



MEN & WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER TO  
END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# **Engaging safely and effectively with perpetrators of domestic abuse**

Sara Kirkpatrick: Respect Services Development Manager

# Who are Respect?

## UK membership organisation

- **perpetrators**
- male victims
- young people
  
- Respect Phonenumber & Men's Advice Line
- Research & development
- Set national standards & accreditation
- Support innovative safe practice
- Influence public policy

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# Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

psychological

physical

sexual

financial

emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

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# Perpetrators of domestic abuse

- Evidence shows that the majority of domestic abuse perpetrators are men who tend to 'specialise' in violence, abuse and coercive control of their partners.
- They do not always appear to be violent or abusive to professionals who have contact with them.
- In order to effectively respond to perpetrators of domestic abuse professionals must be able to identify abusive behaviour
- Be willing to work with specialist services in order to both challenge the behaviour and address victim safety.

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# Perpetrators of domestic abuse

Work with perpetrators of domestic abuse has **increased** in both inside the Criminal Justice System and beyond.

The **appetite** for innovation and a broader range of solutions to challenge or disrupt abusive behaviour has continues to increase.

Work with perpetrators of domestic abuse offers the **opportunity** to address the source of the problem.

Work with perpetrators of domestic abuse must be conducted as **part of a systematic approach** to tackling Violence against women and Girls.

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# The scale of the problem

Police data indicates domestic abuse related offences make up 1 in 10 of all crimes (England and Wales 2015-16)

Not all domestic abuse is brought to the attention of the police.

The Office of National Statistics annual crime survey estimates that 1.9 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2017.

There is no specific data on perpetrators but we can presume that 1.9m victims equates to a very significant number of perpetrators and presents a considerable challenge to every local community.

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# Wider than Criminal Justice

Key to the management of perpetrators and protection of survivors is an effective criminal justice system. High quality evidence gathering to ensure a successful prosecution where crimes have been committed is essential.

But justice for survivors means many things beyond the criminal justice response:

Accessible and affordable civil court processes

Recognition of further harm

Being given a voice and being listened to

Expanded space for action

**Your Role may well contribute to justice for a survivor**

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# Do No Harm

While interventions with perpetrators are always aiming to reduce harm it is vital to recognise there are some risks in undertaking this work, such as:

Overly optimistic judgements by providers and partner agencies

Increasing perpetrators sense of grievance

Inappropriate offer of service for perpetrators needs

Perpetrators deliberately misleading partners

Perpetrators manipulating the system

'learning new tricks'

Consider who can be harmed?

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# Do No Harm: Consider who can be harmed?

The current partner experiencing direct current abuse

Children in the home where abuse occurs

Former partners

Children from previous relationships

Future partners

Future children

Professionals, colleagues and ourselves.

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# Coordinated multi-agency action

Domestic violence and abuse cannot be addressed by one agency alone and work with perpetrators should never take place in isolation.

Local multiagency arrangements such as the MATAC (multi agency tasking and coordination) approach bringing together all agencies – public sector, voluntary sector and private sector – who have contact with perpetrators to agree an action plan to address their behaviour and its impacts, and to reduce future harm.

The priority is always the safety and wellbeing of victims including children who may be witnesses and/or themselves victims of direct physical abuse.

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# Where does your service fit?

Many organisations work with service users who have domestic abuse in their life, most of these organisations are not primarily addressing 'domestic abuse'.

Contribution to strong multi agency networks enables more effective and faster responses to the needs of these individuals.

This allows all professionals to contribute appropriately to addressing domestic abuse without requiring services to undertake work which they are not equipped (or resourced) for.

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# What do you know?

Some of you may work with men who arrive at your service with a full chronology of abuse

Others of you may become suspicious that someone is a perpetrator due to signs in the course of your work.

What are the signs that have alerted you in your work that someone might be a perpetrator of domestic abuse?

What are you able to contribute to the addressing the perpetrators behaviour?

What services are also available in your local area, do you have established links with them?

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# What could you know ?

Create an environment where disclosure is possible.

Consider asking everyone if they affected by domestic abuse

Create a culture within the service where violence can be discussed – not just with victims but also with potential perpetrators

Have access to helpline numbers clearly available so people do not have to ask.

Skills where possible create a relationship with trust, respect and honesty but also have clear boundaries

Identify who is doing what to whom.

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# What can you do?

Reflect on your own feelings about asking about perpetration- confidence, comfort, anxieties you may have

Avoid jargon and be clear about speaking to other agencies, and that there are boundaries to confidentiality – safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Document all your contact with a perpetrator him and form a case chronology

If you are in contact with both partners, always try to see them separately to discuss abuse.

But note – where his abusive behaviour is the problem be careful not to act as if she is the problem (consider how this might happen)

Do not expect an early full, honest disclosure about the extent of abuse used.

Do not expect or believe that one candid conversation is likely to bring about a cessation of abuse.

Consider how you respond to all allegations of domestically abusive behaviour.

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# Communication styles :

## Collusive

**secret** agreement or **alliance** with the other person

A shared position

Questioned person may feel at ease you maintain trust but lose critical distance

Can you tell me what *really* happened?



## Collaborative

to work, one **with** another to cooperate with the other person

A neutral position

Questioned person may feel at ease you maintain trust and retain critical distance

Can you tell me what happened from your perspective?



## Confrontational

Challenging accusatory to work **upon or at** the other person

An adversarial position

Questioned person may feel judged & not at ease you lose trust while retaining critical distance

Can you tell me what you *claim* happened?



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# Referral to a Programme

Respect Phonenumber is available to professionals to find out if there is an intervention with perpetrators in your area or if you need advice regarding a perpetrator.



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# Respect Phonelines

Men's Advice Line – for supporting male victims of domestic abuse



Advice and support for men  
in abusive relationships  
Helpline 0808 801 0327



Respect Phoneline – for supporting perpetrators of domestic abuse



Phoneline 0808 802 4040  
Are you hurting the one you love? Choose to stop!

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# Contact Respect

**Website:** <http://respect.uk.net>

**Email:** [events@respect.uk.net](mailto:events@respect.uk.net)

**Tel:** 0207 549 0578

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