

From early responses to interrupting high harm: interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse

This factsheet is for frontline workers who are interested in the availability of suitable interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Introduction

Work with domestic abuse perpetrators in the UK has included Domestic Violence/Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (DVPPs/ DAPPs), offered in a community setting (for perpetrators self-referring), or under the Probation Service (for perpetrators found guilty of a domestic abuse related offence). These have been almost exclusively developed for male, heterosexual perpetrators.

More recently, interventions targeting the whole cohort of perpetrators have been piloted. These include targeted prevention, early intervention work, high-risk, complex needs interventions, women's use of violence, and abuse by those in same-sex relationships.

All safe and effective perpetrator intervention programmes should be provided within a coordinated community response, rather than as a stand-alone solution to domestic abuse.

Programmes focused on safe and effective practice must work alongside services such as the Police, Social Services, Housing and victim/survivor services.

Interventions for perpetrators must address the different needs, the presenting risk and the context for their behaviour. Organisations must match individuals to suitable interventions in line with risk, need and responsivity principles.

This is to ensure:

- survivor confidence;
- that perpetrators are given an intervention which has a realistic opportunity of success; and
- that services provide value for money for commissioning agencies.

Respect accreditation

Respect accreditation is a quality assurance certification for organisations working with perpetrators.

Accreditation has been developed so that everyone, including perpetrators, survivors, funders, commissioners and practitioners can be assured that a service is of a high-quality standard, regularly monitored and supported to frequently reflect and improve on best working practices.

Respect Accreditation for work with perpetrators of domestic abuse is based on a set of working principles outlined in the Respect Standard. All Respect Accredited services are held to this standard to ensure only safe and effective work with perpetrators of domestic abuse takes place.

To find out more visit: <https://www.respect.uk.net/pages/64-respect-standard>

What about victim/survivors?

Integral to perpetrator work is the safety of survivors and children; a package of support for survivors alongside the programme is vital. In all cases where a perpetrator engages with an intervention programme, there should be an offer of support for survivors to access safety planning advice.

What are the options?

The range of perpetrator interventions offered varies significantly around the country, therefore interventions detailed in this factsheet may not be available in your locality.

1. Early response – early intervention projects

Change that Lasts

Change that Lasts is a whole systems approach, developed to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse receive the right responses the first time.

It is based on the model developed by Welsh Women's Aid in partnership with Women's Aid Federation England (WAFE). In Cardiff, this includes working with perpetrators or people at risk

of becoming perpetrators, through community-based interventions at the earliest opportunity.

Welsh Women's Aid and Respect are working together to implement the Change that Lasts model to transform responses to survivors of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, together with a response to perpetrators of violence against women in Wales.

To find out more about the Change that Lasts model visit <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/>

Make a Change

Make a Change (MAC) is a multi-tiered early response to the perpetration of domestic abuse, working with trusted professionals, those who are using abusive behaviours and want support to change, their partners and ex-partners, and the broader community.

The intervention was developed by Respect and Women's Aid, to provide an earlier response to domestic abuse than traditional domestic abuse perpetrator interventions provide. It addresses the needs of people concerned about their behaviour, before it escalates to the point where intervention is mandated by courts or by child protection orders.

The MAC model has four components:

- a group-based intervention for people who are worried about their behaviour and/or have used abusive behaviours
- integrated one-to-one support for partners / ex-partners
- 'Recognise, Respond, Refer' training to improve domestic abuse awareness of practitioners in public, voluntary and private sector organisations; and
- a community strand that aims to:
 - o raise awareness of domestic abuse
 - o address the barriers faced by those seeking help, and
 - o change the social context that enables it to go unchallenged.

Unlike traditional domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, anyone can refer to Make A Change, including perpetrators, their partners and ex-partners, their friends or family, and professionals who have concerns about someone's behaviour towards their partner.

To find out more visit: <https://www.makeachange.uk.net/>

2. Domestic Abuse Prevention Programmes

DAPPs are community-based programmes for people who recognise they have been violent and abusive towards an intimate partner and want to stop these behaviours.

DAPPs – groupwork

DAPPs aim to increase the safety of partners and children and the quality of life for everyone in the family, by supporting the person who has been violent and abusive to change.

The programmes are delivered by trained facilitators who help perpetrators identify the root cause of their violent and abusive behaviour, understand that they have choices and learn non-violent and non-abusive strategies when dealing with conflict.

Requirements for perpetrators:

- To attend all weekly sessions. Programmes last 26–30 weeks, depending on the provider. Each weekly session lasts between 2–2.5 hours.
- To be eligible for a DAPP, those referred must first be assessed for suitability: they need to demonstrate they acknowledge they have a problem, they take responsibility for their behaviour, and are motivated to change.
- Pay the programme fees, if fees are charged.

DAPPs' – One to One

Some organisations offer interventions to perpetrators on a one to one basis.

A one to one intervention might be offered to perpetrators who are not able to access a groupwork programme, or in cases where perpetrators need interpreters to engage or to perpetrators in same-sex relationships who would not benefit from a groupwork programme with heterosexual men.

The overall aim of the one to one intervention is the same as that of a groupwork DAPP: to reduce re-offending and promote the safety of current and future partners and children, as well as work collaboratively and with a client focus to manage risk.

Respect's Individual Work Programme with Perpetrator is a comprehensive manual accompanied by a training course to upskill organisations and practitioners offering this type of intervention.

3. High-risk, high-harm interventions

High-risk, high-harm perpetrators are those who have been assessed as posing a risk of serious harm or murder to people they are in intimate or family relationships with.

The Drive Partnership

Drive is a partnership between Respect, Safe Lives and Social Finance. Working in collaboration with Police and Crime Commissioners, local authorities, multi-agency services, and service providers, Drive has pioneered an innovative approach to preventing and reducing domestic abuse. Drive advocates for changes to national systems so that perpetrators posing all levels of risk can no longer get away with abusive behaviour and can access the help they need to stop.

Drive challenges and supports perpetrators to change and works with partner agencies – like the police and social services – to disrupt abuse.

To find out more visit: www.driveproject.org.uk

Advice and guidance for you

Respect Phonline – helping your work with the cause of the problem

Helpline, email, and webchat service for domestic abuse perpetrators and those supporting them

What we offer Frontline Workers

- advice on working safely with perpetrators
- information about interventions for perpetrators
- contact details of behaviour-change programmes
- online resources

How we support perpetrators

- motivate them to talk about their abuse
- challenge minimisation, excuses, and partner-blaming
- encourage them to get long-term help for their abuse
- give them contact details of behaviour-change programmes

0808 8024040

info@respectphonline.org.uk

<https://respectphonline.org.uk/>

Contacts are confidential. We do not undertake long-term phone work or counselling.