

Probation: domestic abuse programmes and budgets

A briefing from Napo the Trade Union and Professional Association for Family Court and Probation Staff - March 2012

Napo has analysed trends in offenders sentenced to community orders with a condition of a domestic abuse programme: rationing, delays in commencements, cheaper alternatives and the effect of budget cuts in 26 of the 35 probation trust areas, involving staff completing questionnaires in 82 teams across England and Wales.

The study concludes that there are routine delays of between three and six months, and sometimes longer, before offenders commence their programmes, which affects motivation; the introduction of cheaper unaccredited courses and one-to-one work and rationing of intense programmes to only those offenders who are thought to pose a high risk of harm. In addition the length of waiting lists varies within the same county or metropolitan area reflecting court practice and pressure for places. A third of staff who took part in the study believe that as a consequence of concentrating only on those who pose a high risk, behaviour of others escalates whilst untreated. Of the 668 offenders on caseloads in the study, 478 were thought suitable for programmes with 301 having commenced at the time the questionnaire were completed. The work with domestic abusers is complex and difficult and many of the men do not wish to participate in the programmes. Nevertheless there is on average a 60% completion rate.

Over the last six years there has been a sharp rise in the number of persons found guilty of violence against the person placed on community orders. The increase over the last five years was by 4,704 to 25,068 in 2009/10. The rise is primarily because of the suspended sentence order, which is often used instead of a short jail sentence, and a greater proportion of offenders sentenced to domestic violence courses by the judiciary. Napo conducted a study in 2011 in 19 of the 35 probation trust areas and found that 2,040 offenders commenced the integrated domestic abuse programme (IDAP) with 1,408 completing. Napo estimates therefore that the number of persons commencing a domestic abuse programme in 2010/11 was approximately 3,500.

The probation service in England and Wales has been running offender behaviour programmes for over 20 years. The arrangements were formalised under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which came into force in April 2005 when it became a requirement that could be placed by the courts on a supervision order.

The programmes have been extremely successful and have been shown to reduce reoffending significantly, from 50% for a standard supervision order to 35% with the inclusion of a programme. As well as domestic abuse, programmes are run for sex offenders, those with drug and alcohol treatment requirements and deficit thinking skills. During 2009, 23,442 requirements were made by the courts for participation in accredited programmes including domestic abuse.

The Probation Service is facing major budgetary cuts of 20% during the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2015. As a consequence there are already significant cuts to programmes. This is firstly because there will be fewer staff to run them, and it will be mainly experienced staff who will be made redundant and secondly on cost grounds. Currently it costs £3,000 a year to run a supervision order but this rises by £3,288 if IDAP is attached (written parliamentary answer, Hansard, 10-11-11). Nevertheless, programmes are still considerably cheaper than custody, which is currently £42,000 per prison place per year.

Typical Accredited Scheme (National Probation Service London – May 2009)				
Programme	Programme Description	Number of Sessions	Suitability	Eligibility Score
Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP)	A programme for male perpetrators of domestic abuse who are assessed as being of medium to high risk of reoffending and of harming current and previous female partners	4 pre-group sessions 1 orientation session 27 x 2.5 hr group sessions (9 x 3 week modules)	<u>Suitable</u> Men whose index offence relates to domestic violence <u>Not suitable</u> Complete denial Severe mental health problems Equivalent provision is being developed for offenders who do not have sufficient competence in the English language. Such cases should be discussed with the IDAP Programme Manager A community order of minimum 18 months	Any OGRS*/OASys** score 'Spousal Assault Risk Assessment' (SARA): medium to high risk ***
<p>*OGRS is an actuarial assessment which will tell the probation officer what proportion of men with particular characteristics are likely to reoffend.</p> <p>**OASys (Offender Assessment System) will be a more individualised assessment.</p> <p>*** SARA (Spousal Abuse Risk Assessment) is a mandatory additional assessment in all cases of male abuse towards women with whom they are in an intimate relationship, as identified by a number of key questions within OASys</p>				

What Works with Domestic Violence Offenders?

International evidence

An internal Ministry of Justice document (May 2010) says: *'Research has not yet clearly indicated which interventions for Domestic Violence (DV) are most effective in reducing reoffending. Unfortunately the research to date has used different methods and definitions, making it hard to draw any firm conclusions about what works. The proper evaluation of programme effectiveness requires a clear explanation of how domestic violence is defined, identified and measured; none of these is straightforward.'*

The research study cites: *'Depending on the type of research design employed by the various studies, the authors found a 5% to 15% decrease in recidivism or reduction in violence between those who took part in an intervention and those who did not. The reviewers argued that even though this appears a modest effect, "DV treatment in all reported cases of domestic violence in the United States in 1996 (840,000) would equate to approximately 42,000 women per year no longer being battered". The review concluded that, overall, DV programmes have a small but positive effect on abusive behaviour.'*

The report adds: *'Several risk factors related to domestic violence have been identified. These factors include history of violent behaviour, anti-social behaviours and attitudes, relationship instability, employment instability, mental health problems and personality disorder, an abusive childhood, low self-esteem, and hostile attitudes towards women. Other factors which may increase risk of DV include distorted thinking about relationships and male and female roles within relationships; emotional mismanagement; social skills deficits; impulsiveness and alcohol. DV interventions should address all of these factors.'*

A study conducted by Veronica Hollis in 2007 showed that 38.7% of those completing Integrated Domestic Abuse Programmes reoffended within a two year period, compared with a predicted reconviction rate of 40%. Studies conducted in Avon and Somerset between April 2008 and March 2010 showed that 187 offenders successfully completed the programmes. An analysis of the data produced a reoffending rate in any three month period of 6.3% compared with a predicted rate of 7.4%. The figures from Devon and Cornwall supplied to Napo in February 2011 showed that between April 2004 and December 2008, 135 men had completed the IDAP, 73 of whom had no further police call-out or convictions, which suggests significant progress.

Domestic abuse analysis February 2012

In November 2011 Napo members working in Probation and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) were asked to supply details of the number of persons on their caseload who had been convicted of violence in a domestic setting. They were also asked whether the individuals were suitable for domestic abuse programmes and how many actually started.

In addition they were asked for details of delays before programmes commenced and also whether their probation trust was rationing provision of the programmes or introducing less expensive interventions because of budgetary constraints. Information was supplied from 26 of the 35 probation trust areas involving individuals in 82 probation and Cafcass teams.

Probation Trust Areas Responding		
Bedfordshire	Humberside	Norfolk and Suffolk
Cambridgeshire	Kent	Nottinghamshire
Cheshire	Leicestershire and Rutland	South Yorkshire
Devon and Cornwall	Lancashire	Staffordshire/West Midlands
Dorset	London	Thames Valley
Durham and Tees Valley	Merseyside	Wales
Essex	Northamptonshire	West Mercia
Greater Manchester	Humberside	West Yorkshire
Hampshire	Northumbria	

In Napo's view the study is very representative, including all the major metropolitan areas including Merseyside, London, Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and West and South Yorkshire, and also a number of smaller, more rural areas, such as Dorset, Cheshire, Cambridgeshire and Devon and Cornwall. The study also represents returns from Wales.

Delays in commencements

Staff completing the questionnaire from the 82 teams in England and Wales were asked if there was any delay in offenders commencing domestic abuse programmes and what was the average length of delay. Staff reported delays in commencement in 58 of the 82 teams that were surveyed. The delay varied from two to 12 months. The survey also included four prisons, all of which reported delays of at least 12 months or that the course was no longer available in that institution. However delay varied in the same trust area. In many counties staff reported from one part no delay and from others up to six months. Delays in smaller rural areas varied from between four to 12 months, probably a reflection of there being not enough offenders at any one time to be able to run the course in a cost effective way.

Delay clearly affects motivation, especially if the waiting list exceeds three to four months. In 14 of the teams the delay was greater than six months. However some areas reported a small or no delay, which may have been a reflection of restrictions on commencements, either the lowering of the targets for starts or restricting the programmes to those who posed higher risk.

Delays in Commencements	
No delay	22
One to three months	31
Four to six months	16
Six to 12 months	10
12 months or more	1
Did not know	2
Total	82

Delays of four months or more do have implications for the completion rates. Some staff have reported that orders have expired before courses have been completed. The probation trusts do not have funds for individuals to continue voluntarily on courses, although Napo is aware that it has happened on occasion.

Programmes are popular with the courts, however staff report that delays are becoming more common place. They also report that trusts are resorting to rationing and the introduction of shorter, non accredited courses to cope with the shortfall.

Restrictions on programmes

Staff working in 26 of the teams who completed the survey reported that the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme was now being restricted to those that were deemed high risk, as a means of rationing a scarce resource. This represents eight, or one-third, of the 25 trust areas covered in the survey. Staff have expressed concern about this, stating that many offenders who have lower offender group scores than the benchmark still pose high risk. They also note that information on police call-outs and reports from victims are not taken into account in calculating the scores. Many areas report a variation on the restriction, saying that the courses are only available to those who pose a high risk or where child protection is an issue.

Escalation

Staff were asked if there was any evidence that non participation in programmes because of medium or low risk assessments led to violence in a domestic setting. In all, 63 staff members answered this question, the remaining 19 did not express an opinion. Twenty-nine said there was evidence of escalation, 34 were not aware of any and the remainder said they did not have access to the relevant information. However research and studies carried out in the past have shown that a failure to intervene early in domestic violence and stalking cases does lead to an escalation in violence and can even result in homicide.

Shorter interventions

Just over half (42) of the 82 respondents reported the introduction of shorter interventions in their trust area. This was either one-to-one work or programmes that required less frequent attendance. Most of these short-term interventions were not accredited by the Ministry.

Staff concluded that the prime reason for introducing the shorter programmes was rationing and cost saving. Comments from staff were as follows:

- a) *'We now have one-to-one domestic violence programmes which are deemed to be completely inappropriate. It is one of many one-to-one programmes being introduced into the probation service, and is impractical to deliver both in terms of having the necessary level of experience and the time to be able to deliver. Programmes need to be delivered regularly and consistently which is not practical for an individual officer where other priorities may take precedence in addition to annual leave and possible sickness. Research has shown that offenders who fail to complete programmes present a higher risk as a result, than had they not started the programme. We are dealing with a group of men who are often highly frustrated that the law has intervened to stop their controlling, abusive behaviour toward victims. This can then be transferred onto officers, with offenders attempting to undermine officers at every opportunity. Those with a long history of abusive behaviour are not getting into group programmes due to low scoring, in spite of the fact that we know that victims may experience domestic violence an average of 35 times before they contact the police..'*
- b) *'We now have a safer relationships programme which was initially designed for young men under 21 who were thought not suitable for the integrated domestic abuse programme. It hasn't been running for very long, but we were asked to take all cases who had been given IDAP and were deemed lower risk back to court, to be replaced by SRA. As far as staff can see the only reason this has been done is to cut IDAP waiting lists. Staff say that this has resulted in men being sentenced to SRA who actually need the more intensive IDAP intervention. This is very concerning, especially as their entrenched views may influence other younger people on the group. I am not aware of any research that has been conducted about whether the SRA programme does reduce risk.'*
- c) *'We now have IDAPA, a shortened version of IDAP, but I am not entirely certain what the essence of the change is, other than it is no longer accredited as a programme and is now a specified activity, which frankly has brought a lot of problems to some of my cases in terms of court orders and enforcement of attendance.'*
- d) *'The Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme is now delivered within a specified activity requirement, some 18 hours for medium to high risk perpetrators who cannot participate in a group work programme.'*
- e) *'We now have a safer relationships course, which is 15 sessions, as part of a specified activity which has been developed by the probation trust.'*
- f) *'We now have a safer relationships programme which is not accredited. It is a shorter session in content and delivery timescale. It is about information giving and raising awareness more than anything else.'*

- g) *'We now have structured intervention to address domestic violence known as Workbook. This is a set of eight modules, which is based on the old IDAP programme.'*
- h) *'IDAP has been replaced by IDAPA, an accelerated programme. The content is condensed into a six month period to ease waiting lists.'*

Caseload size, suitability and commencement

Individual staff were asked how many offenders on their caseload had been involved in violence in a domestic setting. They were also asked whether these men were suitable for an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme, whether they actually commenced and what the completion and breach rates were.

Caseloads	
Number	668
Suitability	478
Starts	301
Completions	92
Breaches	79

Of the 82 respondents, 67 had responsibility for caseloads with a total number of offenders who had been convicted of domestic violence at 668. The remainder either worked in prisons or held managerial responsibility for a team. The figures these officers supplied were broadly similar but were team wide. Of the 668 individual cases, staff reported that 478 were suitable for programmes. However at the time of submitting the questionnaire, 301 had actually started and the rest were on waiting lists. Again at the time of writing, 92 had completed the course and 79 had failed to comply. It is likely therefore that around 60% of commencements will actually finish the course. The rest will breach, either for non attendance, for being disruptive or because they have been taken back to court for being involved in further offending. These figures suggest that at least 25% of those ordered to attend domestic violence courses were on waiting lists at any one time.

CASE STUDIES

Summary and analysis

The studies contain both successes and failures and in particular highlights the need for persistent support, challenge and intervention. The cases detailed illustrate how difficult it is to engage with men who have been convicted of violence in a domestic setting. Often they are in denial and have high levels of anxiety about participation in groups. Many fail to attend after just one or two sessions and intensive work has to be done with them to persuade them to reengage. This complexity in terms of personality is one of the chief reasons why the breach rate is so high. However there is ample evidence from this and other studies that support which leads to completion does reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

There is clear evidence that the courts have been more willing to use suspended prison sentences as an alternative to prison, but custody is fairly inevitable when the violence continues.

The complexity is evident in dealing with men who have been released from prison who have not completed any programmes whilst inside. They require highly skilled staff and close monitoring in order to minimise the risk to the public. Other perpetrators emanating from different religions and cultures also pose major challenges to staff. The level of intervention and its sophistication is time consuming and resource intensive, but necessary if female victims are to be offered protection.

In a number of cases the perpetrator had limited grasp of English and this was a major impediment to successfully completing the course. Staff report that intervention in these cases can actually make matters worse. The study also demonstrates the limitations of one-to-one work and of courses such as safer relationships, which although they can lead to success can also contribute towards the escalation of violent behaviour because of its inability to deal with the complex, deep-rooted, personality problems that many of the men exhibit.

It is clear from the cases histories that many men who were placed on the programmes had views of women that were so entrenched they were unlikely ever to change. This kind of supervision requires specialist knowledge beyond any tutoring experience in a group. There has to be constant liaison with police and mental health agencies in order to maximise safety for victims. This again has implications for resources at a time of shrinking budgets. In Napo's view this is bound to lead to more violence against women.

All cases reproduced in this study illustrate the need for a highly trained, skilled and experienced workforce. Many of the individuals are highly manipulative and have no real desire to change. Essentially the work is about risk management and protecting victims. Nevertheless 60% of the men complete the programme and in many cases either the above is eliminated or reduced. Any cuts to programmes, intensity of supervision or attention that can be given to ongoing risk management clearly, in Napo's view, puts the victims at risk.

It is of deep concern that there are on average two domestic violence homicides against women per week and that accounts for approximately 40% of all female murders. There is a real fear amongst staff that reducing the number of courses and opting for cheaper alternatives will result in more serious violence and homicide.

Case studies

Staff were asked to supply cases studies where they believed that intervention had changed domestic violence behaviour or where the behaviour had escalated, and in all instances demonstrated the need for skilled intervention.

1. Yorkshire

Staff report working with a 26-year-old male who has a long history of entrenched violent behaviour closely linked to attachment issues with parents. He has a suspected personality disorder as a result. He has a desire to be loved but is so demanding in his relationships that the partners cannot fulfil what is asked, leading to violence and verbal abuse. This individual started and completed an alternative course only to reoffend within weeks of finishing. In the view of staff, non-accredited programmes, such as safer relationships, could not scratch the surface of all the issues present and this has left him frustrated and disillusioned with the service. Staff report being exhausted from all the supplementary work that was needed outside of group work sessions. It is possible that the court will sentence him to IDAP for the further offence.

2. Yorkshire

A 25-year-old man currently under supervision completed IDAP but then went on to commit a further offence of harassment. It is alleged that within this context he made threats to kill his partner and dispose of her body in a vat of acid, so there would be no trace of her body. He was originally assessed as medium risk but his behaviour has clearly escalated and he is now thought to be very high risk of harm to his victim.

3 South East

A 30-year-old male completed IDAP in 2010. He also told staff he had been on other private courses to which his GP had referred him. It is said he had a problem with anger and that had caused his relationship to collapse. Through IDAP he certainly recognised that he had been exerting power and control over his partner and he was able to acknowledge the impact this had had on his children. At the end of the programme his partner reported noticing a marked improvement in his behaviour and she felt the relationship could be reunited and survive. He said the critical moment for him was when he realised it was he who had to change and not his partner. Staff believe this case reflects the importance of skilled facilitators being able to be direct, open and honest when dealing with unacceptable behaviour but also challenged it and offered constructive criticism. It also illustrates the need for probation to liaise with other agencies such as the police and women's safety officers in order to manage the case.

4. South East

Staff are currently working with a 40-year-old man who has almost completed IDAP and frequently tells facilitators that he has changed. However staff are reluctant to believe this because of behaviours he exhibits during the group and also because things the man says do not fit in with the image he likes to present. The handling of the matter is therefore highly sensitive and needs care, skill and judgement as he has a long history of domestic violence over several relationships. He is still living with his partner, the most recent victim, who is significantly younger than him. He has one small child. He is identified as someone who remains at high risk despite his protestations to the contrary in that he believes he has changed.

5-7 South East

- A 30-year-old group member was undertaking the sexual respect module of the IDAP course when he disclosed he had raped his partner the previous week. This meant tutors had to contact the police. The group member was then removed and arrested, causing immense disruption. The remaining participants did however continue and completed the course but they were interviewed by the police and had to make statements about the disclosure.
- On a separate evening in the group, a member turned up at the beginning and asked to speak to one of the tutors. He disclosed that his relationship had failed and he was feeling suicidal to the extent that he planned to kill himself that night. This meant that the tutor had to start the group as normal while colleagues dealt with the matter, contacting the local hospital and close friends and arranging for him to be taken to A&E and advising local police that he posed increased risk of violence to his former partner.
- A third member of the same group exhibited signs of being extremely controlling in his relationship and there had been a long history of domestic violence. Staff tackled his thinking deficits and entrenched view of women, taking into account his mental state. He did make good progress, with a lot of individual work and efforts from tutors, but after several sessions it became evident that he was actually using some of the strategies and skills he was being taught to control and abuse his partner. Staff felt the situation was being made worse. The sessions were then suspended whilst a safety worker made contact with the partner and also the criminal justice mental health team, to which he was referred. There were constant checks to assess the ongoing risks.

8. East Anglia

A third offender, on life licence, had been sentenced to prison for homicide. He later assaulted his partner, but due to the seriousness of the assault he was not recalled to prison but sentenced to IDAP. He lacked relationship experience and skills to manage his interpersonal problems having spent much of his adult life in prison. Thus far IDAP has not only led to improved insight but enhanced skills to manage problems. His relationships are being monitored by police intelligence and the supervision process.

9. East Anglia

An offender recently completed an order with IDAP attached. He had a long history of abusive behaviour within the long-term relationship and initially was unable to recognise the extent of his unacceptable behaviour. On the completion of the programme he is said to be able to identify aspects of his behaviour that need to change and to listen to his partner. He believes that without group work intervention he would not have been able to move on and feels that if he had not attended a programme his behaviour would have gone unchallenged and there would have been repeat situations in the future. He now considers maintaining contact with his children is a priority over trying to score points against his former partner. He believes he has to be completely confident in his ability to manage his emotions before becoming committed to any new relationship.

10. North East

An offender, JM, is said to have worked very well with the programme. There is excellent feedback from tutors and he appears to be improving the standard of his life. He has also been open to one-to-one work, engaged well and said it supported him to make significant changes. He is divorced, with two sons, and despite having several problematic relationships he is now communicating with former partners through his current one. He admits that his behaviour used to reflect his desire to be seen as 'the good guy' by his sons. He progressed through IDAP and began to see that his behaviour was unacceptable, particularly to the boys' mother. There have been no reports of further violence for some time and his relationship with his children appears to be satisfactory.

11 -12 Lancashire

- DS, who is 29, received a community order with the requirement of supervision. He has psychiatric problems resulting from a violent upbringing. His mother died when he was 11. He abused alcohol and cannabis. He has assaulted his partner on a number of occasions. A community approach has proved beneficial, securing appropriate support and assistance for members of his family and relieving pressure on the offender. Psychiatric services have worked with this mental health problems. At present his situation has improved. His mental health has stabilised, there is ongoing work with his addictions and his attitude to his former partner.

- A 40-year-old man was made the subject of a suspended sentence order with a condition of a domestic abuse programme. There had been a serious assault against his partner. In supervision he is charming and superficially engaging. He says all the right things and presents as positive, wanting to change behaviour. However reports from a number of agencies, including those that work with the victim, provide a different picture. They say he continues to make threats to his victim and his parents, with whom he lives. These threats have included use of weapons, including air rifles. He is regarded as high level in MAPPA. He is attending a programme but it is thought that the intervention is unlikely to have much impact.

13. North East

A 45-year-old prisoner was released from custody two years ago having served a lengthy sentence for GBH. He had stabbed his partner three times, causing paralysis down one side of her body. He was initially housed in a hostel. He then completed the domestic violence programme, stopped drinking, found a flat and a new partner. So far there has been no return to offending behaviour. The licence expires imminently. The new partner has been interviewed by the police and no concerns have been raised.

14. North West

A 31-year-old man started treatment work just before Christmas 2011 with a view to commencing a domestic violence programme in January. However, due to lack of resources, that group will not now run until late spring 2012. Probation staff are expected to continue to promote the programme with offenders despite the five month waiting list before it can start. Staff believe that the pre-group work done with the offender will be undermined because of the delay and the risk of further domestic abuse is very high. Criteria to join the programme also changed in this probation trust area to high risk and there are now insufficient facilitators to properly deliver the programme.

1

15 - 16 East Anglia

- A man in his forties subjected his partner to a long period of psychological abuse eventually involving violence. His partner was thrown to the floor and also one of his children was hurt. The offender was sentenced to a community order with IDAP. He is half way through it at the time of writing and there is said to be marked change in his behaviour. He is no longer blaming his partner for incidents at home and it is said that he is increasingly aware of the impact his behaviour has had on his partner and his children. There have been no further incidents.

- A second offender in his early forties was mentally and physically unwell at the time of referral. He was homeless and in pain from a damaged vertebrae, depressed and unemployed. He is truculent and insular and can often present as aggressive when not meaning to do so. He commenced an IDAP programme and became a key member of the group. He is progressing well despite having had further operations during the course of the programme. He has also reported having been violently assaulted. He has not missed any programme sessions and appears to be making sound progress.

17. London

A 29-year-old man agreed to do IDAP to avoid immediate custody. He was very antagonistic towards his female probation officer and said it was her fault for making him resistant to starting IDAP. His partner was also obstructive and disrespectful. There was very poor engagement at the start. The easiest route for probation would have been to breach him, leading to a custodial sentence. Staff however worked hard on concentrating on the benefits to him in that an improved relationship would result. He maintained his position that he would rather go to prison than do IDAP. Probation called his bluff and he has now started the programme. He is reported to be making poor but slow improvement. His partner then stopped coming to supervision with him and being disruptive and calls from the family social worker have stopped, meaning the risk level has been reduced.

18 -20 London

- A 34-year-old man has convictions for several offences against the same victim. They usually start with threatening texts and end with him taking a knife or other instrument and threatening her in public. He uses emotional methods to try to control her. Whenever he has offended he has misused alcohol. He gets very emotional and blames the victim to the extent where he is often out of control. He was sentenced to a three year order with an IDAP condition. He is a high risk case and a decision was taken to suspend his commencement on IDAP for a year. He then reoffended and was bailed outside London and his case was taken over by another area. He was not put on IDAP. The course eventually commenced, but due to the time it had taken between sentencing and the programme's start it was almost impossible to maintain any motivation or get him to engage on any offence focussed work.
- A 28-year-old man assaulted his partner in public by smashing a glass over his head during an argument. This however was male partner against male partner and no specialist intervention is available to assist. This escalated to the same partner being again assaulted and he is now regarded as high risk. In the view of probation staff the case identifies gaps in domestic violence provision and highlights the need for research and development to be undertaken in respect of domestic violence in gay relationships.

- A 47-year-old man is regarded as high risk MAPPA. He has beaten up his partner in front of her children when she was trying to protect them by leaving the family home. Her face needed reconstructive surgery. He was sentenced to custody. He was initially released to a hostel with a residence requirement and strict signing in times. There were active child protection measures in place and he was excluded from the family home and the children's school. There is also a non contact condition forbidding him to contact his victim or their children. He was due to undertake IDAP in the community as part of his licence conditions however he was recalled when he went to the family home to ask his victim for money. He had only been in the community for 12 weeks. He then completed IDAP whilst in custody, but was recalled again because there were concerns that he had been making telephone calls to his ex-partner. That relationship is now ended. In the view of staff this case has required active, multi agency working. There are real concerns that there may be insufficient resources to offer the kind of intensive intervention that was needed in the future.

21. South East

A probation officer started working with Mr E two months into a two year community order. He was convicted of common assault on his partner with a condition that he participate in IDAP. He was a drug user, had mental health problems and his children were subject to child protection arrangements. He was mistrustful of professional agencies and had himself been in care. He was difficult to engage with in the first part of his order. He did the first session of the course but left in the break and did not return. He said he was anxious about attending the group and said he had never completed anything before including school, training and previous community orders. He was then arrested and charged with a further assault on his partner and his children were then put on the child protection register and he moved out of the family home. He agreed to restart the group and after a difficult beginning completed the programme and exceeded expectations. He was able to talk about his abusive behaviour in depth and identify what changes he felt he needed to make and his partner confirmed that he appeared to be making positive changes. His children have been taken off the child protection register. His partner continues to engage with a number of agencies including Women's Aid and there have been no further police call-outs.

22. West Midlands

A probation officer reports recently completing the one-to-one domestic abuse work with a medium risk of harm offender. This is eight sessions and a much shorter version of IDAP. Prior to the programme there was a long history of police call-outs and convictions for violence against his partner. During the course of the work he was taught techniques such as 'time out' and 'self talk'. He used these techniques at home and his partner came into one of the sessions so she could get an idea of how it functioned. The offender claimed he had learned valuable techniques and the programme made him question for the first time how he treated his partner. Although the programme has only recently ended there have been no further police call-outs.

23. North East

Mr M has a long history of violence against two ex-partners. He is currently completing the community domestic violence perpetrators' accredited programme. There have been no violent incidents reported since he joined the programme three months previously. He talks freely in supervision and appears to be learning techniques to control his behaviour.

24. North East

Mr D was sentenced to a suspended sentence order for a domestic violence assault against his partner. He is completing a thinking skills course and his domestic violence is being addressed on a one-to-one supervision order. He remained offence free for 18 months, but then started using alcohol again, and drugs, and punched his partner, who was three months pregnant, breaking her jaw in multiple places. He is now serving a prison sentence of 12 months.

25. North East

Mr N has a history of domestic violence perpetrated against his ex-wife and current partner over a period of six years. There have been in excess of 60 police call-outs. He is described as one of the most prevalent perpetrators of domestic violence known to the police. He has been diagnosed with a personality disorder and deemed unsuitable for group work as he is unable to function. He is working with his GP to address his alcohol use and his domestic violence behaviour is being approached on a one-to-one basis in supervision. This is an ongoing and slow process as he minimises his actions and apports blame to his victims.

26 - 28 Yorkshire

- A 23-year-old man who had established and ingrained views on violent behaviour within a relationship, was placed on an IDAP course. Staff report that he started to challenge his underlying attitudes and increase his motivation to acquire new skills and behaviour. He has one current conviction for a domestic abuse offence but disclosed numerous other incidents in the course of the programme.
- A second 30-year-old man in the same area who emanates from Eastern Europe justifies his abusive behaviour in the context of his cultural origin. The group work has challenged these views without being judgemental about his cultural beliefs and did so in an engaging way but without collusion. However staff report it has been highly challenging and difficult work requiring sophisticated questioning.
- A 40-year-old man who has been released on licence with an extensive and extremely violent history of domestic abuse, maintained his denial of any responsibility despite ongoing attempts to motivate him. He is being supervised very closely as it is feared that his continued denial poses a high risk of serious harm to his partner.

Yorkshire

- A man in his thirties completed IDAP. There were no further call-outs during the course of the order. He expressed significant remorse for his actions and his commitment to the programme was influential on his being granted custody of his children. He concluded that IDAP should be rolled out in schools to allow for intervention as soon as possible so that school children could be brought up without domestic violence, in a normal environment.
- A second man on an indeterminate public protection sentence had been convicted of significant number of violent and sexual offences against his partner. He also had been convicted previously for manslaughter. It was thought that intensive work would be necessary if any progress was going to be made with him.

South Midlands

Staff report working with four men who have just completed IDAP. Three appear more respectful and understanding of women, which staff believe will make them lower risks. Although they had been abusive to partners and parents before IDAP there has been definite improvement. The fourth man however appears unchanged and even more disrespectful. His English is extremely limited, which may be one of the biggest constraints to his personal development via the programme.

Midlands

Staff are working with a 30-year-old man whose relationship ended after he assaulted her. Staff are looking at his attitude toward women and challenging his rigid views and thinking about how to communicate and the way in which he uses intimidating behaviour to get what he wants. There is evidence of very poor communication between him and his ex-partner and lots of conflict both verbal, texting and on Facebook, between them around decision over their new born son. The group is looking at more positive ways for him to communicate and drawing on his experience of childhood and how he viewed his mother and fathers relationship and possible comparisons to his own behaviour, in order to challenge the way he thinks about what he is doing. Staff are also looking at the effect of his behaviour on his son and how this could be affecting his perceptions of what constitutes a healthy relationship. At the time of writing there is no outcome but the situation remains tense and the risk still significant.

East Anglia

- An offender was placed on supervision for domestic offences. He did complete IDAP and was thought to have moved from an entrenched and defensive position to a more reflective and insightful mode. He was later able to provide examples of how he had used skills learnt on the programme to manage real life problems in his relationship.

- A second offender had stabbed his partner and beaten her unconscious before leaving her on the pavement. There is significant evidence of warped thinking, belief and intent behind his behaviour. Staff feel that if it is to be addressed it would require specific knowledge and understanding of domestic violence as well as skills to challenge his entrenched beliefs. The individual committed the offence having left court one morning, having been sentenced for another domestic violence offence against the same victim. The risks are thought to be high.
- In a further case an offender threatened to kill his partner and used calculating and often sadistic methods to ensure her compliance and continued fear. When talking to the offender staff say he presents as courteous, remorseful and determined not to reoffend, yet staff know the risk of him doing so is very high as he lacks insight into the motives of his own behaviour. This case is ongoing.

39 - 40

Yorkshire

- A 40-year-old man was sentenced to two years supervision with a condition of IDAP. He is a serial perpetrator of assaults and harassment but has just one previous conviction for domestic violence. However police call-out records show a pattern of abuse and harassment over a 10 year period. On completion of the course he was assessed as medium risk as his profile and thinking perceptions appear to have altered. Staff were pleased with his progress on issues of control and anger. He has also demonstrated a change according to victim feedback, as although his partner now lives in the same residential area contact with him has been non violent.
- A second offender was sentenced to two years supervision with an IDAP condition. He has one previous conviction for domestic violence against his partner. In respect of the current offence he went to her house with a gun, allegedly saying he intended to 'die by cop' after killing his partner and her children. Eventually barristers plea bargained him down to criminal damage, knocking down the door and related issues. He has previous convictions for arson and serious assault. There are problematic issues in his own background with abuse and domestic violence witnessed by him as a child. He has had four commencements on domestic violence programmes but continues to harass his victim, who has alcohol problems and therefore makes for a poor witness. He is a persistent rule breaker, involving manipulative behaviour. Magistrates asked for the order to continue despite probation saying they could not manage him in the community. He is on IDAP again but is angry, hostile and aggressive. He is still abusing drugs and alcohol but there have been no fresh accusations of violence against his partner.

41. East Anglia

Staff have written a court report on the behaviour of an offender who had been under supervision on a parole licence in the community. On release he commenced a relationship with a woman who he described as supportive. However it was clear in supervision that there were power and control issues and the offender was not managing his emotions effectively within the new relationship. He repeatedly blamed his partner for the tensions between them and refused to recognise that he was controlling her. He subsequently committed an assault on her – grabbing her round the throat – and was recalled to custody. When his licence expired he was re-released on bail. He breached bail conditions and continued to make contact with the victim, during which time he committed two further assaults on her. When he was finally arrested he was found hiding in the victim's flat. It was recommended that he be given a community order with IDAP in order to address the offending behaviour. The court however choose not to impose a community sentence and sentenced him to prison. It also imposed a restraining order on him. On release he breached the restraining order, committed a further assault on the victim and is now back in prison.

42 – 43 North Midlands

- A 35-year-old man has a history of frequently assaulting his partner after drinking bouts. His partner has a child and child protection services are involved. He is thought not to meet the local criteria for IDAP, which is to be assessed high risk. He has severe issues with trust and jealousy, which are entrenched. These require to be constantly challenged in order to work with him. There is also multi agency work involved with this individual around risk management and contact with the police domestic violence unit, with information and alerts on change of behaviour or address. He is now being worked with on a one-to-one programme. Unfortunately there has been one further assault. The work is ongoing.
- A 37-year-old man is not allowed unsupervised contact with his children because of his behaviour toward his partner when drunk. The couple are suspected of not complying with this order. He has persistently reoffended, escalating from criminal damage to assault on his partner and assault on an innocent third party. He has three concurrent community orders but for the most recent offence received a custodial sentence. He will be released soon. There are ongoing issues. It has been difficult to get the man to accept he has a problem, particularly with alcohol, and he needs to address this. His minimisation and denial of domestic violence is extreme. He tells his partner lies and there are ongoing child protection issues. He is also thought to have mental health issues that remain unaddressed. He frequently breaches his order so that any ongoing assessment is extremely difficult. He is currently in custody.

44. North East

AM, who is 40, has been known to probation for 12 years. He has been involved in repeated abuse of relationships with a pattern of controlling behaviour, manipulation of partners, threats of self-harm, breaking into their properties when the relationship ended and becoming aggressive, often self-harming in front of children. He has breached numerous restraining orders whilst the subject of suspended sentence orders and avoided IDAP, claiming he was mentally unwell. He has refused to disclose current relationships or cooperate with any other authorities. He has had several periods of incarceration and has been on community orders at least twice, but there has been little progress with him. He has little motivation to complete the programme despite paying lip service that he wants to address his offending behaviour. He is regarded as high risk.

45. Yorkshire

A 35-year-old man completed IDAP but was assessed as high risk of harm to his ex-partner. During the course of IDAP it is thought his risk increased and his partner was housed in a refuge. Unknown to agencies there was a reconciliation. Tutors on the course were unaware that the couple had got back together. He displayed some very challenging attitudes and probation was informed of a further incident involving his partner. Police and childrens services became active at this time. It was decided to suspend IDAP and offer him one-to-one work to try to encourage engagement. During this time more concerns arose requiring ongoing monitoring and communication with agencies, including the police. Regular home visits were undertaken and information was shared with those who were monitoring events. The risks remained high, particularly as he became involved in a new relationship and the new partner became pregnant. He is now awaiting a restart of the IDAP programme for a third time and concerns remain. This case has required significant levels of experience and skill from staff with priority on information sharing between the various professionals who are trying to manage the risk.

46 - 48 South West

- DH, 28, during treatment work made the link between his abusive behaviour and its impact on his family. Prior to this he had been convinced that his children were not aware of his abusive behaviour towards their mother. The programme motivated him to examine that behaviour further and its impact and to undertake work to reduce it. There does not appear to have been any further police call outs.

- KM, who is in his forties, joined a group, reporting having been abusive in all his relationships and currently facing new charges. He was able to work through his emotions around what had happened and able to take responsibility for his behaviour by the end of the sessions. He was then supported by one-to-one case management, assessing the risk to his new partner, and developing the discussions that had been worked out in the group, using the knowledge, theories and practice behind IDAP to build on the work he had done previously.
- MR, who is 29, is on his second IDAP course, having completed the first three years previously. He had a period of non reoffending since the first completion but his risk increased due to other factors in his life, particularly coming off drugs. He then reoffended against his ex-partner. There does appear to be escalation of risk and harm. He has now been sentenced to a two year order with a condition that he attends IDAP again. He said in court that he was motivated to do this.

49 - 50

North West

- A 28-year-old man who was placed on a programme reoffended against his partner very quickly and was also involved in harassment against a previous partner. He has a long history of assault. The options are currently under consideration.
- A 36-year-old man, living with his partner and three children, was under supervision. The most recent events involved wrapping cable around her throat and threatening her with a cricket bat when she attempted to leave the family home. He has a history of continually being challenging and dominating in supervision sessions. In view of the risk he posed it was deemed necessary to provide him with the opportunity to engage with a community domestic violence programme. His partner revealed to her women's safety officer that his controlling behaviour had reduced significantly since commencing the course and communication had improved within the relationship. Despite him becoming unemployed on two further occasions, an event which had triggered violent incidents in the past, no violence was reported for the duration of the order.
- A 26-year-old man committed assault and harassment offences towards his ex-partner. He is described as having a high level of motivation to address his offending behaviour. He recognises that there will be further reoffending if he does not. The mental health team assessment indicates social anxiety, paranoia and personality disorder and this initially precluded him being suitable for counselling because of the way he was reacting to probing questions. He was then reviewed by his GP as he presented as likely to experience similar issues in the group, but so far has responded to probation supervision and appointments. He is currently deemed not suitable to engage with the community domestic violence programme.

52 - 53

North East

- A 47-year-old offender on an indeterminate public protection sentence was assessed as suitable for a healthy relationships group at his prison. He had stabbed his partner 17 times and made her drink bleach. He is now on a waiting list to start the programme. There is a parole board direction that he will not be released until he has completed the programme.
- A 40-year-old man started the probation trust solo programme but during the course of that he was recalled to prison for actual bodily harm when he tried to strangle his partner. He is now serving another custodial sentence for another assault as well as the period of licence recall.

54. South East

A 33-year-old man has completed a domestic violence programme but is still under supervision. His relationship with the victim of the original offence recently broke down. Staff believe he is using skills learned on the programme to avoid transcending into domestic violence with her again and he has discussed avoidance in supervision. He has also now discovered she has another boyfriend. He is sleeping rough and has not been allowed contact with the sons of his previous partner. Nevertheless he has completed the programme and has not been involved in any further offending behaviour.

55 - 56

Thames Valley

- A 34-year-old man, who is a foreign national, completed a domestic violence programme in 2011. There was a language barrier which prevented him understanding the nuances of the domestic violence programme. There were also cultural differences which had an impact. He had an important position in the country of his birth and had been involved in local politics. His wife worked in a local hospital. She earns more than him and he is feeling devalued and finding it difficult to cope with the role reversal and the fact that his wife was enjoying western culture more than he was and this led to abusive behaviour and a series of assaults. Because of the language difficulties he has been asked to do additional one-to-one work, which is ongoing. Staff believe this is a perfect example of the need to have highly trained, skilled individuals running courses as well as awareness of issues of diversity, which can impact on the delivery of the programme.

- NW, 40-year-old man, has seen himself as the victim throughout participation in the course and he has not accepted responsibility. His behaviour at present has not escalated. He is separated from his wife. He said positive things at the report writing stage and later changed his mind. He has dropped out of one group due to ongoing issues within his own relationship, but has started again. Staff believe that until he takes responsibility for what he has done he will not be able to move forward and make changes. He is still fixated on his ex-partner, sees himself as blameless and will not consider that he may be at fault. The work is ongoing.

57. London

A 29-year-old father of four had three previous domestic violence convictions, blaming it all on his drinking behaviour. He thought that giving up drinking would solve his problems. He did become sober and was reluctant to engage with a domestic violence programme thinking he could learn nothing from it. He also obtained employment which meant that attending a weekly group would become difficult. Staff insisted he continue and he did learn he had unresolved issues and dilemmas he had been experiencing for years, which were masked by the alcohol. He has also been undertaking one-to-one counselling outside the group session. There have been no further incidents since he started the programme and he has gained in confidence and believes he can now be good partner and father to his children.

58. London

A man in his 40s is reported as being unable to understand his pattern of behaviour. He has a long history of violence, however participation in programmes has 'opened him up' and he has become less worried about disclosure. He is now in a new relationship and is working towards abuse not happening again. Staff believe he has learned insight into his own behaviour and beliefs as well as understanding his thoughts and feelings and the link to anger. He keeps a control log and this has helped him analyse his own behaviour, become much more open to change and he has stopped blaming his partner for everything.

59 – 60 London

- A 34-year-old man was placed on a supervision order. He emanates from Africa. His mother was under age and had 12 children over the course of her marriage. He admits that his father used physical means to instil discipline. He normalised his behaviour and has a long history of beating his partner. He was given a condition of IDAP. He found elements of the programme dealing with male privilege helpful in gaining an understanding of why he behaved how he did. He says the IDAP experience was invaluable as was the support of his probation officer. He found it useful and supportive and said it assisted his learning and his motivation for continuing with the group. He now says his relationship with his ex-wife has improved to the point where they are good friends. He has not been reconvicted in the last 18 months.

- A 40-year-old man has a 17 year relationship with his partner. He blames her for 'pushing his buttons' and causing his anger. He takes no responsibility for his own behaviour and responses. However IDAP has taught him to recognise that he had more control over his behaviour than he first thought. He found he was better able to recognise that it was alright for him to control his own actions and behaviour in a positive manner. He also learnt when he needed to walk away and let go and allow his partner space. However he has been reconvicted for a less serious incident. He is now learning to live apart from his partner until she feels able to address her own issues and he is putting IDAP into practice every day. He is still however assessed as medium risk of harm.

61. London

A 35-year-old high risk man recently married his index victim and reported there were no issues between them as they were married. However he has three recorded violent offences against her and exhibited a lot of controlling and suspicious behaviour, such as checking her phone, her Facebook and attending her workplace where he threatened her, prior to the marriage. He claims he forgave her for being unfaithful to him some years ago but there are real concerns. Approximately three months previously he attended a one-to-one session asking what he should do because his wife was cheating on him. He said that both families were meeting to discuss action but there was animosity between them.

He said his wife was contacting him continually on the phone since he had challenged her about her suspected affair. He was agitated and almost intimidating, finding it difficult to express himself coherently. He denied he had been taking any drugs or had other health issues. Staff thought there was real risk of harm to his wife and the man she was suspected of seeing. He was also thought to possibly be a risk to himself as he was agitated. Other agencies were contacted and information was exchanged. Further meetings were held with the man and there were ongoing meetings with other agencies. At the time of writing the situation is more stable. There is now multi agency risk management in place, he is taking part in an IDAP group and the risk is being managed.

62. London

A man in his thirties who has currently been charged with harassment with intent is consumed with hatred for his former partner and is using his children as a means to hurt her. He shows little insight into his own behaviour and claims to understand little about the meaning of domestic abuse. He is however of above average intelligence and it is possible to challenge him try to motivate him to change his behaviour. He is therefore engaged in one-to-one work. Probation officers are confident that there will be change.

63 - 64. London

- A man in his late twenties is currently on licence for rape and is attending the shortened IDAP course. He has disclosed he is looking for a new wife from Bangladesh. He is extremely angry and bitter towards his victim and carries a photograph of her around with him to remind her of what she has done. He is intending to go abroad but will be in breach of his licence and will be recalled. There have been absences from supervision and breach proceedings are being considered.
- A man in his forties is currently on the shortened IDAP course. He has been disclosing his violent behaviour and also says he was a victim of violence from his ex-partner. Facilitators doubt if there is any truth in this allegation. Staff believe there is a serious risk of escalation. Recently he revealed to the group that he was feeling suicidal and had thought of killing his ex-partner. They have one pre-school age child together. There is now liaison between women's safety officers, police and social services.

65. London

A man in his late twenties was convicted of common assault against his ex-partner and this then brought to light a long history of abuse in this relationship and a pattern of violence throughout his life. He is currently diagnosed with depression, acute leg pain and substance misuse problems. There are five children all on child protection plans, due to the abuse, and there is significant multi agency social services work ongoing. He was placed on and has completed IDAP and despite many problems and delays on the way the children have been taken off child protection lists.

He has made progress with substance issues and housing. The case is described as complex. He has many needs and cannot deal with challenging behaviour so lots of strategies have been needed to get him through the work and assess and deal with all his risk factors.

66. London

A probation officer has been supervising an offender in his thirties who has committed an offence of domestic violence against his partner. A court report was prepared asking for custody because of the seriousness of the offence, or alternatively a suspended sentence order with an IDAP condition and a restraining order. He was in fact sentenced to a suspended sentence order with residence and curfew but he was not placed on the IDAP course. He went on to commit further offences against his partner including criminal damage and constantly breaching his restraining order, including contact with his children. After his last breach his SSO was activated and he was given 18 months custody. All this occurred during a seven month period.

- A 40-year-old man was convicted of harassment after sending extremely abusive and aggressive texts with the threat of violence to his ex-partner. He started an IDAP programme, admitted he was wrong but said it was his partner's fault. He also admitted if he came across her he would not be responsible for his actions and would do damage to her new partner. As the case progressed it became evident that he had suffered emotional abuse at the hands of his father who constantly told him he was cowardly, weak and worthless. This then led to change. At the end of the programme it was reported that he had not become angry since the beginning of the programme and was able to manage his behaviour. At the time of writing there has been no further offending.
- JP who was in his early thirties began the IDAP programme with beliefs and mindsets seen in many men during the course. He denied his behaviour was abusive, did not show any willingness to take responsibility for his own behaviour, he blamed his victim and minimised his offence, saying he had been provoked. However as the programme progressed he began to become more open with facilitators and understand his behaviour. During the sexual respect module of the programme he became quite, which was unlike him. He then disclosed he may have raped his wife. He looked upset and worried. From that point on his supervision required very careful managing and involved liaison with other agencies including the police.

69. North Midlands

A 50 year old woman with no previous convictions assaulted her partner with a broken glass. There was evidence of learning disability, an exploitative relationship, multiple personality disorders and alcohol has been an issue. The matter was referred to MAPPA. However there are no courses available for women offenders so she has been the subject of one-to-one intervention.

70 – 72 Prison Setting - South East

Staff report that the majority of men they are working with are lifers but there are some CAT C/D resettlement prisoners. In the view of probation staff, all the cases required skilled intervention to ensure they had the best chance to address their offending behaviour. IDAP challenges beliefs and addresses their behaviours in a way no one-to-one work can. Cases currently in the prison include men who murdered their first partner and committed GBH on their second. In another case a prisoner had murdered his estranged wife's boyfriend despite the fact that there was a non-molestation order in force at the time. This particular man has completed courses and is showing reasonably good insight into his need for power and control. There are also cases of people who have kidnapped. One prisoner who is sight impaired, kidnapped his pregnant girlfriend. He was eventually told he would not get parole until he had completed the relevant courses and this has now happened.

Staff Comments

A number of respondents to the questionnaire made general comments about the provision of domestic violence programmes in their area, the effect of cutbacks and the need for a dedicated, skilled workforce. Some of these are reproduced below:

Community Setting

a) Greater Manchester

'The best indicator of change and effectiveness of treatment is based on the victim's perception of the type of change that the man has undertaken following attendance at IDAP. We no longer undertake psychometric testing so it is therefore difficult to measure the exact impact. In my experience there has been a lowering of standards in the way in which offender were allocated to groups, victim safety work and referrals. I am the only qualified member left in the domestic abuse team, although some of my colleagues are highly experienced and have many years of working in groups.'

b) South Midlands

'The majority of people on groups we run have children and although not involved with social services the children may have witnessed the domestic abuse. We look at parenting and the effect abuse can have on children in the most sensitive way. It is important to keep the men on board so that they can speak about the abuse the children have witnessed and what the consequences might be. I would be really concerned that if this work went to the private sector. Everyone is qualified to a high degree, I am sure the private sector would not ensure that this level of expertise was in place if they took over and they would be looking to make money and not necessarily offer the best service.'

c) Wales

'In my experience over the past 12 months I would highlight five particular cases where IDAP has made a significant impact on the participants' thinking, attitudes and behaviour. In many of those cases I am aware of significant positive behavioural change reported by partners through the women's safety worker. I would say that for the majority of other participants IDAP does make a difference in their attitudes towards women and their increased awareness of their behaviour and increased self control, all of which probably reduces domestic violence in their relationship. It is only in odd cases where I would say IDAP has made no difference to them.'

d) [North West](#)

'I am concerned that the development of lower level DV programmes has resulting in a serious breach of treatment integrity towards securing and providing services for the protection and safety of women and children. I consider the lower risk programme to be highly dangerous practice. We know that risk towards the victim increases at the start of any treatment. On IDAP we teach 'time out' as a risk management strategy in the initial induction period. On the lower programmes this doesn't occur until after the tenth session, which is far too late.'

e) [London](#)

'At the moment I have eight cases which relate to domestic violence offending on my caseload, although in half the cases the domestic violence came to light during the period of sentence. Each case included in that number generates more work than the average case due to the complexity of addressing the issue. It involves more partner agency working, including meetings with social services where necessary, and making referrals to multi agency meetings and presenting cases there such as at MAPPA and MARAC. The work within supervision is also time consuming and this issue has to be addressed sufficiently without ignoring other criminogenic needs. This may involve using work from the one-to-one manual which requires specialist training to deliver.'

f) [North East](#)

'The majority of cases that I have supervised who successfully completed a domestic violence programme requirement have been forthcoming with praise for the programme. Most view the DVP as a very positive experience and it is apparent that many develop appropriate coping strategies. Those who complete have a much better insight into their behaviour and can turn their risk management strategies around compared to those who have not been afforded the opportunity.'

g) [Yorkshire](#)

'The IDAP has challenged several of my cases' beliefs about violence and increased their awareness of the harm they have caused to partners and children and I believe has reduced the risk of reoffending. Behaviour has escalated in cases who have not been motivated to explore their behaviour and who have extremely entrenched views about using violence. Motivating men to explore their behaviour and take steps to address it needs lots of patience and skill.'

h) [West Yorkshire](#)

'Of the five people on my caseload who have completed a domestic violence programme, three have had no further call-outs at all. Two have had one call-out each, but both less serious than the index offence. I had one case removed from IDAP due to low motivation and disruptive behaviour, he went on unfortunately to murder his partner. This demonstrates the risks involved in domestic violence and the need for experienced staff to work cases who commit this type of offence.'

i) [Leicestershire](#)

'I work with persistent prolific offenders, who are by definition chaotic, with a host of problems ranging from mental health to substance abuse. As a result the majority of my time is spent breaching and returning them to custody. I recently completed five IDAP sessions with one offender who presented as highly motivated and compliant following his recall to custody for absconding from a hostel. However I subsequently found out his abusive behaviour has not changed and he was returned to custody.'

j) [South East](#)

'Every man, save one, that I know who has successfully completed IDAP appears more respectful and understanding of women, which should make them less risky. But some men have terrible partners and parents before IDAP and their improvement is relative to the start point. One offender recently is unchanged and more disrespectful. His English is extremely limited, which in my view is the biggest constraint to personal development via IDAP.'

k) [Leicestershire](#)

'I have had three offenders who completed domestic violence programmes. It has made a significant difference to all three. I have also engaged in one-to-one work with one motivated offender but I felt a proper course would have had more effect. I believe skilled intervention is especially needed where there are child protection concerns, which happens in roughly five out of every seven cases I have. I think there is a high incidence of personality disorder and psychopathic tendencies in the domestic violence population.'

l) [Kent](#)

'Most individuals speak well of the courses, although one struggled with all aspects of the rest of his life. It was decided to suspend him from IDAP and carry on with one-to-one supervision and hold three-way meetings with the victim where appropriate rather than breach for non-IDAP compliance.'

m) [North East](#)

'I work with very high risk cases in public protection. I recently dealt with an offender with a considerable history of both serious violence against both his mother and partner. This involved highly skilled and multi agency joint work and close monitoring with the police. I believe this can only be done through a properly qualified probation officer. For example a fully comprehensive spousal assault risk assessment (SARA) must be completed on every domestic violence case. This risk assessment is vital and only possible through specific training with commensurate access to police intelligence and probation records. I also need to work closely with women's safety workers and other relevant agencies. In addition I have to write very detailed monthly reviews to the crown court at the judge's specific request on progress. I need to have a clear definitive knowledge of DV risk, particularly where there is substance and alcohol usage, especially over holiday periods.'

Every aspect of DV work must be fully recorded and confidential and subject to possible serious further offences should one occur. If the workers aren't skilled and professional the consequences for the victim can be extremely serious and all too often life threatening. It is absolutely appalling that tendering such vitally important publically accountable work is even being considered.'

n) [West Midlands](#)

'As far as IDAP is concerned, if it is taken seriously by the offender, it does raise awareness as to the reasons why, consequences of and harm to all involved. One-to-one work can work but should stay one-to-one and there should not be pressure on officers to start running groups, which is totally inappropriate.'

o) [Thames Valley](#)

'I work as a probation officer and deliver IDAP so I have seen successful changes of behaviours with people who attend the group. With people awaiting to start I tend to do one-to-one work in order to prepare them. There are other cases I have but because of the young age of the perpetrator I have not felt that they were suitable for group work so I do one-to-one work. There is a need to do this structured intervention to address their thinking and to deliver this with a mixture of IDAP exercises alongside the use of targets for effective change'.

p) [Yorkshire](#)

'In our area we run a programme which is 12 sessions as opposed to the 27 of the IDAP. This encourages men to look at their past behaviour but does not allow time for teaching of relationship skills. The men on this programme are there because they are not living with a partner at the point of sentence. We do have failures on both courses but at present we are being relatively successful in keeping men on the group and achieving a real change in their views about their former behaviours.'

q) [West Mercia](#)

'We have participants who come back to talk to new participants about the benefits of completing the IDAP programme now. We have also had participants who attend on a voluntary basis where their orders have been exhausted but who want to complete the module.'

r) [Yorkshire](#)

'I believe that specialist skilled interventions from the various staff involved including programme tutors have been crucial in managing all cases as it is through the attendance on IDAP and information sharing between professionals that risk is successfully managed.'

s) London

'I have worked on many cases where the work demonstrates the need for skilled intervention. One in particular used excessive sexual violence as a way of controlling his partner, including one where he raped his 16-year-old step daughter as a way of controlling that partner. The individual went to prison and completed a lot of work regarding the offence particularly with the victim, which clearly required specialist skilled intervention.'

Cafcass setting

t) North West Cafcass

'There are a significant proportion of Cafcass private law applications in which domestic violence is both raised as an issue or independently identified via safeguarding processes and has to be considered within an assessment of the welfare of the child. In all these there is a need for skilled intervention in terms of the interview and assessment of victims, be they adult or child. There is a need to interview and assess perpetrators and liaise with other agencies such as probation, police domestic violence units, local authorities, DV perpetrator programmes, multi agency risk assessment conferences and multi agency public protection arrangements. This is time consuming and needs skill and training.'

u) London Cafcass

'Cafcass can only refer perpetrators direct to programmes run by probation if certain criteria are met. High risk cases and those with concerns over mental health and substance abuse are under specialist risk assessment which is likely to recommend attendance on a perpetrator programme. However if the person is not in receipt of legal aid their costs may have to be borne by the perpetrator.'

Prison Setting

v) South East

'All the cases I work with require skilled intervention to ensure they have the opportunity to address their offending behaviour. IDAP challenges beliefs and addresses their behaviour in a way no one-to-one work can.'

w) Prison setting

'I currently have a caseload of 28 prisoners. A large proportion of them have issues around domestic abuse in some capacity. Many have been identified as needing an accredited programme though some can do one-to-one work. Others have other work that needs to be undertaken as a priority, for example addressing instrumental violence, emotional management, aggression, substance misuse and educational needs. Currently however only two are undertaking domestic violence courses, four have completed within the last 12 months and the rest are waiting for commencements.'

Conclusion

Domestic violence programmes are clearly an important intervention in both containing and reducing crime for the probation service and Cafcass. However the case studies and trends in this briefing cause grave concern. There are now clearly waiting lists of three months or more before a perpetrator starts programmes and this seriously affects motivation. Many areas have introduced shorter, less intensive, non accredited programmes and one-to-one work. This is in response to a combination of high workloads, cuts and the cost of delivering full length programmes. Whilst there is evidence in some cases of these shorter, non accredited programmes assisting in rehabilitation, in many cases the intervention is not appropriate.

There is evidence too of services rationing programmes to those who pose high risk, which is reported by almost half the staff who engaged in this study. The policy of restricting programmes to those who pose high risk is potentially dangerous in that there is evidence from this study and elsewhere of behaviour escalating if it is not challenged at an early stage. Concentration therefore on high risk cases may in the end prove counterproductive.

The cases studies also show overwhelmingly the need for a skilled, experienced, trained workforce to deliver the programmes and other interventions. However cuts to the probation service and Cafcass budgets are already resulting in fewer programmes being run because of fewer staff and the staff who are left are having to resort to one-to-one work, which is not always appropriate. Unfortunately it is the experienced who are currently leaving both services in significant numbers. In Napo's view privatising the provision of programmes will lead to a fall in the quality of supervision and should be resisted. Napo believes that a combination of fewer interventions and various rationing techniques will compromise public protection and inevitably and unfortunately lead to more victims, more misery and more violence.

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