accepted referrals from all parts of the CCR and self-referrals, whilst being located within the Children and Families section of the local authority.
- **Mapletown DVPP** is located in the north of England and sat within a national children's charity, with staff members seconded from Children's Services.

All four sites had begun from, and developed practice consistent with, the Duluth CCR philosophy, in which changing men's behaviour is understood as one route to increase the safety of women and children. Each had an integrated women's service. Some external partners recognised the alternative route into support DVPPs offered for women, but DVPP staff noted how this aspect of their work was seldom acknowledged. This is somewhat ironic, given that the pro-active contact model now embedded in IDVA and other core responses began in DVPPs (Burton et al., 1989).

On the one hand, the DVPPs we studied were held in extremely high regard by CCR partners – they were seen as doing good, safe work and being the experts in their area on domestic violence perpetrators. However, on the other hand the case studies confirmed that work with male perpetrators in general still remains controversial (Hester and Westmarland, 2006), especially when services for female partners are under-resourced and doubts about outcomes are so firmly held within parts of the wider CCR, especially among the police. There existed a myth amongst some CCR partners that DVPPS worked with the 'easy' men and the CJS was left to deal with the 'serious violence'. We did not find evidence of this in any of our data collection. In our qualitative interviews we were given examples of life threatening injuries and attempted murder. In our DVPP interviews staff talked about working with men whose partners were in fear of engaging with the CJS, and in our analysis of DVPP data we found that there were men with long histories of criminal justice contact (e.g. four men had been arrested over 20 times).

POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Each area had a policy infrastructure that provided a basis to respond to domestic violence in a coordinated way, within an overarching strategy and action plan in which work with perpetrators was a recognised part of delivery. Whilst the formal structures were configured differently, in each area there was a DV/VAWG (violence against women and girls) strategy manager or lead, and the range of stakeholders signed up to deliver the strategies were broadly consistent. One area was considered to have a clear strategic approach, whereas in others many stakeholders saw the MARAC as representing the coordinated community response, meaning that strategic oversight was lacking. There was widespread support for DVPPs being part of the CCR. In Mapletown and Elmsville the DVPP was viewed as one of the core pieces of the jigsaw offering options for women as well as referrers. Interestingly the DVPPs based within Children's Services were seen to be more central to the CCR, but by virtue of their position within a statutory agency.

12. The case study areas have been anonymised.

Before it was a bit of a community organisation drifting - I'd say it's become more central to how Children's Services work – it used to be on the periphery... so it's still specialised intervention but more central (C¹³, senior practitioner, family therapy centre).

Some experienced practitioners voiced a desire to shift the focus in MARACs from women to men (see also Coy et al, 2009), and DVPP attendance supported this. In three sites the DVPP was considered to add value to MARACs regardless of whether it was directly involved in the case being discussed: their presence raised awareness about perpetrator behaviour, including how men may recruit agencies into continued harassment and control of women and children (see Coy et al, 2012; Kelly et al, 2014). In Cedartown, however, the DVPP no longer attended MARAC, being represented by the agency in which it was located: this led some stakeholders to suggest that perpetrator accountability was lacking within both the MARAC and the area more generally.

SHAPE SHIFTING

All of the DVPP research sites had had to 'shape shift' to respond to changing and challenging funding regimes, as evidenced by the increasing connections between DVPPs and services for and about children. Whilst Cedartown had the most dramatic change – losing both an independent location and visibility – the other three case study sites had all adapted to make the services more sustainable. The tensions between sustainability and the original model of a community based DVPP were a concern for some stakeholders.

We essentially don't have an accessible community-based programme. I would like them [DVPP] to be able to do more, truly community-based perpetrator work, so including non-systems referrals as it were; however there's a reason why it's not community-open and that's because it's within a children's service and it can't fundraise independently (C, VAWG Commissioner)

The advantages of close working within a statutory service in Ashville's case also carried risks of no longer being seen as independent and limiting perpetrator work in these locations to fewer referral pathways.

I think ideally I would like an easily accessible perpetrator programme specific to Ashville that wasn't just focused on whether you're a dad or not (A, DV Co-ordinator).

Shape shifting involved had involved both losing and gaining ground. All of the four sites were considered locally to have good reputations and the expertise of staff about perpetrators was widely acknowledged.

*I think the people they've got running the DVPP certainly have the knowledge and expertise. ... They keep up-to-date with research and they're very keen to review and examine and talk about what they do. They've very keen to involve partners in that conversation (C, probation)
... the quality of their assessments has always been good; their reputation has always been good. (A, social worker).*

The loss of CAFCASS contracts for two sites was linked to access and availability rather than quality: CAFCASS interviewees in both areas believed the longer DVPP programmes were more challenging but they were under pressure to 'scale up' in order to ensure that they could refer a violent man to a programme at any time.

The probation programme has been a really flexible programme and by that I mean it's located in a lot of different areas... We can refer anyone, anywhere and they'll be accepted onto it... but I'd probably say the DVPP is much better (C, CAFCASS)

13. The first letter of the case study name denotes the area the respondent comes from followed by their work role.

The role of DVPPs in re-focusing attention to perpetrators has tended to be understood as taking place through training and participation in multi-agency fora. Three of the case study sites, however, were experimenting with new models which involved different connections with Children's Services, either located within their offices or a co-location of DVPP workers. These shape shifts had resulted in social workers increasingly recognising the need to think about men in their decision-making and do direct work with fathers.

It's just sort of ingrained into like what we do now, our assessments and plans... it's quite a standardised outcome for DV cases that the men have to engage with domestic violence intervention programmes. (A, social worker).

For the DVPPs this involved unpicking the fears many social workers had about engaging with men.

[We] provide the reassurance that they [professionals] can be more open with the clients [perpetrators]. People are so worried about raising the level of risk and that seems to impede anyone from talking about it (C, DVPP staff).

Co-location undoubtedly provided significant benefits to the statutory agency staff. In Ashville, Cedartown and Elmsville the DVPPs were able to get involved in cases earlier, providing support to women and challenging men. Statutory sector managers in Elmsville described how the DVPP had led to social workers needing to work less intensively with women and keep families together.

We feel children are in a better place therefore we're reducing the amount of social work involvement and we also know of a number of cases where children would have been removed from the family where a social worker has decided not to remove them because things have got better so I would say that it clearly does make a difference to the lives of children. (E, Children and Families team leader)

At the same time it brought new challenges to the DVPPs and new questions about what programme integrity means.

Our boundaries are being challenged all the time. Would we do that? Why wouldn't we do that? We wouldn't do it like that in that setting but we're in this setting. Why wouldn't we do it in this setting? (A, DVPP men's worker)

At issue here is the independence of the DVPP, and the pull through to their reputation: having to negotiate shared agendas with a larger and more powerful agency carried risks. Services oriented around children rarely with work within gendered perspectives, as they have historically prioritised parenting rather than women's safety. In the areas where links with Children's Services were closest this had also offered opportunities to encourage social workers to consider a 'woman centred' rather than a 'mother centred' approach.

I suppose it changes your thinking. Whereas we used to be very much focused on the mother - now we're engaging dads in the assessments. I think that helps women because there's less blame I suppose, and there's less pressure - responsibility on them to make a change (A, social worker).

Whilst DVPPs believed that healthy debate and disagreement was both possible and productive, external perceptions, particularly in the domestic violence sector, were that their identity had been a bit 'diluted' and even compromised, with potential issues for how women might perceive and engage with them; a possibility not lost on DVPP staff.

I think if their [women's] experience of social services has been bad they're in a place where they're scared the children will be removed, so just barriers go up completely and I guess because I work for the council they just think I'm Social Services as well (C, DVPP women's worker).

RESOURCE PRESSURES

Stakeholders across the four sites expressed frustrations about capacity, that long waiting lists deterred them from making referrals or meant that opportunities to engage men were lost. Some argued that the length of group work programmes was an 'outdated' model, but the desire of social workers in Ashville that the DVPP have a full time presence in each team suggests that this is as much about resources as models of work.

We work in a crisis-type service so we need people to go out five days a week really, not two. More than part-time would be brilliant (A, social worker).

In Cedartown and Elmsville some stakeholders argued that austerity politics had 'brought people to the table', encouraged them to be more coordinated and to explore new ways of working. Overall, however, austerity measures were perceived to have had a negative impact on both partnership working and the effectiveness of local CCRs; commissioning and competitive tendering were not conducive to open and co-operative ways of working. Mederos (1999) observed more than a decade ago that restricted resources mean that fewer agencies participate in the CCR: it is time consuming and does not bring in income. Being reduced to a 'survival mode' reduces both trust and capacity to innovate, with DVPPs the most vulnerable component of the CCR. Several DVPP managers and stakeholders feared that the policy emphasis on short term risk reduction and crisis intervention (see also Kelly et al, 2014) would undermine the limited support for work with perpetrators.

Whilst many factors contribute to the vulnerability of DVPPS, time and time again stakeholders noted the absence of evidence to show that work with violent men was successful. This is exacerbated by the growing emphasis of some statutory agencies (for example NOMS) to fund only evidence-based interventions. The measures of success referred to by stakeholders here were limited to programme completion or a cessation of physical abuse. Very few recognised the wider impact of a focus on perpetrators within a CCR.

Among the most sceptical of stakeholders were the police, who have an increased influence on local policy through both MARACs and Police and Crime Commissioners, but others also reflected a view that 'violent men' cannot or will not change. This scepticism had the unintended consequence of reinforcing an emphasis on victim-survivors as those who needed to change. A stronger voice on making perpetrators visible and accountable throughout the CCR was commended in three sites, with possible synergies between DVPPs and probation/prison based work offered as one route towards this.

CONCLUSIONS

Whilst perpetrator programmes and work with perpetrators have been considered a core element of a CCR, there is little policy or documentation on how this is realised in principle or practice. There is a danger, therefore, that their visibility and accountability of violent men becomes a secondary activity. This has been accentuated in the UK with the much narrower reach of a MARAC coming to represent the CCR at local levels.

The shape shifting which UK DVPPs have undertaken recently to secure sustainability has offered new routes to focusing on violent men, especially through various co-location models within Children's Services. There are challenges here, however, including potential loss of not only independence but also voice and presence in multi-agency groupings.

All four case study DVPPs had strong reputations, but there were many lost potentials within the wider CCR for benefiting from the knowledge and expertise on perpetrators which is held in DVPPs.

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This study used a new methodological approach to studying DVPPs: casting the question differently to ask what does work with perpetrators contribute a co-ordinated community response; creating measures of success based on the daily reality of domestic violence; integrating children's needs and perspectives; combining quantitative and qualitative data; and including men as participants.

We learnt a number of lessons in the process, including: creating a comparison group that is matched in terms of histories of violence and current relationship status, whilst controlling for the intervention, is difficult to operationalise; tracing change in a deeper and wider way is complicated by the different positions of women and men – whether they stay together/separate/have not had contact for some time and whether men have regular/limited or no contact with their children. We stand by the findings of our pilot study – that DVPPs should not be assessed in terms of whether they are a 'miracle cure'. In fact, any reports of absolutely no violence and abuse from the point men begin any perpetrator intervention would be highly suspicious given what over three decades of research on the patterns of violence and abuse has taught us. The six measures of success used in this study assess change across a number of dimensions.

MORE THAN GROUP WORK

DVPPs have developed in specific ways in the UK, with the majority having dedicated support for women as a core part of service provision. The limited financial and policy support for DVPPs has limited their capacity and required constant shape shifting to adapt to new funding regimes. Currently this involves various models which are linked to Children's Services.

Alongside direct work with men, women and in a few cases children, DVPPs provide many agencies in the CCR with expert reports and assessments on perpetrators, which facilitate informed decision making.

Most DVPPs are also members of local multi-agency groups; their presence raises awareness about perpetrator behaviour and makes abusive men more visible and accountable in local responses to domestic violence.

ENTRY POINTS

The largest referrers into DVPPs are now Children's Services, followed by CAFCASS. In some areas this has created limited pathways into programmes, excluding men who are not fathers and even those might self-refer who are. There are significant differences between men who enter programmes with an interest in change within existing relationships and those who have after a length of separation, and limited, if any, communication with ex-partners made a legal application for child contact. Some of this latter group have a purely instrumental approach to the programme. Thus there are men attending with entirely different orientations - for some the programme is a hurdle and for others an opportunity.

STEPS TO CHANGE

Both the quantitative and qualitative data showed steps towards change for the vast majority of men attending DVPPs. The programmes do extend men's understandings of violence and abuse, with clear shifts from talking about standalone incidents of physical violence to beginning to recognise ongoing coercive control.

Physical and sexual violence was not just reduced but ended for the majority of women in this research. Everyday abuse and harassment, unsurprisingly, was more difficult to curtail, as men admit and women regret. Even here, however, change is in the direction one would hope with at least some reductions across all our measures of success. There is no evidence that men either increase or shift to completely new, more subtle forms of abuse, although a number do not choose to abandon practices they have already used. At the same time that some men took a few steps towards

change, the fact that they were on a DVPP gave some women the confidence to change as well - to set new boundaries and reclaim space for action that had been constrained by abuse.

Changes in parenting and understandings of the impact of violence on children were also found for some men, but this was harder to evidence, especially in the qualitative data, as about half had no or limited contact with their children at the end of the programme. Children themselves, when receiving dedicated support from a DVPP, reported feeling much safer and able to develop more rewarding relationships with their fathers. DVPPs are not, nor should they ever be, considered a panacea. What this research found was a continuum of change among the men, with some taking minimal steps towards change and others – by the accounts of their partners – moving a considerable way.

The findings overall confirm that ending physical and sexual violence is insufficient for some women to feel at ease, and restore the freedom that living within coercive control involves.

HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

Group work is part of what enables men to change. This involved seeing themselves through others, being challenged by peers and having skilled facilitators. Many men, at the end of the programme, note that it takes consideration, time and reflection to understand, unpick and change embedded patterns of behaviour and habits. Many women noted that at the outset their partners thought they could attend, ‘tick a few boxes’ and carry on as usual. It is the length and depth of DVPPs which makes it possible to go beyond simple behaviour disruption to deeper changes which make a difference in the lives of women and children. Short untested programmes run a number of risks, not least that they play into the instrumental orientation that many men have at the outset, and so are unlikely to address the deeper issues which matter to women in terms of their and children’s safety and the restoration of their voice and space for action.

The techniques used by DVPPs that enable men to be self-reflective and question gendered assumptions about masculinity in relationships and parenting appeared to make a difference in enabling men to change. Gender is a key to some of the abusive practices, but needs to be understood using nuanced theoretical frameworks – that both men and women are ‘doing’ and ‘performing’ gender in a range of different (and often conflictual) ways.

REFLECTIONS

As feminists, with most of our policy and practice work firmly located in the women’s sector we began this programme of research with a healthy scepticism about the extent to which men choose to change. After spending time with thousands of pages of transcripts of men and women talking about their use/experiences of violence and abuse we are convinced that our data shows steps towards change do start to happen for most. Some men make only a few, halting steps forward. A tiny minority take steps backwards. Others start taking small steps and end up taking huge leaps. For many men, women and children, their lives are improved following a domestic violence perpetrator programme. The policy and practice implications of these findings will become clearer in the months that follow the launch of this report. For now, we conclude that whilst there is more work to be done, and improvements to be made to group work with men, support for women and children, and the location of DVPPs within CCRs, overall we are optimistic about their ability to play an important part in the quest to end domestic violence.

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