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**The delivery of domestic abuse
programmes**
**An implementation study of the delivery
of domestic abuse programmes in
probation areas and Her Majesty's
Prison Service**

**Karen Bullock, Sophie Sarre, Roger Tarling
and Mike Wilkinson**

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Contents

Key implications for decision makers	i
Summary	iii
1. Context	1
2. Aims	3
3. Approach	4
4. Results	6
Community programmes	6
References	20

List of tables

Table 3.1	Breakdown of interviews by area and responsibility	4
Table 3.2	Breakdown of interviews with programme participants	5
Table 4.1	Evaluation measures completion	8

Key implications for decision makers

This research examined the implementation of domestic violence perpetrator programmes in the Probation Service and the Prison Service in England and Wales. The aim of the study was to identify factors central to determining how well the programmes operate in practice and to assess whether the programmes are being implemented according to the stated guidelines. This research identified a number of lessons which could be used to inform future policy making and practice in this area.

Probation Service implications

Offender manager role

In the community programmes risk management is the responsibility of offender managers. There are a number of guidelines for offender managers to follow regarding keeping partners, ex-partners and children safe. This research identified that practice, at all stages, varied between practitioners, and that there appeared to be deviation from the stated guidelines in some cases. Co-ordination of information flows, within the Probation Service and from outside agencies, is crucial to successful risk management, and this does not seem to be occurring in all cases. This is an issue central to effective operation of the programmes, and it is recommended that efforts are made to improve consistency of practice. Greater monitoring of individual offender managers is required, as is a drive to ensure that all those handling the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme/Community Domestic Violence Programme (IDAP/CDVP) cases are trained, and fully aware of their pivotal role in the programme structure.

Women's safety worker issues

- **Timing of the approach to partners/ex-partners.** Partner/ex partner engagement is central to the success or otherwise of the programme. The number of women who engage with the service varies across the country but is generally low. The timing and the nature of the approach seem to influence engagement. It is thus recommended that efforts are made to improve the timeliness of the approach to each woman and to ensure that the women's safety service receives referrals quickly and accurately. Some areas do appear to have been successful in engaging women and good practice in these areas could be communicated internally in a more systematic fashion.
- **Resourcing.** This role is resource intensive and in the absence of additional resources it is hard to see how women's safety workers would be able to work with more women, or more intensively with particular women, to maintain their engagement. An option for high-risk cases may be to link women's safety work more routinely into the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) or other victim workers who can provide more intensive advocacy and support.
- **Integration into the programme structure.** The study has shown that the women's safety worker can be somewhat marginalised, and information not routinely shared. The centrality of this work to the effective management of risk needs to be acknowledged and the flow of information between offender managers and women's safety workers improved.

Group delivery

Practitioners reported that the cognitive-behavioural group work is delivered in line with the programme framework (though some areas are more problematic than others). Delivering the group work elements of the programmes is challenging though and the manuals cannot guide the tutors in all the scenarios they may face. Hence, a strong framework for monitoring and supporting tutors is important. However, due to pressures on treatment managers and poor quality video monitoring equipment there is mixed practice in respect to the levels of monitoring of group delivery. This is a key part of the treatment manager's role which is not always prioritised. It is recommended that greater efforts are made to facilitate this to ensure that practice is consistently of a high standard and that tutors develop their skills over time. Options for improvement, aside from ensuring the technology works properly, would be to reduce reliance on the videos and for treatment managers to monitor a selection of groups in person.

Evaluation measures

These take up a substantial amount of time with, from the perspective of those administering the measures, little gain and little incentive to complete them. As a result, evaluation measures were often not completed and those that were completed may not have been given due attention. The opportunity cost of time spent completing the measures can be quite significant. Therefore, if it is felt that they are important enough, some kind of meaningful sanction for non-completion should be employed, and feedback on results offered to practitioners who are engaged in collection. If not, then consideration should be given to scaling down the quantity collected, or even to abandoning them altogether.

Prison Service implications

Risk and the role of the women's safety service

The management of risk for participants on the Healthy Relationships Programme (HRP) is generally confined to reports on the man's progress in the group work and one-to-one sessions. Information from other sources could be gathered and used to corroborate men's reports. Particularly absent in HRP is the voice of the victim and/or the partner of the programme participant. Although it is clear in the programme manuals, there seems to be a lack of clarity about what the role of the women's safety worker should be in practice. This needs to be addressed.

Summary

Context

This study involved undertaking a process-focused evaluation of the implementation of accredited domestic abuse programmes across probation areas and Her Majesty's Prison Service institutions in England and Wales. As part of the commitment to tackling domestic violence, cognitive-behavioural programmes aimed at modifying the attitudes and behaviour of perpetrators have been developed and delivered throughout the UK. In 2003, the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel accredited two programmes, the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) and the Community Domestic Violence Programme (CDVP) for delivery in the Probation Service and the Healthy Relationships Programme (HRP) for delivery in prison. IDAP, CDVP and HRP include cognitive-behavioural group work components alongside a package of inter-agency risk assessment, proactive offender management and structured victim contact from the women's safety service.

The study is one of the first to examine the implementation of domestic violence perpetrator programmes across the statutory sector in England and Wales. Its aim was to consider the factors central to determining how well the programmes operate in practice. It also sought to identify whether the programmes are being operated in accordance to stated guidelines and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Approach

Data were collected from ten probation areas and from two prisons (Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Whatton and HMP Manchester). The areas were selected to cover all the probation regions of England and Wales. The prison sites were selected by the Ministry of Justice. All fieldwork was conducted between April and July 2008. The data collected took the form of qualitative interviews with practitioners involved in delivering the programmes and with men who had participated on them. Practitioners responsible for delivering the programmes were identified for individual interview in ten probation areas and within two prison sites. Interviewees included: programme managers, treatment managers, tutors/facilitators, offender managers and women's safety workers. The exact number of interviews depended on the size of the programme and number of staff involved, and was typically between five and ten. In all, 55 interviews were conducted, with a small number (4) involving more than one interviewee. Interviews were also conducted with 26 men, who had participated in the programmes, to explore their experiences, their views and perceptions along with its perceived impacts and benefits. Certain key factors were found to shape the operation of the programmes. They include: the referral process and the management of waiting lists; the nature and integrity of group work delivery; issues that influence the management of risk; and the nature of women's safety work. Given the selection and sampling issues it is difficult to say with any certainty that the results reflect the practice of areas or sites not included in this study. The findings are summarised in the following sections.

Results

Community programmes

Referral and the waiting lists

- The study aimed to examine the arrangements for referral to the programme and the length of time that men wait to start the group work. The decision to refer is an important one because there are more men sentenced for relevant offences than there are places on programmes. The study showed that a decision to refer an offender to a programme is shaped by the extent to which he meets the suitability criteria and the programme capacity. Even though it is offender managers who actually make recommendations for referral, via the pre-sentence report, other programme staff play a central role in this process. Practitioners set targets for the number of perpetrators who should complete the programme. The flow of men to the programmes in the community is controlled on the basis of the capacity of the group work programme and if too many are being referred they will tend to tighten the criteria for acceptance, informing offender managers to write their pre-sentence report with these criteria in mind.
- Once an offender is selected as suitable, the length of time he waits to start the programme is shaped by an assessment of the level of his risk (higher risk offenders generally take priority, and can be fast-tracked onto the programme), by the time it takes to complete the pre-programme requirements, and by the length of time until the start of the next module (IDAP), or course (CDVP and HRP).

The nature of group work delivery and monitoring of integrity

- Meta-analyses point to how maintaining quality and integrity of the delivery of cognitive-behavioural group work is an important factor in determining effectiveness. Respondents consistently reported that the cognitive-behavioural group work is indeed delivered within the framework on which the programme is based. Deviation was evident only to account for dynamics of specific groups and to make examples more relevant to men on the programme. Nevertheless, these are very challenging programmes to deliver and the instructions cannot guide facilitators in all issues and scenarios that may arise.
- Reflecting the challenging nature of the programmes, guidelines set out minimum levels of training for tutors and arrangements for monitoring the quality of group work. However, the study showed that the extent of monitoring of the quality of group work and staff supervision was, in practice, highly variable due to pressures on the managers, and poor quality equipment.
- All programme tutors have had basic training which was generally considered useful, although they recognised that this does not necessarily provide them with the skills to manage all possible scenarios. While tutors recognised that practical experience is important in developing their skills, some felt that additional formal training would be helpful.
- There are guidelines for group size, gender and consistency of tutors and suitability of venue. Generally, efforts are made to conform to these programme requirements. Practical and organisational constraints mean that it is not always possible in some areas.

Managing risk

- Offender managers are responsible for the management of all aspects of risk – meeting with participants at stated intervals, conducting all pre- and post-programme work, and acting as a conduit for all information regarding risk. This study identified deviation from the programme guidelines in respect to risk management. Individual practice is highly variable at all stages. This appears to reflect a combination of the pressures of case load, an assessment of the man's risk and a lack of awareness of the guidelines.

The role of the women's safety worker

- To co-ordinate risk, the partner/ex-partner of the programme participant should engage with the women's safety service. This study identified that the number of women engaging with the programme across the country is variable, but generally relatively low. Interviewees identified that engagement seems to be influenced by the speed at which contact is made by the women's safety worker relative to the index offence taking place, which is in turn affected by how quickly the women's safety worker receives the referral. Interviewees also suggested that women are more likely to engage where the service is seen to offer support on their terms and is non-judgemental – issues which women's safety workers seem to be very sensitive to.
- As the link to the partner/ex-partner, the women's safety worker holds the key to vital information about the participant's behaviour and risk. In turn, offender managers should communicate relevant information to women's safety workers. This research showed that information exchange between the offender managers and women's safety service is not always routine and can be slow. Despite its importance, the role of the women's safety worker can sometimes appear to exist on the margins of the overall risk management framework.

Prison programmes

Referral and waiting lists

- In contrast to the Probation Service, prisons have discretion to determine their own referral criteria. HMP Manchester was moving towards a system of referrals based only on the recommendations of an offender's sentence plan. In HMP Whatton, referrals also came from offender managers on the basis of routine use of the Offender Assessment System (OASys) or attitudes shown by an offender in another group work programme. In HMP Whatton men could also self-refer.
- Demand for HRP is high because it is offered only in a small number of prisons, resulting in long waiting lists. In both prisons men were prioritised primarily on the basis of their suitability and level of motivation along with the length of their tariff. The pre-programme work conducted in the prison is very different to that in the community setting and primarily involves one-to-one motivational sessions with group tutors. The nature of this varies between practitioners as there is little guidance on how this should be conducted.

Group delivery and integrity

- As in the community programme, systematic deviation from the manuals in respect to the delivery of the group work was not evident except to respond to the dynamic of particular groups. Video monitoring of group work delivery seems to be more consistent in the prisons. A sample of videos are observed by the treatment manager and subsequently sent to the Offending Behaviour Programme Unit at HM Prison Service. In turn, practitioners noted that they received feedback from the Offending Behaviour Programme Unit. This could be indicative of a generally more structured regime, which also has fewer programmes and consequently less staff to manage.
- Aspects of administration are similar to those in the community settings, and respondents identified that they went to some lengths to follow the procedures set out in the manuals – especially in respect to group size, gender and consistency of facilitators.

Risk management

- There are significant differences between the community and prison setting in respect to risk management. Risk management is primarily driven by the collection of information related to an offender's engagement with the programme. It centres on one-to-one motivational sessions with group tutors and session review logs, along with the completion of a range of psychometrics and evaluation measures. Although the HRP manuals make reference to women's safety work there is limited proactive relationship between the programme and the women's safety worker.

Implications

- IDAP, CDVP and HRP comprise cognitive-behavioural group work for perpetrators of domestic violence, along with packages of inter-agency risk assessment, proactive offender management and structured victim contact. The programmes have been rolled out across probation areas and in certain prisons since 2003. This study has identified uneven practice in respect to the delivery of some of the constituent parts of the programmes. Some aspects of programme delivery appear to reflect the principles set out in the guidelines. In others there is greater deviation. This relates especially to the risk management functions of the offender managers. Individual officer practice appears to be shaped by their level of knowledge of how the programmes should operate and their own views on the utility of the programmes along with a lack of formal structures to ensure that this work is completed.

1. Context

This report presents the findings of a study which examined the implementation of domestic violence perpetrator programmes in the Probation Service and the Prison Service throughout England and Wales. Three domestic violence perpetrator programmes were accredited by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel in 2003.

1. The Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) is a rolling cognitive behavioural programme based on the Duluth model.
2. The Community Domestic Violence Programme (CDVP) is a sequential, cognitive-behavioural intervention based on a family violence initiative within the Correctional Service of Canada.
3. The Healthy Relationships Programme (HRP) is also a version of the Correctional Service of Canada family violence initiative.

IDAP, CDVP and HRP include cognitive-behavioural group work programmes. The three programmes have a similar (although not identical) theoretical framework. The stated primary aim of all the programmes is to 'eliminate' violence against women and children. According to programme documentation all three draw on Dutton's 'nested ecological model'. This conceptualises domestic violence as a multidimensional problem and considers the links between the social and psychological characteristics of individual perpetrators (e.g. his development, experiences of abuse, degree of empathy), his immediate patterns of interaction (e.g. his environment and patterns of family interaction) and the influence of his social context (e.g. his work and friendships) as well as wider influences (e.g. cultural norms endorsing male power and control, patriarchy). They also draw on social learning and cognitive-behavioural theory.

CDVP and HRP identify 'self-control' deficits that offenders need to deal with and the cognitive-behavioural methods focus on these directly. By contrast, adopting more of a feminist perspective, the IDAP model emphasises the central role of culturally reinforced attitudes of power/control over women. Whilst cognitive-behavioural methods are employed, the primary approach is more indirect and the focus is on re-educating men regarding their views of how women should be treated and relationships managed. Although there is similarity between the theoretical basis of the three programmes stated in the guidelines the subsequent programme structure, tools and techniques diverge somewhat. IDAP is a rolling programme based on nine themes, each one taught over a three-week period. Graduated methods are used to introduce the participants to the theme, to explore them, to enable participants to understand their own controlling behaviour and finally to explore alternative 'non-controlling' behaviours.

The moderate intensity of HRP and CDVP are broadly similar. These programmes consist of six modules containing 24 sessions. There is also a high intensity HRP which consists of ten interrelated modules and takes around six months to complete. CDVP and moderate HRP modules include: managing thoughts and emotions (thinking skills, emotions management); social skills (communication, negotiation skills); and relapse prevention. The programme aims to teach participants to analyse and understand their patterns of thinking and to change them. Once participants can identify underlying beliefs they are introduced to alternative beliefs, actions and behaviours.

For all three programmes management of risk is also a component, so they include a package of inter-agency risk assessment, proactive offender management and structured victim contact from the women's safety service. Offender managers should meet participants at regular intervals during the time that they are on the programme, link into local multi-agency forums for risk management, react to emerging risk and enforce the court order.

Participants' partners and ex-partners should be referred to the women's safety service. Women's safety workers should meet with partners and ex-partners (if they are willing), conduct safety planning, collect information regarding risk from women and link women into local support services.

A battery of 'evaluation measures' should also be collected from participants before, during and after their programme, the aim of which is to provide data for evaluation of programme effectiveness.

The programmes have been rolled out to all Probation Services in England and Wales and at the time of writing also operate in five prisons. They are not, however, without their critics. There is ongoing debate regarding whether they are effective in preventing re-offending and, in addition, commentators have noted the following:

- that they are inflexible and non-responsive to individual or group needs (Eadie and Knight, 2002; Rees and Rivet, 2005);
- there is concern that the programmes do not address the broader, social needs of offenders (Atkinson, 2004; Raynor, 2003; Rees and Rivet, 2005);
- there is suspicion that statutory provision for the perpetrator may be funded at the expense of support for women (Eadie and Knight, 2002);
- there have been implementation problems including waiting lists, differential access to training, high staff turnover (Bilby and Hatcher, 2004).

2. Aims

This research involves a process-focused evaluation of the implementation of accredited domestic abuse programmes across probation areas and Her Majesty's Prison Service institutions in England and Wales. The stated primary aims were:

1. to assess whether or not the domestic abuse programmes (IDAP, CDVP and HRP) are being implemented according to the programme guidelines;
2. to understand the perceptions of staff and offenders with regard to the implementation of the programmes.

More specific objectives of the research were to examine practice in relation to:

- offender assessment, selection and participation;
- staff training and support;
- the arrangements for treatment and programme integrity;
- interagency work;
- the evaluation and monitoring requirements for IDAP, CDVP and HRP and whether the measurements are collected correctly.

3. Approach

The primary source of data were qualitative interviews with practitioners involved in delivering the programmes. Interviews were conducted in ten probation areas and two prisons. Probation areas were purposefully selected to cover all the government regions of England and Wales and different operational contexts (e.g. urban/rural). Two prisons (HMP Manchester and HMP Whatton) were selected by the Ministry of Justice. It is difficult to say with certainty whether the practice found in these areas would be reflected in other areas or prisons.

All fieldwork was conducted between April and July 2008. Practitioner interviewees included: programme managers; treatment managers; tutors/facilitators; offender managers; and women's safety workers. Interviews explored staff views regarding a range of subjects: how the programmes are being implemented; why interventions are delivered in certain ways; the nature of inter-agency working and any associated stresses or strains; and the tensions that may be associated with the delivery of programmes in operational contexts. They also afforded an opportunity to explore the experiences of practitioners and their views about what works well, or less well, in the programmes. The exact number of interviews depended on the size of the programme and number of staff involved, and was typically between five and ten. Interviewees were selected partly in terms of their knowledge and experience of the programmes. It should be noted though that the researchers relied on a senior practitioner (usually a programme or treatment manager) to select who was interviewed. This raises issues about sampling, but because of practicalities (staff illness, holidays etc) and protocol (the researchers could not bypass these gatekeepers without jeopardising the goodwill of those being interviewed) there was little option in this regard.

Table 3.1 Breakdown of interviews by area and responsibility

	Programme Manager (PM)	Treatment Manager (TM)	Group Tutor (GT)	Women's Safety Worker (WSW)	Offender Manager (OM)	Total
Probation area						
Derbyshire	-	1	1	1	-	3
Gloucestershire	1	1*	1*	-	1	4
Hertfordshire	1	1	1	1	-	4
S. West London	1	1	-	2	-	4
Manchester	1	1	4	1*	1	8
North Yorkshire	1	1	1	1	-	4
Northumbria	1	1	2	1	-	5
South Wales	1	-	2	1	-	4
Sussex	1	1	2	1	1	6
West Mercia	1	1	1	1	1	5
Prison						
HMP Manchester	-	1	3	-	1	5
HMP Whatton	1	1	1*	-	-	3
Total	10	11	19	10	5	55

* With two interviewees.

Interviews were also conducted with a small number of men who had participated in the programmes. They explored participants' experiences of the programme: their views and perceptions along with the perceived impacts and benefits. Access to offenders was usually arranged via programme staff. Because of logistical issues regarding their availability – often only for a very limited period prior to a group session – interviews were conducted in a limited number of the probation areas. The same constraints were not a factor for inmates in prison. It was thus possible to interview participants in both prisons.

Table 3.2 Breakdown of interviews with programme participants

Area/institution	Number of interviews
London (GM)	10
HMP Whatton (GMP)	4
West Mercia (GM)	4
HMP Manchester (GMP)	3
Hertfordshire (GM)	2
Gloucestershire (GM)	1
Northumbria (GM)	2
Total	26

All interviews were digitally recorded (with the exception of those conducted in HMP Manchester which is a high security prison and does not allow recording equipment so notes were taken instead) and fully transcribed. Probation areas and interviewees were anonymised, and individual respondents assigned codes numbered at random, but their different roles within the programmes can be identified by the codes noted in the tables above. Interview data were organised into themes informed by the aims of the study. These included: the selection and referral of offenders; waiting list management; the management of risk; inter-agency working; and staff monitoring and management. The interview data were used to make assessments regarding the extent to which the programmes (IDAP, CDVP and HRP) are being implemented according to the programme guidelines and to examine the perceptions of staff and offenders with regard to the delivery of aspects of the programmes. In analysing and interpreting the data, themes were developed on the basis of issues identified across a range of interviews. Certain practices and experiences were observed, and these are discussed in the results sections. Some deviation from general trends is inevitable and if practice at individual programme level deviated significantly from the general trend this is highlighted also.

A further aim of the study was to examine whether the evaluation measures are collected correctly. Quantitative data related to the ten Probation Services and two prisons were extracted from central data bases and the levels of missing data identified.

In the following results sections the community programmes (IDAP and CDVP) are discussed first, followed by the prison-based programmes (HRP), though there are of course cross-cutting issues.

4. Results

Community programmes

Referral to the programmes and waiting list management in IDAP and CDVP

An aim of the study was to understand how the practitioners apply referral and selection criteria. The initial decision to refer men to the programmes is an important one because there are far more men convicted of violence against their partners than there are places on the programmes.

Men are referred to the programme on the basis of a pre-sentence report recommendation but the programme is not considered suitable for all those with relevant convictions. Their suitability is assessed by an offender manager on the basis of a risk assessment (OASys, and the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment, SARA), age, level of drug and/or alcohol dependency, literacy and crucially, his level of motivation:

'You are looking for some acceptance of culpability, some sort of desire to change, some sort of understanding that the victim has not had a very nice experience...but within these parameters there is quite a degree of flexibility because they are going to be at an early starting point in that process of accepting culpability.'

(OM1)

Not all the men assessed as 'suitable' can be referred to the programmes without waiting lists growing. Throughput of men onto the programme is controlled by the programme staff engaging with offender managers in respect to what constitutes an appropriate referral at the pre-sentence report stage. Their guidance and recommendations point offender managers towards a particular decision.

The suitability criteria are, therefore, tweaked by programme staff over time in order to manage the throughput of men. Where the flow of eligible men is high, the programmes will only take offenders with high-risk scores and where this flow is lower they will take both medium- and high-risk offenders. It appears that a continual balancing act is taking place. If existing criteria for acceptance are producing a backlog they are tightened, and conversely, if not enough men are coming through, the criteria are relaxed. Some areas seemed to have more problems judging the throughput than others:

'The waiting list...averaged from about three months to six months...so quite a significant waiting list...and then we changed our criteria to high highs (risk) and as a result...the waiting lists were significantly reduced...so at present there is no waiting list and we've got ample space...and very recently...we changed the criteria again...so we're taking mediums back now.'

(TM 7)

Other organisational processes also shape how long men wait to commence the programme. The time it takes to complete the pre-programme work (discussed further below) and the participant's level of risk – men considered as lower risk may be bumped down a waiting list in order to accommodate higher risk cases – are also important determinants.

Pre-group programme work in IDAP and CDVP

Pre-programme sessions are provided to introduce the prospective participant to the programme. These sessions are considered to be important for motivating the participant and introducing him to the group work requirements. Levels of motivation can be difficult to gauge though. Some men, for example, could be more concerned with avoiding a prison sentence than truly driven to change their behaviour. However, this may become apparent during pre-programme work, and indeed high levels of attrition were reported at this stage.

'At the moment we are enrolling 20 onto a group. We never get 20...by the time the groups actually start sometimes we expect to get 14-15 on the first night...we tend to finish groups now with around 8 or 9.'

(GT2)

Programme staff reported that there were sometimes delays in completing the pre-programme work. These delays were attributed to a lack of knowledge, or perhaps an element of scepticism, about the programmes amongst some offender managers. In addition in some areas there are no formal, systematic structures to monitor the progress of this work and so whether it is completed becomes reliant on individual officers practice and programme staff chasing them if necessary.

There is also a requirement that the programmes collect certain data from the participants the purpose of which is to inform any future outcome study. These are separate from and in addition to the data collected to make an assessment about suitability noted above (OASys, SARA). CDVP and IDAP should collect evaluation measures three times: pre-programme; at the end of the group programme; and then six months after that. In practice, there is a great deal of variation regarding how the measures are collected and by whom, and there are significant concerns regarding their completeness and quality.

Significant numbers of men – almost 3000 – have completed the programme in the areas examined. However the evaluation measures are poorly completed. Pre-programme data are available for just under 80% of the participants and pre-programme data together with post-programme data for just over ten per cent of participants. Pre-programme, post-programme and follow-up are available for fewer than 1.5% of the participants.

Table 4.1 Evaluation measures completion

Type of data	Number of men
Pre only	2,208
Post only	207
Follow-up only	7
Pre and post	299
Pre and follow-up	3
Post and follow-up	5
Pre-post and follow-up	40
Type not classified	217
Total	2,986

Interviewees offered various reasons why these measures are not always completed. Firstly, they can be time-consuming to complete for some offenders. Secondly, for many programme staff and offender managers there appears to be little purpose in collecting these measures. Many respondents stated that it is unclear whether anything is done with them and that they do not receive any of the results anyway:

'It has been a complete waste of time up to date....what is the point of a whole bunch of psychometrics being done...and there is no feedback mechanism'

(TM2)

Thirdly, there is little material incentive to complete them. No sanctions are in place for any failure to complete, and conversely no reward for careful and timely completion. The programme management, therefore, may not see the measures as a priority and this attitude filters down to the line-level staff where responsibility for the task is disputed.

Group delivery, integrity and administration in IDAP and CDVP

An aim of this research was to examine the nature and integrity of the delivery of the group work sessions. Meta-analyses point to how maintaining quality and integrity of the delivery of cognitive-behavioural group work is an important factor in determining whether it is subsequently effective or not (Lipsey *et al.*, 2007). Indeed the point of accrediting and monitoring the programmes is to ensure that high quality interventions are consistently delivered across groups.

Across areas, interviewees – programme managers, treatment managers and facilitators – reported that the delivery of the group work was framed in terms of the programme manuals. Indeed, tutors sometimes refer to the delivery manual as their 'bible', and the document does seem to offer a strong framework, which tutors and treatment managers generally spoke highly of. The manuals are not totally prescriptive though and cannot control for all the sets of circumstances. Facilitators noted how difficult it can be to deal with some of the issues raised by the programme:

'The one thing that bothers me about IDAP is...that some of the modules that we look at, you are not really sure where to go...sometimes you want to explore certain things and you are not really sure how to do that effectively. You can look at general things, but trying to get guys to open up, particularly if they have been abused themselves, that can be quite daunting.'

(GT9)

It is challenging to deliver this programme to a high standard. The key to maintaining and improving delivery may rest in group monitoring, good training, and generally, a strong system for internal quality control. Reflecting this, an aim of the study was to examine the arrangements for monitoring group work quality and practitioner views of their training and management. Programme manuals set out the various ways through which practitioners should monitor and improve the quality of delivery. The extent to which these are adhered to in practice varies.

- **Video monitoring.** Respondents reported variable levels of monitoring of group work in practice. All groups should be recorded, a sample monitored and this should feed into staff management and development. The degree of monitoring undertaken varied substantially across areas. In some it approached the levels set out in the manuals. However, in others little or nothing was being done.
- **Individual staff supervisions.** The manuals set out in detail the number of one-to-one supervisions that members of programme staff should receive. Again, practice was mixed. Some practitioners appeared to be receiving supervision roughly in accordance with the guidelines set out in the manual, whereas others rarely saw their supervisors.
- **Team meetings and consultancy.** Respondents noted that team meetings and reviews with external consultants were held across the areas. Generally these were seen as useful for developing skills and discussing problems.
- **Counselling.** Respondents noted that counselling was available but that individual take-up was variable. Some tutors appeared more likely to access counselling than others.
- **Peer support.** Across all areas there seemed to be good mutual support and co-operation amongst programme staff. Tutors stated that they would debrief individual sessions with their co-facilitator and that they could also consult with treatment managers (and other colleagues) for advice on areas of concern. Thus, some kind of informal development and review was taking place in most areas even if this does not look quite like the arrangements set out in the programmes.
- **Training.** Group tutors reported that they had received the mandatory facilitator training. Most were positive about this training, with the caveat that the training only provided an introduction to the programmes and that their skills in delivering and managing the group work are developed through experience.

A final feature of programme integrity relates to the group administration which is designed to optimise learning and to portray a positive and healthy working relationship between men and women. IDAP and CDVP manuals set out very detailed instructions about how

the groups should be administered in terms of, for example, the suitability of the venue, the location and time of groups, the group size, and about maintaining consistent male/female facilitator teams. Across areas, respondents noted that considerable efforts were made to conform to these guidelines. This was challenging though. Maintaining male/female facilitator pairing can be difficult if the team of programme facilitators is not gender-balanced. The same applies for sustaining consistency of facilitators (same tutors in the same groups) over the cycle of a whole programme. Managing these requirements is a constant juggling act for programme managers and practical constraints on the availability of staff mean that in some areas it is not always possible.

Practitioners noted that the size of the groups can be variable. Generally the group size was around eight or nine (about what it should be) but occasional extremes of between two and fifteen were reported. In most areas the accommodation was described as suitable, although in some men and staff had to travel long distances. Groups were run both during the day and in the evening in all areas. There was variation though. One area ran all but one of its groups during the day. Others offered more evening sessions. The rationale behind these different approaches varied from considerations about risk to concerns about convenience for the men who were employed.

Managing risk in IDAP and CDVP

Understanding practice with regard to risk management was a key aim of the study. The safety of women and children is the primary concern of the programmes. The management of risk is, therefore, central to their effective functioning. There were variations in the extent to which risk management procedures were followed.

Meeting with the offender

There appears to be variable practice in respect to whether the offender managers meet the participants at the regular intervals set out in the IDAP and CDVP guidance:

'Well as far as I'm aware, when they're on IDAP...there's an expectation that they will see their offender manager every third week, which is about every fourth week, which is the gap week. Some see them more regularly than that and some unfortunately don't see them in the gap week, so that's as far as I'm aware.'

(GT16)

Respondents suggested that the quality of the work with individual participants is associated with the extent to which individual offender managers know about the requirements of the programme and acknowledge its value. It also depends on the size of their case load and on their judgement about the degree of risk posed by an offender. There was a sense that offender managers tended to view the period when programme sessions were running as a time when their input with offenders could be downgraded. Effectively the individual was handed over to the programme staff. This may have been related to the division of labour within the Probation Service:

'I think that the psyche of the offender managers is that when it comes to addressing criminogenic needs, that's our job, that's what interventionists do...so their tendency is to hang onto them and not do that much within the sessions, run them through the programme and then get shot of them...For me as a prevention officer to have a probation officer phone me up and say "I've got somebody on a DV order and I don't know what to do with them because the programme hasn't started yet" is a bit frightening.'

(PM5)

Reacting to emerging risk

The management of risk is reliant on both the generation of information regarding offender behaviour and on that information being shared between those agencies responsible for acting upon it. In IDAP and CDVP risk should be monitored by the offender managers who retain primary responsibility for identifying and acting upon fluctuation in risk levels. The research identified that information was available from various sources in principle but the level of routine data sharing varied in practice. Information regarding risk is generated from various sources and utilised in practice in different ways.

The behaviour, attitudes and attendance of group participants is monitored and recorded by group tutors. Respondents across probation sites stated that they would react instantly if they felt that a man's behaviour during a group work session indicated that a woman may be at imminent risk. In these circumstances the tutor would contact the police, the offender manager and the women's safety workers directly. More generally, tutors and treatment managers highlighted how they would do their best to ensure that men did not leave groups frustrated or angry as a means of minimising the potential of harm to women and children:

'One thing you really want to avoid in a group is getting men wound up. They need to be leaving the group calm, clear, and as they were walking in...you shouldn't be winding people up to the point where they are distressed and they are a risk going out of the building.'

(GT10)

In general, respondents indicated that this information is shared in a straightforward manner between the tutors and the offender manager. Information about behaviour, attitudes and attendance is generated routinely by programme tutors and recorded on management systems. This information is stored on shared databases but these systems are not the primary means by which offender managers search for and access information about a participant's progress and risk. Reflecting the sheer volume of information generated, they tend to rely on individual communication from the tutors to alert them directly to any issues of concern.

Information should be shared between the offender manager and the women's safety service. Respondents across the areas noted that the level of routine information exchange between the women's safety worker and offender managers was not consistent. In many areas women's safety workers are reliant on offender managers informing them of the existence of a new referral, and providing accurate contact details. This did not always appear to occur in a timely manner:

'Sometimes... the referrals don't come through straight after the person has been sentenced. It could be months, or in some cases nine, ten months...I would say that the majority of cases come through quite some time after the offender has been to court and been sentenced.'

(WSW5)

'That's something that I think could be improved...it's really important that...we get to find out things like, if a man starts a new relationship, if he discloses that there's some sort of crisis within the relationship...if he discloses that there's some sort of crisis. In an ideal world we would automatically be told all those things...I don't think we always get that information in a timely fashion...Individual staff are very good...but what we need is a system, so that exchange of information is facilitated better.'

(WSW2)

The relationship between offender managers and programme tutors appeared, in some cases, to be problematic. Across areas programme staff noted that whilst some offender managers were very good at sharing information others were less proactive:

'We're constantly chasing up offender managers, it's just never ending, and yet it's the offender managers who are supposed to be central, and they should be managing the order. It's just not working and we're constantly contacting women's safety workers... we have more of a relationship with women's safety workers than offender managers.'

(TM7)

Information on a participant's risk during the order may come directly from other agencies. The flow of communication from the Police Service is especially important. The extent to which information from the police is feeding routinely through to programme staff is mixed:

'We get the police call outs, so we know if there has been quite a few call outs or we will have had one of the meetings [the MAPPAs meetings]...the DVU [domestic violence unit] will be there...in [named area] we have all got brilliant liaison with the police.'

(TM3)

'Well, we have supposedly got a protocol with the police that has been agreed a number of years ago, but it has never filtered down from the top down to the bottom. So we have got a protocol and then we as practitioners are trying to link in with the practitioners in the police station and so there are some difficulties with that and we are trying to forge the link without people who the protocols haven't filtered down basically. Also there is a huge changeover of staff in the police.'

(PM10)

Whether the offender managers or the programme receive information from the Police Service is dependent on the relationship between police officers, offender managers and the programmes at an individual level. This in turn appears to be related to the Police Service's arrangements for dealing with domestic violence – whether it is prioritised and whether multi-agency data sharing agreements are in operation and used.

Finally, interviewees across areas reported linking into formal multi-agency arrangements – local Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) and (where relevant) Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). Practice varied across areas in

respect to these. In some areas the treatment manager, group tutors, or women's safety worker attended but in others information was passed on to the offender manager, who was the main conduit to external agencies. It appeared that the programmes were always represented in these forums, suggesting that information sharing of this sort was considered important. Further work would be needed to examine more fully the nature of inter-agency risk management and its impact in the field of domestic abuse.

Women's safety work

In principle, the women's safety worker is central to the management of risk. The safety of women and children is the key concern of the programme and it is widely accepted that partners (and ex-partners) have access to the most accurate information regarding a participant's behaviour, and hence risk. For this process to work optimally partners must engage with the service.

Securing the engagement of the partner/s or ex-partners of the participant constitutes a significant challenge. The partners of all participants are contacted by the women's safety worker, and while the level of take-up by victims of domestic abuse is variable across areas it is generally quite low. The offer of assistance is rejected, or at least ignored, by many women. Those who are no longer in contact with the offender and who have perhaps moved on to a new relationship might not be interested in engaging with the service. There may also be resistance among women to contact the Probation Service, given its connection to the criminal justice system. Some of these failures to engage partners or ex-partners are understandable and actually it may not be necessary to be in contact with some women. The priority though should be to maximise take-up by those women who are still at risk.

Certain techniques and practices appear to help secure more referrals than might otherwise be the case. Women's safety workers reported that the form in which an approach is made can be important in setting a tone and optimising the chance of take-up. Women should feel comfortable with the contact, that they are not being judged and that the service offered is for their benefit rather than that of the Probation Service. The timeliness of the approach also appears to influence whether she will engage. A long period between the index offence and the approach from the women's safety worker makes take-up less likely.

Some of these issues could be addressed through improved co-ordination and information sharing. However, sustained engagement with the women's safety workers seems to be influenced by the nature of the services they provide. The guidelines state that the support and advocacy offered to partners and ex-partners should be limited. If the woman is prepared to engage, evaluation measures are collected at set intervals, a safety plan prepared, and contact details for relevant organisations which offer support proffered. In the opinion of some practitioners this limited role is not sufficient. While recognising that the demands of

managing a large case load of contacts make it extremely difficult to sustain intensive one-to-one contact, it was suggested that without putting in time to support particular women they may not engage with the service at all:

'I think there's little understanding on management's view that, they just think, well she's got that problem, that's really got nothing to do with IDAP, so refer her onto somebody else. But they don't always want to be, I would say the majority of them don't want to be referred on.'

(WSW5)

Enforcing the order

An offender can breach his order by failing to follow programme regulations. Any problems once the group has begun, for example with missed sessions, disruptive behaviour, or lack of engagement, would be dealt with by programme staff. The guidance gives a participant some leeway with regard to missed sessions – up to three catch-up sessions with group tutors are allowed. Practitioners have discretion to determine whether participants are sufficiently engaged with the programme material and make decisions on a case-by-case basis. There appears to be a general reluctance to breach men, especially once they are established on the programme:

'The manual lays down how many misses someone can have...occasionally I've had to remove someone because they're clearly causing difficulties...but I wouldn't use the manual in a mechanical way...If we're taking someone off the programme then, by definition, we could be putting someone else at risk, so we should try and get the person through the programme.'(TM3)

Efforts are made to help the participants complete. Where a man has been having problems, especially in respect to attendance, he may be returned to his offender manager for more motivational work and be allowed to start again at a later date.

Men's engagement and views on the programme

This study was concerned with understanding participant engagement in the programme. Interviews, with both participants and tutors, indicated that original motivation to attend the group programme was limited. One group tutor, when asked what he thought influences engagement, was quite clear:

'...prison. Some of them literally turn up because they don't want to go to prison'

(GT3)

Whilst a few men appeared to look forward to the programme, hoping to gain useful insights into their behaviour and tools for managing emotions, most were apprehensive. Despite the pre-programme introductory work the prospect of a long programme with a group of strangers is clearly a daunting one. Respondents stated that men generally do engage with the group work programme, at least to some degree. The opportunity to learn from other

men was frequently referred to by the participants as being an important factor in facilitating involvement. Working in a group meant that there were a range of personal experiences and views to draw upon, along with practical suggestions for dealing with issues and emotions. Participants stated that they employed the input of others to evaluate their own situations, opinions and actions.

Group tutors felt that their own attitude towards the men in the group could influence the likelihood of engagement:

'I think it's about listening and keeping hold of personal information, things that are relevant to them, and then coming back and feeding (that) back to them...but it's also how you interact...I treat people how I like to be treated.'

(GT1)

This attitude certainly seemed to have a positive impact on the men interviewed. Their views on their group facilitators were usually complimentary. When referring to their approach the men employed terms such as non-judgemental, approachable, respectful and helpful:

'Well, it was just pretty much giving me a chance to introduce myself, anything I said they made it feel like it was valid and they would actually listen and give advice about it – really interested in knowing what you are doing outside work, outside of the course and stuff like that. They do involve themselves quite a bit, they do encourage you as much as they possibly can, I think.'

(GM6)

In one area, facilitators would arrange to see men individually for extra discussion if it was felt that more individual support was required than could be offered in a group session. Several of the men had literacy difficulties, and they appreciated the help that the facilitators gave them with for example filling in written components of the programmes. Consistency of facilitators was also seen as important in developing a productive group work environment. This helps build up a rapport and facilitator knowledge of their personal situation.

Many interviewees (staff and participants) noted that the rolling nature of IDAP was important for engaging new participants. The more experienced participants acted as 'role models' for new starters and made the prospect of a long group work programme seem less daunting. It was suggested that their involvement facilitated a more relaxed atmosphere, and more importantly, helped to combat initial resistance from new members:

'The fantastic thing about IDAP is that by the time the men have got through quite a lot of the process they are like mini-facilitators, so instead of constant challenge coming from tutors...where they are like "oh God, you are just browbeating us with your do-gooding ways"...if it comes from another man then you can just see, it makes them pay attention.'

(GT10)

Whilst mindful that our sample was relatively small and self-selected, the majority of men interviewed felt that the programme had had some impact on them and that they had learnt skills and techniques for managing their behaviour. Not everyone was in an intimate relationship, but nonetheless some men found that their IDAP/CDVP experience had influenced other family and work relationships. Generally, interviewees who had participated on the programme felt that it had helped them be calmer, and to stop and think before taking action. Other respondents noted that it had helped them to respect their partner, and to act with a greater appreciation of the effect of their behaviour on others:

'In general just the way I come across and deal with situations, you know, I didn't understand, I don't think I really realised that I was coming across in my voice and my body language quite aggressive towards my partner always. I've controlled that a lot more, so it's, you know, I'm conscious of it, which means that you do tend to control it. You know, as soon as it starts happening, you can nip it in the bud, because you're now conscious of it, you know you're doing it.'

(GM11)

The prison programmes (HRP)

An aim of the study was to identify differences between the community and prison-based programmes. There are actually strong similarities between the group work in HRP and the community programmes. However, because HRP is delivered in an institutional setting there are certain constraints and considerations which shape its operation, especially in respect to referral and the management of risk.

Referral, suitability, waiting lists and assessment in HRP

Very few prisons run HRP, and in both the prisons there is a high demand for the programme, which inevitably results in waiting lists. Unlike IDAP/CDVP, HRP does not constitute part of a sentence. The referral procedures differed between the two prisons. HMP Manchester was moving toward referrals based on an offender's sentence plan. In addition to sentence plans HMP Whatton referrals also came from offender managers on the basis of routine use of OASys or attitudes shown by an offender in another group work programme. In this prison men could also self-refer.

Not all men referred start the programme. As in the community programme practitioners identified that men are prioritised on the basis of their suitability (assessed in the same way as IDAP/CDVP and as set out above) and level of motivation. In the prisons an important additional consideration is the length of an offender's tariff. Those coming to the end of their tariff are prioritised, as are those on indeterminate sentences who are over their tariff.

As in the community-based schemes participants complete a number of pre- group work sessions to introduce the programme and improve motivation. This is rather different though from that provided by IDAP/CDVP. In both prisons motivational interviews were conducted

on a one-to-one basis with the men to engage and prepare them for the group work. There is little guidance on what the motivational work should include and practice reportedly varies between different practitioners.

Evaluation measures

As with the community programmes an aim was to examine whether the staff understood and delivered the evaluation measures. In both prisons staff stated that they complete all the psychometric and evaluation measures which are also used to help identify treatment needs. These measures were then reportedly sent to Prison Service Headquarters. Indeed, an examination of the evaluation data for HRP showed that it was much more complete than that available for the community programmes. Administrative records indicate that 243 men had completed HRP since 2003 and that psychometric tests were recorded for 173 of those participants (71%). However, these data are virtually complete, recording all pre- and post-test scores on all individual tests.

The difference between the community and prison setting seems to reflect organisational and cultural processes. The prison programmes are run by psychologists who appear more willing to collect these data. They may see value in collecting the data which many of the Probation Service staff do not. In addition, the programmes have fewer participants than the community programmes and, because of their institutional setting it may be easier to manage the collation of these data. Lastly, the collation of the data is monitored centrally and missing data chased up. This obviously creates an imperative to take the collection requirement seriously.

Group delivery, administration and integrity

The HRP group work was reportedly delivered according to the programme guidelines. Variation from the manual was only evident in respect to how the sessions were delivered, not in respect to what was delivered. Respondents reported deviation from the manual only in response to group dynamics and to make delivery more relevant to the men's context (outdated Canadian examples were noted as inappropriate).

As in IDAP/CDVP certain management processes to oversee programme integrity should be in place, along with systems to manage practitioners and interventions. Though some variation was evident at the individual level they were generally more systematically adhered to than in the community programmes. In line with the manuals all sessions were reportedly recorded. A sample was observed by the treatment manager and subsequently sent to the Offending Behaviour Programme Unit at HM Prison Service. In turn, practitioners noted that they received feedback from the Offending Behaviour Programme Unit. This would seem to offer a robust means of ensuring the group work is of an appropriate standard and a way of developing tutors skills.

Practitioners were generally positive about their line management although it appeared that individual practitioners received varying amounts of formal supervision. Counselling was reportedly available for those who wanted it but the take-up at the individual level was variable. Consultants were also available and consultancy reportedly occurred when required rather than systematically. As with the community programmes respondents reported high levels of support from their colleagues.

Finally, the programme tutors were positive about the training they had received. As in IDAP/CDVP they reported that the training needed to be reinforced with practical experience. In HMP Whatton, tutors were usually experienced in other programmes before being trained to deliver HRP. Tutors in HMP Manchester, on the other hand, were either seconded from the Probation Service or the Prison Service and trained for HRP. In this case, while they might not have had programme experience they were generally very experienced in offender management. Other tutors were recruited directly. These tutors tended to be very inexperienced, usually recent graduates. Whilst there was no evidence that these tutors were less able to deliver HRP, it makes monitoring of quality and staff development more important.

Respondents stated that considerable efforts were made to ensure that aspects of group administration set out in the manuals were adhered to. This included holding groups in appropriate rooms, maintaining consistent facilitators and balancing the genders of the facilitators.

Monitoring, risk and breach

The arrangements for the management of risk vary markedly between prison and community settings. Managing risk in an institutional setting is rather different from doing so in a community one, as a man in prison does not pose an immediate risk of violence in the community. This is not to say, of course, that issues regarding the management of risk are not posed. Many men do maintain a relationship whilst in prison (with an original partner or with another woman), and he may continue to be abusive to her on the telephone or during visits. Of course, most men will also be released at some point.

The primary sources of information for risk management are generated from one-to-one sessions between the tutors and participants, the post-session review logs completed by the tutors and the psychometrics and evaluation measures. Information on a participant's behaviour in the wings could be collected from prison officers, as could information regarding how participants behave towards their partners (and other visitors) during visits and on the telephone. These sources of information, along with information from women's safety workers, could be compared to that given by the man himself. This is not currently happening.

The role of monitoring progress was primarily the concern of the tutors, although resettlement officers play a part in the post-programme review and in taking forward aspects of this. The

role of offender managers and women's safety workers appeared to be marginal. Indeed, there was little evidence of proactive engagement between the programme and women's safety workers at all.

It was reportedly highly unusual for men who had started the programme not to complete it though. Participants can be removed from the group at the discretion of the programme staff. This would usually be the result of disruptive behaviour, absence from the group or very low motivation.

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The delivery of domestic abuse programmes: An implementation study of the delivery of domestic abuse programmes in probation areas and Her Majesty's Prison Service

This research examined the implementation of domestic violence perpetrator programmes in the Probation Service and the Prison Service in England and Wales. The programmes comprise cognitive-behavioural group work, an integrated risk management system and support for partners and ex-partners. The study showed that the effective operation of the programmes is reliant on systems of referral, integrity of group work, consistency of risk management practice and on the engagement of partners/ex-partners with the women's safety service. This report makes recommendations for the refinement of certain procedures, particularly in relation to the monitoring of risk management processes.

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