

I am the IDVA Service Manager at XXXX City Council. Our service has seven IDVAs, one DVA children's programme coordinator, one part time helpline worker and one court / admin worker. We deal with approximately 600 high risk cases each year, of which 75% are referred to us by the police.

Having looked at the majority of IDVA cases over the last month or so, the following are comments to what we have been witnessing recently.

This is by no means the whole picture as there have been some outstanding police responses (especially by the dedicated Safeguarding teams – which are diminishing), but the picture is not consistent. Victims do appear to be receiving a varied response from frontline officers. Often cited is lack of resources to respond to the volume of calls in a timely fashion.

1. Failure to arrest for breach of civil injunctions, in particular non-molestation orders, and for breach of restraining orders; at least half, if not higher of all current IDVA cases where there is a NMO / RO in place, breaches have not been pursued by police. Comments from the IDVA team have included that often the police approach to breach of a NMO is:
 - Not taken seriously, it was only a minor breach....
 - Not enough evidence to suggest it was a breach
 - A complete lack of understanding about what 'indirect contact' or 'intimidating behaviour' is
 - At worse the responsibility of the breach is placed on the victim, 'you responded to...' 'you made contact....'
 - some extremely negative comments have been made in relation to child contact: 'dad just wants to see his children', 'be reasonable' etc. one victim in particular was so appalled by the unhelpful and victim blaming response she recorded the police officers on her phone
2. Failure to utilise Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders; this is getting slowly better, but still far too many missed opportunities for DVPN / Os when an offender is not charged and released NFA. Naturally we see more DVPN's then O's – it has been suggested that this is due to being unable to locate the perpetrator to serve the notice in time to proceed to the order
3. Failure to apply for restraining orders at point of sentencing (whilst this involves failures on the part of the CPS also, it can result from initial failure by the police to request an order); this is usually not an issue as we have a SDAC IDVA in court weekly with the up-to-date information in relation to ROs and requirements (especially concerning third party child contact arrangements....)

4. Failure to impose bail conditions:
4. a) Where suspects are interviewed as volunteers and not arrested, bail cannot be used. Not such a big issue in our current case load, more released NFA'd
4. b) Where suspects are interviewed under arrest, release pending further investigation without bail, or release on bail without bail conditions.

This is an area of rapid increase since new Policing and Crime Act 2017. We are increasingly seeing 'Under Investigation' on daily basis – especially if the victim / perpetrator are under 25 yrs old