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An Assessment of Services for Domestic Abuse Perpetrators in Bristol.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODS	4
1.1 Background	4
1.2 What is a domestic abuse perpetrator programme?	5
1.3 Why have a voluntary programme?	5
1.4 The effectiveness of different perpetrator programmes	6
1.5 Research aims and objectives	8
1.6 Methods	9
1.7 Report structure	10
CHAPTER TWO – PERPETRATOR PROFILES	12
2.1 Background	12
2.2 Socio-demographic characteristics	12
2.3 Incident details	16
2.3.3. Nature of domestic abuse incident	18
2.4 Criminal justice system outcomes	18
2.5 The frequency of domestic abuse in Bristol	19
CHAPTER THREE – ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PRACTICE	20
3.1 Current work with perpetrators	20
3.2 Referral routes	20
3.3 Different organisation’s responses to the same situation	21
CHAPTER FOUR – NEEDS ASSESSMENT	24
4.1 Availability of services in Bristol for perpetrators of domestic abuse	24
4.2 Is there a need for a perpetrator programme in Bristol?	24
4.3 Potential take-up of services	26
4.4 Awareness raising of services	27
CHAPTER FIVE – RECOMMENDATIONS	30
5.1 Recommendations	30
APPENDIX A – CASE OUTCOMES	32
APPENDIX 2 - QUESTION GUIDE	37
REFERENCES	39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter One – Introduction and Research Methods

- The response to domestic violence in the UK and elsewhere has been to situate the victim and any children at the heart of interventions. This has been important to ensure the safety of the victim and her children and this has been the focus of most research. However, a sole focus on the victim and children cannot in itself reduce domestic violence substantially over time. This is because the end of a relationship is unlikely to mean an end to the perpetration of domestic abuse (perpetrators may continue to abuse the same partner after a relationship has ended and/or may abuse a new partner). Any region seriously committed to *reducing* domestic abuse cannot afford to ignore perpetrators.
- Evaluations indicate that perpetrator programmes can have a positive impact and result in change for some men. However, research on perpetrators is in its infancy and there are many as yet unanswered questions. The largest, most robust evaluation to date took place in the USA and found that the majority of men (80%) reached sustained non-violence, with around 20 per cent continuing to reassault (Gondolf, 2004). The evaluation also found that the strongest and most consistent predictor of reassault was the woman's perceptions (i.e. likelihood of reassault) and that a programmes' success was dependant on the wider intervention system of which the programme was just one part. Hence, rather than a voluntary perpetrator programme being an alternative to the criminal justice system, it is vital that it works as part of a coordinated approach to tackling domestic abuse.
- The remit of this research was to: provide a review of relevant literature; develop profiles of domestic violence perpetrators in Bristol; map current work with perpetrators in Bristol; estimate the scale of the problem; provide a needs assessment and; discover potential referral routes and suggest relevant programme 'advertising'.
- This research used an 'action research' framework and used a multi-method approach to address the research aims, including: interviews with forum members; analysis of police data; interviews with statutory and voluntary sector organisations; a survey of women survivors; and participant observation at meetings and workshops.
- A total of 76 statutory and voluntary sector organisations were approached to take part in the study, which resulted in 28 interviews (a response rate of 37%). The most frequent explanation for not taking part in the research was that it was not relevant to their organisation because they did not work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. However, it was also clear that many of these organisations *would* come into contact with perpetrators – in some cases on a day-to-day basis. This suggests either a lack of awareness about what constitutes domestic abuse or a lack of inclination and active avoidance of working with perpetrators.

Chapter Two – Perpetrator Profiles

- Analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of perpetrators reported to the police shows that they are most likely to be male, aged between 25 and 44 years old, the same age or older than the victim, white, abusing a victim of the same ethnic group as themselves.

Analysis of the police incident data shows that incidents are most likely to take place within the home, on a weekend night between 18.00 and 02.00.

- Perpetrators were unlikely to have their actions sanctioned through the criminal justice system. Incidents reported to the police dropped sharply out of the criminal justice system at each stage – arrest, charge, prosecution, conviction and sentence - culminating in a conviction rate of just one in 21 incidents (i.e. 4% of incidents reported to the police resulted in a criminal conviction). Only 3% of incidents resulted in a medium (community) or high (custodial) tariff sentence.
- This means that the vast majority of perpetrators of domestic abuse are not receiving any criminal justice sanction for their behaviour, in turn meaning there is an increased need for some form of non-criminal justice intervention.
- Just over 14 incidents are reported to the police per day in Bristol - more than one every two hours. Taking under-reporting into consideration, the true frequency of domestic abuse in Bristol can be estimated to be 26,195 incidents per annum, 70 per day, or nearly three every hour.

Chapter Three – Analysis of Current Practice

- Organisations in Bristol were doing different forms of work with perpetrators. A small minority were doing direct work, in that they were doing work with perpetrators who were identified as such. Most, however, were working indirectly with perpetrators and their primary concern was not the domestic abuse.
- Tracking the referral routes made by different organisations proved to be a very complex exercise, and it became obvious that there were no clear patterns. Perpetrators currently appear to be referred randomly to different organisations, generally ending up somewhere in the healthcare system. Most organisations pointed out that there is no dedicated place to refer perpetrators to.

Chapter Four – Needs Assessment

- The vast majority of respondents to the needs assessment said there were not enough services for perpetrators of domestic abuse in Bristol (79%, 22 out of 28) and the other respondents said that they did not know whether there were enough services. Hence, no one thought that there *were* enough services. Most of the responses centred on the lack of services for men who had not been convicted of a criminal offence.
- There was evidence of enormous support for the development of a voluntary programme for domestic abuse perpetrators in Bristol, both from statutory sector organisations, voluntary sector organisations and from women survivors.
- However, most of the women survivors (9 out of 13) said that their ex/partners did not acknowledge that their behaviour was wrong and therefore would not have volunteered to attend a perpetrators programme. This suggests that the posters/leaflets advertising the programme may also need to raise awareness about types of behaviour that are abusive.

- Most of the organisations interviewed said that they would advertise a perpetrators programme and signpost/make referrals when appropriate. Nearly all of the women (10 out of 13) said that the programme should be advertised in pubs. In addition, GP surgeries, public toilets, public transport and betting shops were suggested by three or more women.

Chapter Five – Recommendations

- A voluntary perpetrator programme should be set up in Bristol. Nationally, most major cities have services of this nature and Bristol is an exception. To ensure safety and professional practice this programme should adhere to Respect’s Statement of Principles and Minimum Standards of Practice for Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes and Associated Women’s Services. The Respect Principles place the safety of women and children as central to the work of perpetrator programmes. Therefore, perpetrator programmes should never be run in isolation – the provision of a specialist, pro-active women’s service to accompany the programme should be treated as a core component and not an optional extra.
- It is probably the case that perpetrators do not necessarily fit some organisations’ stereotypes of them, and awareness raising and training should be offered to all organisations not just those that offer specialist domestic abuse services.
- An evaluation of effectiveness should be incorporated into the funding and operation of a programme. Effectiveness should be based on pre-defined criteria and should include measures of changes in safety for women and children as well as change for men.
- Further investigation should be conducted into why such a large proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators who are given a community sentence are not being sent on the IDAP as part of the sentence. Magistrates may need updated training about sentencing options available to them. The use of cautions in domestic abuse incidents should also continue to be monitored.
- Although the perpetrator programme will be held outside of the criminal justice system, some major steps forward by the criminal justice system are needed in order to ensure its success. It is not only time for perpetrators to change; it is time for change in Bristol.

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH METHODS

'There were times when he would have accessed a programme if it would have been available.'

(Survivor of Domestic Abuse)

1.1 Background

The response to domestic violence in the UK and elsewhere has been to situate the victim and any children at the heart of interventions. This has been important to ensure the safety of the victim and her children and this has been the focus of most research. However, a sole focus on the victim and children cannot in itself reduce domestic violence substantially over time. This is because the end of a relationship is unlikely to mean an end to the perpetration of domestic abuse. Over a third of women who disclosed that they had been victims of domestic violence in the 2001 British Crime Survey continued to be abused after ending the relationship and seven per cent of women said that this was when they experienced the worst incident of violence (Walby and Allen, 2004). In addition, women are at the highest risk of homicide at the point of separation and shortly afterwards (Lees, 2000). Domestic abusers may go on to re-offend against new partners (Hester and Westmarland, 2006) or continue to abuse the original partner and children in other ways, for example through child contact arrangements (Hester and Radford, 1996; Radford and Hester, 2006). This means that any region seriously committed to *reducing* domestic abuse cannot afford to ignore perpetrators.

Following a study of domestic violence perpetrators in Northumberland (Hester et al., 2006; Hester and Westmarland, 2006), the University of Bristol were approached by Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum (BDAF) who were trying to assess what services were available for domestic violence perpetrators in Bristol and to decide which direction services for perpetrators should go. We were commissioned to research and write a report on perpetrators of domestic abuse in Bristol that could feed into the possible development of a perpetrator programme.

There is already an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) available in Bristol through the Probation Service for men who are convicted of a criminal offence related to domestic abuse (described below). Some places in the UK have also developed 'voluntary perpetrator programmes' – programmes that men can go on if they have never been convicted of a criminal offence (or even if they have had no contact at all with the criminal justice system). However, Bristol does not currently have a voluntary perpetrator programme. The voluntary programmes closest to Bristol are based in Cardiff (for fathers only), Trowbridge, and Plymouth, Exeter, Barnstable and Newton Abbot in Devon. Some of these programmes have reported that men from Bristol have accessed their programmes because they could not find anything comparable in Bristol. The national Respect information line was phoned as part of this research and they said they get telephone calls from the Bristol area and that there is an urgent need for a place to make referrals to.

1.2 What is a domestic abuse perpetrator programme?

Perpetrator programmes are often misunderstood by professionals as being synonymous with anger management programmes. In reality, they are very different and a lack of understanding could lead to an inappropriate and possibly dangerous referral being made. This is not to suggest that anger management programmes are not useful, simply that they are not suitable for perpetrators of domestic abuse. Where anger management programmes focus on techniques to manage stress and anger, communication and emotional intelligence, perpetrator programmes focus on working with men to acknowledge and change their abusive behaviour, tackling issues such as male domination, sexual respect and the impact domestic abuse has on children (Hester et al. 2007).

The terms 'Duluth model' and 'the power and control wheel' are also used synonymously with perpetrator programmes. However, the work with perpetrators was only one part of the Duluth model and it is important not to forget that Duluth was actually a coordinated community response (Pence, n.d.) of which work with perpetrators was combined with support for victims/survivors and their children, and more proactive criminal justice responses. This response was not limited to the perpetrators on the programme but constituted a holistic, coordinated response.

The IDAP programme is run by the probation service, and has since 2005 been available across England and Wales to convicted offenders who have received a community sentence by the court (with the IDAP as a specific requirement). It tackles issues such as the misuse of power and control (following the Duluth approach) and operates within a group work setting. Support is also supposed to be offered for the partners of men attending IDAP. The aims of the IDAP programme are as follows:

- To provide known victims and current partners of men undertaking IDAP with information to inform safety planning.
- To help men undertaking IDAP understand why they use violence and abuse against partners and ex partners, and the effects of this behaviour on their partners, children, others and themselves.
- To encourage men to take responsibility for their violence in their relationships.
- To motivate men to take specific positive steps to change their behaviours in their relationships.
- To encourage men to learn how to use non-controlling behaviour strategies in their relationships in order to prevent future violence and abuse.

1.3 Why have a voluntary programme?

Since domestic violence is a form of violent crime which should be taken as seriously as violence outside of the home (or even more seriously because of the breach of trust involved) and the criminal justice system has already set up programmes, it might appear on first sight that a voluntary programme would send out mixed messages to perpetrators. However, research shows that a large amount of domestic abuse goes unreported. In the 2001 British Crime Survey Interpersonal Violence Module a third of people (34%) who reported domestic violence in the survey had never told anyone else about their 'worst incident' (Walby and Allen, 2004). Only one in five victims reported telling the police about their 'worst incident' (21%).

Research also shows that even when domestic abuse is reported to the police, very few cases ‘make it through’ the criminal justice system and result in a conviction. Hester and colleagues (Hester, 2006) were the first to ‘track’ cases through the criminal justice system from start to finish to measure attrition¹ at different stages. They found that out of the 869 domestic violence incidents recorded by the police during the sample period, only 3.6% (n=31) resulted in conviction for criminal offences, mostly fines and only four custodial sentences. There were a further 24 bind-overs resulting from charges of Breach of the Peace, and 5 convictions for being drunk and disorderly. Contact between children and alleged offenders was likely to lead to more lenient outcomes, whether bail conditions or sentences. The attrition study concluded that:

- The police and courts were more competent in dealing with the less entrenched situations.
- Court outcomes did not stop chronic offenders from continuing their violence and harassment.
- A more systematic approach to repeat offenders is needed throughout the criminal justice system.
- Further development of partnerships between the CJS, health and other agencies is needed to deal with chronic offenders and vulnerable witnesses.

1.4 The effectiveness of different perpetrator programmes²

Do perpetrator programmes work? That is the question that many domestic violence forums are currently facing. Even local areas that have already made the decision to run a programme are faced with funding applications and monitoring forms that ask about the benefits of such a programme.

Hester et al. (2007) suggest that there are many questions still to be answered about the effectiveness of men’s programmes, both in terms of whether they promote the safety of women and children and whether, and in what ways, they can achieve change in the behaviour of violent men. None the less, the evaluation research indicates that the violent behaviour of some men can be changed through interventions with perpetrators and that perpetrator programmes, whatever their limitations, can have a positive impact. Moreover, there are indications that this might best be achieved in co-ordinated, multi-faceted responses to domestic violence.

The DVIP programme in West London, evaluated by Burton et al. (1998) accepted men on either a court-mandated or voluntary basis. DVIP also ran from separate premises a linked Women’s Support Service (WSS) offering empowering support work for women in order to maximise their safety. The pro-active support offered to women through WSS was seen to be a crucial part of the overall programme aims of DVIP, as these are both to stop men’s use of violence and increase the safety of women. The work provided includes one to one work, groupwork and advocacy, and explores issues such as self-esteem and the impact of violence on children. An important area of development in DVIP has been to integrate children’s issues into all areas of its work (see Radford et al. 2006).

Burton et al.(1998) found that for some women involvement with WSS had been ‘successful’ in a variety of ways, including:

¹ ‘Attrition’ occurs when incidents ‘fall out’ of different stages of the criminal justice system. Hence, a *low* conviction rate equates to a *high* attrition rate and vice versa. A very high attrition rate is also referred to as a ‘justice gap’.

² This section is based on Chapter 10 of Hester, M., Pearson, C. and Harwin, N. with Abrahams, H. (2006, in press, 2nd edition) *Making an Impact – Children and Domestic Violence*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

- providing women with the opportunity to end the relationship safely
- providing women with the opportunity to re-negotiate their relationships
- providing women with a ‘breathing space’
- enabling women to build stronger support networks

The men’s perpetrator programme consisted of a two-stage programme of groupwork over a 32-week period. The first 12 weeks of the programme focused on men’s physical violence, and the following 20 weeks explored other aspects of men’s abusive and violent behaviours, with the possibility of continued work after this.

There was tentative evidence of the programme achieving some ‘success’ in that *some* women reported that the violence stopped. For other women there was a decrease in physical violence, but not in other forms of abuse. This was a complex issue, as it is unclear whether other forms of violence increased, or they were more obvious once the physical violence was less, or attendance at the WSS had enabled women to define more of their partner’s behaviour as abusive. Other women benefited from the freedom and space provided them by the man’s attendance at the programme.

On the basis of their evaluation Burton and her colleagues make some suggestions on work with violent men, including:

- the safety of women and children must be central to any programmes for violent men
- separate parallel support programmes for women are vital
- men’s motivation needs to be explored and moved forward early in the programme
- ‘voluntary’ referrals to programmes are important in that such men may be the most motivated and the best investment and may have a positive influence on other men in the group

The study by Gondolf (2000; 2001; 2004) in the USA is probably the most comprehensive evaluation to date, involving comparison across four sites as well as over time, following perpetrators up to four years. The study looked at the location of perpetrator or ‘batterer’ programmes within a wider ‘intervention system’ comprising criminal justice (arrests, court actions, probation supervision), involvement of victim services and other community services. The study concluded that the ‘system’ is particularly important, that is the quality of the links between and ability to respond by other agencies. There were no major differences in outcomes between longer, more comprehensive programmes, and shorter, more streamlined programmes. Using gender based cognitive-behavioural approaches was still deemed most effective, even if there was little information on which particular aspects of the counselling interventions work.

Overall the study found that the majority of men enrolled in perpetrator programmes were affected positively by the intervention, and stopped their violence for a sustained period of time. Focussing on physical assault as the measurement, nearly half the men did re-assault their partners during the four year follow-up period, but most did so within nine months of starting the programme. Two and half years after the programme more than 80% had not re-assaulted in the previous year, and after four years more than 90% of the men had not re-assaulted in the previous year. Thus a majority of men appeared to have stopped their physical violence.

There were, however, about 20% of men who repeatedly re-assaulted their partners during the follow up. This means there exists a minority group of chronic offenders for whom perpetrator programmes will not work. It was difficult to predict which offenders would fall into this group,

with the strongest predictor being the women's own predictions about experiencing a further assault. This was the group where the criminal justice system was most important, with the evaluation indicating that swifter and more intensive intervention by the criminal justice system as a whole might deal better with this group:

Swifter and more certain court action, more sessions per week after intake, ongoing risk management, and other containment options might contribute to stopping repeat reassault and the danger it carries (Gondolf: 2001: 213).

On the basis of his research, Gondolf (2000) recommends that perpetrator programmes include:

- Funding to support coordination of system linkages and cooperation;
- Use of ethical decision making (going beyond immediate effectiveness) in funding decisions;
- Continued use of gender based cognitive-behavioural counselling;
- Emphasis on intensity of programmes rather than length, especially with regard to repeat assaulters;
- Effective screening of participants, especially with regard to severe alcohol and psychological problems.

Hester et al. (2007) conclude that:

- Women and children's safety need to be central to any programmes (or other interventions) for violent men and programmes should offer separate parallel support for women.
- Programmes alone may be ineffective in achieving change in the behaviour of violent men, and must be accompanied by effective legal sanctions, as well as wider agency links.
- Approaches based on cognitive-behavioural approaches that also take gender into account are more likely to be effective.
- Whatever the approach adopted, work with violent men requires specific skills. A central feature of this work must be the message that violence is *not* acceptable and must aim to challenge/ stop/ prevent further violence.
- A wide range of agencies may have domestic violence perpetrators as their clients, and practitioners in health, social care and other services need to develop the skills to ask perpetrators about violent and abusive behaviour as well as knowing where to refer.

1.5 Aims and objectives of the Bristol research

This research had the following aims and objectives:

- To provide a review of relevant literature
- To develop profiles of domestic violence perpetrators in Bristol
- To map current work with perpetrators in Bristol
- To estimate the scale of the problem
- To provide a needs assessment
- To discover potential referral routes and suggest relevant programme 'advertising'

1.6 Methods

To fulfil the research aims, a multi-method approach was used, involving six different research methods. It is very important in exploratory research such as this to use a range of research methods and to combine both quantitative and qualitative techniques where possible. This allows the research questions to be looked at from different angles and at different levels of detail. The study used an ‘action research’ framework, with regular research updates to the BDAF perpetrator sub-group so that that the group could make informed decisions based on emerging findings rather than having to wait until the final report was published. The research methods used are listed below.

1.6.1 Literature review

A review of literature relevant to the Bristol context and the research aims was conducted (see section 1.4). Members of the BDAF Perpetrator Subgroup were particularly keen to know whether there was any evidence that perpetrator programmes actually ‘worked’. While there is very little evaluative literature on this topic in the UK this is an area that has been researched to a greater extent in the USA; therefore we draw on international literature where relevant but take into consideration the different systems.

1.6.2 Interviews with Forum members

Interviews took place with eight members of the Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum’s Perpetrator Subgroup. These were carried out at the beginning of the research period to assess to what extent opinions on the development of a perpetrator programme were shared. The interviews were also used to clarify exactly what the group’s expectations were from the research and what they particularly wanted to discover from the report’s findings.

1.6.3 Analysis of police incident data

Data were collected on 1,163 (intimate partner) domestic violence incidents reported to the police during 2005 – in September (379 incidents), October (422 incidents) and November (362 incidents). The data included the age, gender and ethnicity of a) the victim and b) the alleged offender, details on what happened after the incident was reported (whether an arrest was made, whether the offender was prosecuted) and the incident details. For the October and November incidents the final court outcomes were also available, thus allowing ‘tracking’ of individual incidents from initial police report through to conviction and sentence. Although this data is not representative of all domestic abuse perpetrators living in Bristol (as mentioned above, most domestic abuse is not reported to the police), it does give useful information about perpetrators who are reported to the police but do not receive any criminal justice sanction for their behaviour. Hence, the data tells us about one group of non-convicted perpetrators.

1.6.4 Interviews with statutory and voluntary sector organisations

A total of 76 statutory and voluntary sector organisations were approached to take part in the study. Interviews with 28 of these organisations were conducted (a response rate of 37%).

Questions were asked about: the work done by the organisation in relation to perpetrators of domestic abuse; how their organisation reacts to requests for help (typical responses to two vignettes - hypothetical case studies - were requested) and; their general views about the development of a perpetrator programme in Bristol. The interview schedule is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

It is worth noting that the majority of organisations that were approached and did not take part explained that the interview was not relevant to their organisation because they did not work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. However, it was also clear that many of these organisations *would* come into contact with perpetrators – in some cases on a day-to-day basis. This suggests either a lack of awareness about what constitutes domestic abuse or a lack of inclination and active avoidance of working with perpetrators. It is probably the case that perpetrators do not necessarily fit some organisations' stereotypes of them, and awareness raising and training should be offered to all organisations not just specialist domestic abuse services.

1.6.5 Survey of women survivors

Women were contacted through survivor support services and asked about their views on how a perpetrator programme in Bristol should be developed. Thirteen women responded by completing anonymous qualitative questionnaires.

1.6.6 Participant observation at meetings and workshops

One of the researchers (NW) took part in the BDAF Perpetrators Subgroup for the duration of the research period and organised two workshops at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol in partnership with BDAF. Active involvement was important and NW chaired both of the workshops. As a result of this 'active involvement' rather than 'objective observer', it is thought that the group were able to move forwards more quickly than would otherwise have been possible.

1.7 Report structure

This report contains an assessment of needs and mapping of current practice in relation to perpetrators of domestic abuse in Bristol. This Chapter has reviewed some background literature and described the research aims and methods. Chapter Two uses the police incident data to develop profiles of perpetrators in Bristol. It profiles perpetrators by socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity and also incident specific information such as the time, day and location of domestic violence incidents. The information in this chapter on criminal justice outcomes in Bristol for people reported to the police for domestic violence is what we would expect following national patterns (i.e. a low conviction rate), but this Chapter contains the first Bristol-specific 'tracked' data showing not only attrition and conviction rates but also the sentence types for those convicted.

Chapter Three provides an analysis of current practice, drawing on the 28 interviews with statutory and voluntary sector organisations and interviews with forum members. This Chapter also includes responses to the two hypothetical case studies. In Chapter Four we report on the needs assessment, using the interviews again and also drawing on the data from the survey of

women survivors. Issues such as referrals and programme 'advertising' are also included in Chapter Four. The report is concluded in Chapter Five with some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO – PERPETRATOR PROFILES

'If there could have been help before things escalated, maybe the marriage could have been saved.'
(Survivor of Domestic Abuse)

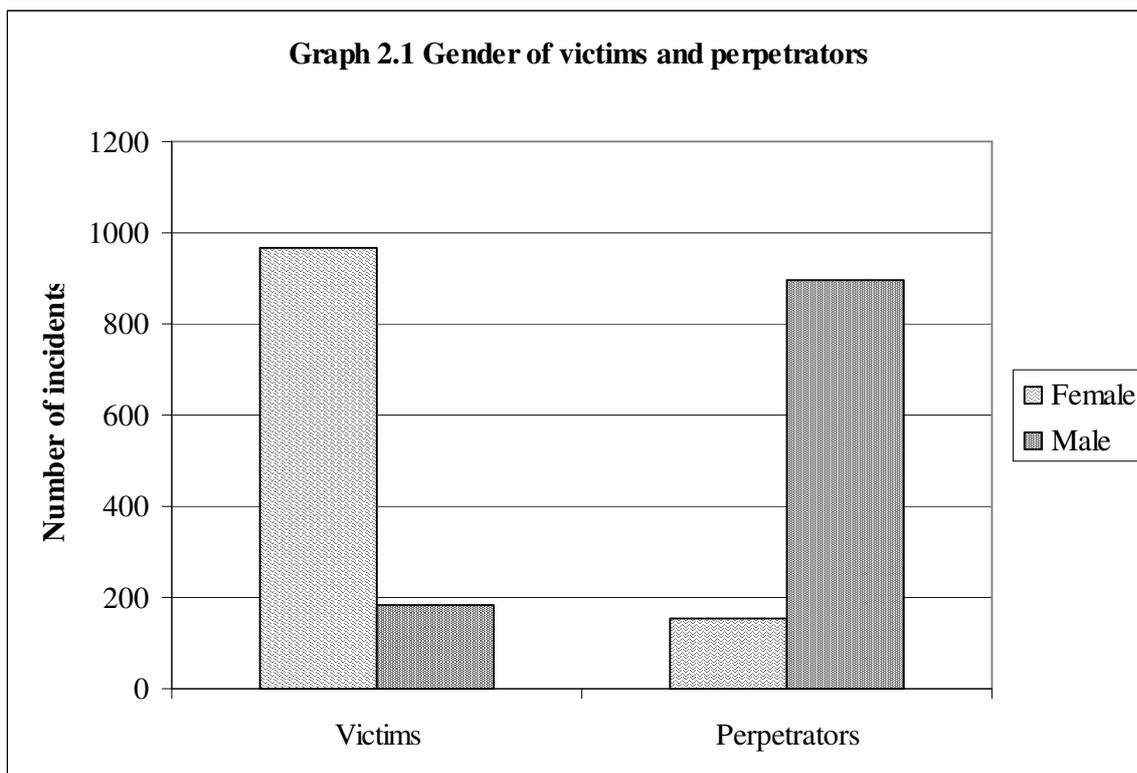
2.1 Background

As mentioned in Chapter One, there has been very little research on perpetrators of domestic abuse when compared to research on survivors. Those studies that have been done found that in the UK, domestic abuse perpetrators involved in incidents attended by the police are most often: male, heterosexual, white, and the same age or older than the victim (Hester and Westmarland, 2006). Perpetrators that have convictions for domestic abuse related offences are the exception rather than the norm (Hester, 2006; Hester and Westmarland, 2005; 2006).

2.2 Socio-demographic characteristics

2.2.1 Gender

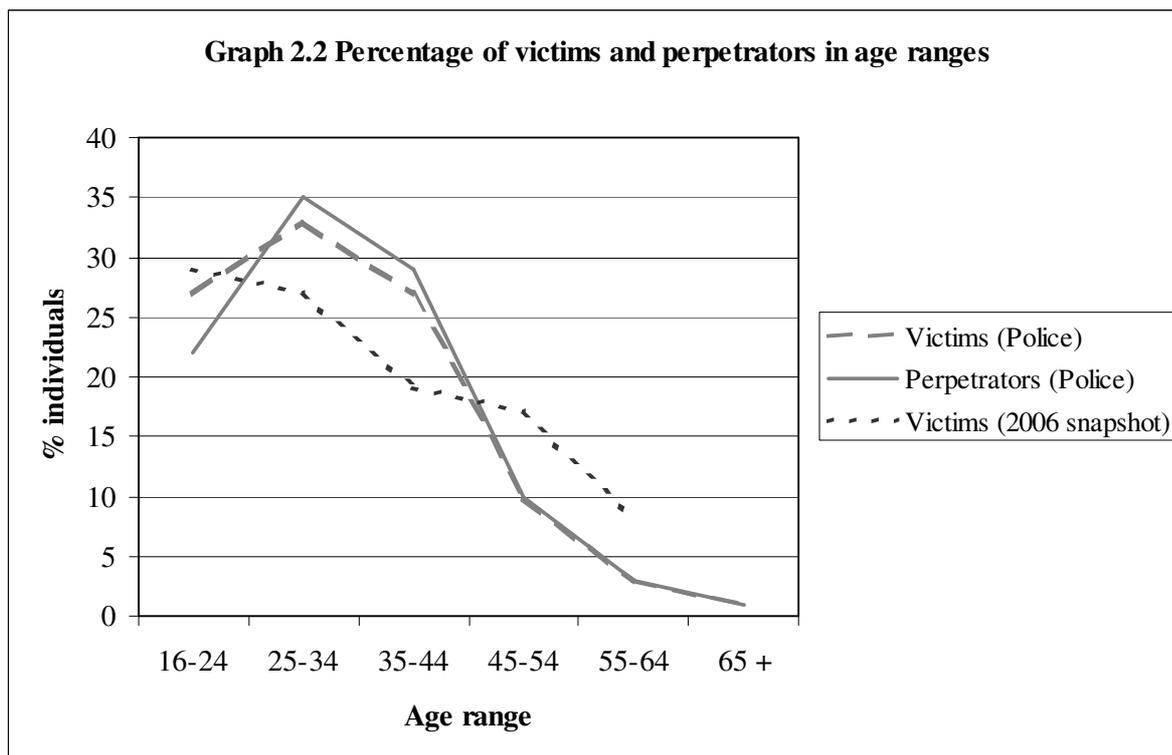
Graph 2.1 (below) shows that most of the incidents in Bristol followed the usual female victim, male perpetrator pattern of domestic abuse offending. Regardless of the gender of the victim, the perpetrator was most often male. Self report studies consistently show that women are not only subject to domestic abuse more frequently than men, they are also more likely to experience more '*extreme levels of violence, consistent with exceptional levels of coercive control*' (Walby and Allen, 2004 pg. 9).



In 39 of the 183 incidents with a male victim (21%), the perpetrator was male. In 18 of the 966 (2%) incidents with a female victim, the perpetrator was female. On first sight this looks like domestic abuse is far higher within male same sex relationships when compared with female same sex relationships. However, our previous experience of working with police databases suggests that incident data on domestic abuse in same sex relationships is very rarely accurate. This is because violence within same sex relationships may not be recognised as such by some front line police officers (leading to under-recording of same sex domestic abuse) or the ‘same sex’ box may be ticked by some front line police officers when the perpetrator and victim are the same sex but are not in a relationship (e.g. brothers – leading to an over-recording of same sex domestic abuse). Also, it has been found that men in same sex relationships are more likely to contact the police than are women (Donovan et al., 2006).

2.2.2 Age

The perpetrators reported to the police were aged between 16 and 80 years old, with a mean age of 34. This is the same age as has been found in other research (Hester et al., 2006). The age range 25-44 years was the largest, with nearly two thirds (64%) of perpetrators falling into this range. Two thirds (66%) of perpetrators were the same age or older than the victim. This is consistent with the findings in Hester et al.’s (2006) Northumbria research (where 71% were the same age or older than the victim).



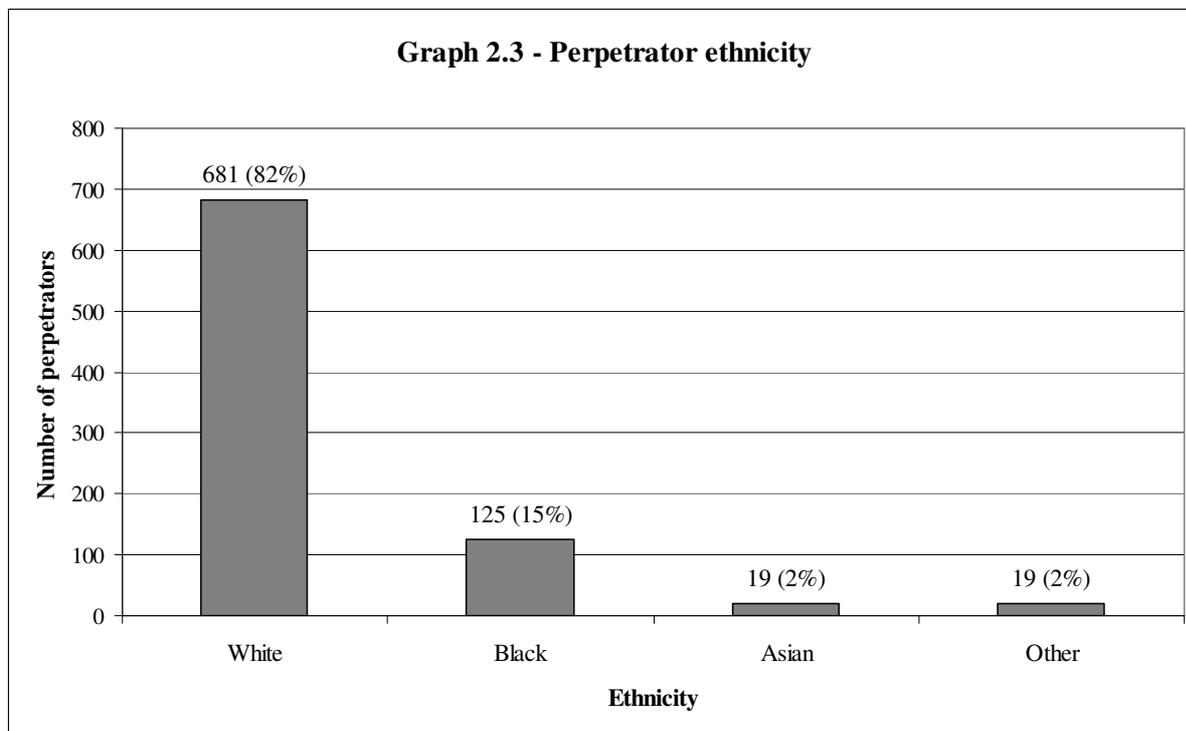
In 97 incidents (10% of incidents where both ages were known) the perpetrator was at least ten years older than the victim. This age difference has been found to be significantly associated with an increased risk of murder (Aldridge and Browne, 2003) and additional support should be given to these victims.

A slight age difference was found between perpetrators who were not convicted of a criminal offence (aged on average 33.3 years old) compared with those who were convicted (aged on

average 35.6 years old), however this was based on a small number of convicted perpetrators. This latter mean age is consistent with Gilchrist et al.'s (2003) research that found the average age of a convicted perpetrator starting a probation-led mandatory perpetrator programme was 35 years old.

2.2.3 Ethnicity

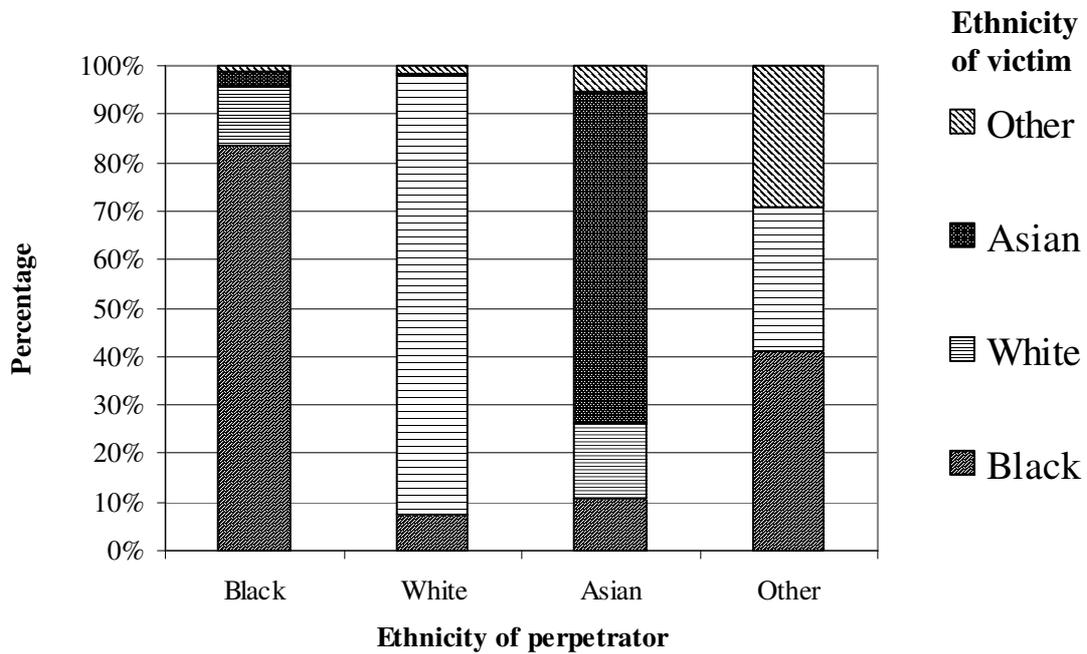
Graph 2.3 below shows the ethnicity of perpetrators as recorded by the police. Following generally the ethnic profile of Bristol, most of the perpetrators were white. However, in comparison with the 2001 census figures, it would be expected that more perpetrators would be white (82% of perpetrators were white compared with 92% of people in the 2001 census). Instead, there were higher proportions of people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups recorded than would be expected from the census figures. There is no clear explanation for this, but it is probably linked to issues of class – with people from predominantly white, middle class areas such as Redland and Clifton being less likely to report domestic violence to the police or to other agencies³.



Graph 2.4 below compares the ethnicity of the perpetrator with that of the victim. In most cases the ethnicity of the perpetrator mapped onto that of the victim, for example most Black perpetrators abused Black victims, most white perpetrators abused white victims. However, there were exceptions to this, particularly in relation to Asian and Other minority ethnic groups.

³ Both the 2005 and 2006 snapshots of domestic abuse in Bristol had few or no responses from these and surrounding areas (Westmarland, Hester and Carrozza, 2005; Westmarland, 2006). In addition, the 2001 British Crime Survey found that women who lived in households with an income of less than £20,000 per annum were nearly three times more likely to report domestic violence to the police than those living in households with incomes of over £20,000.

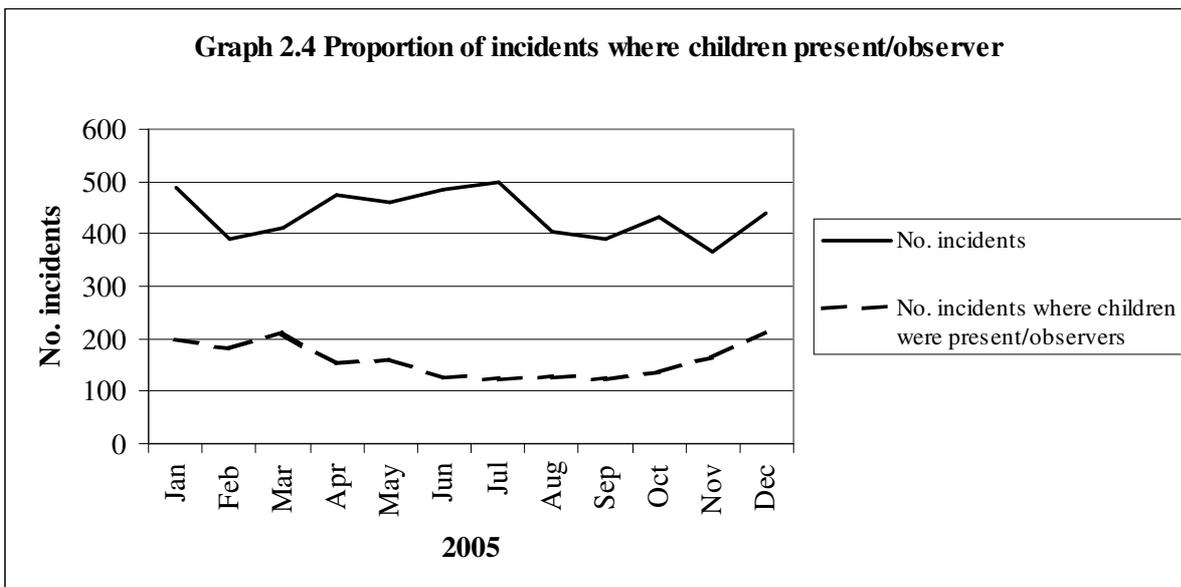
Graph 2.4 Ethnicity of victim and perpetrator



2.2.4 Children

It was not possible from the police data to find out the parental status of the perpetrators nor how many children were living in the household where the incident took place. The only data available referred to the proportion of incidents where children were present/observers. This is shown in graph 2.4 below.

Graph 2.4 Proportion of incidents where children present/observer



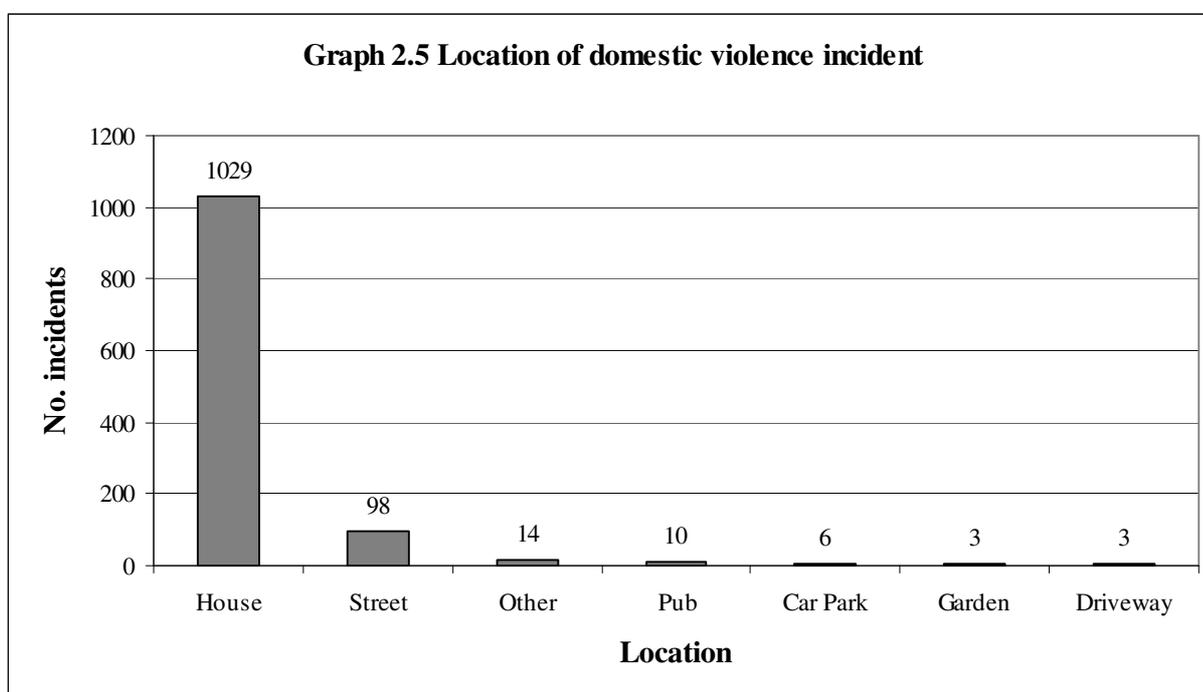
2.2.5 Relationship status

Where the relationship between the victim and perpetrator was recorded, most perpetrators were a current husband, wife or partner (n=211, 42%). The remainder were an ex-husband, ex-wife or ex-partner (n=288, 58%)

2.3 Incident details

2.3.1 Location of incident

Although the common image of ‘a domestic’ is an incident that takes place within the home, more than one in ten incidents actually occurred outside of the home.

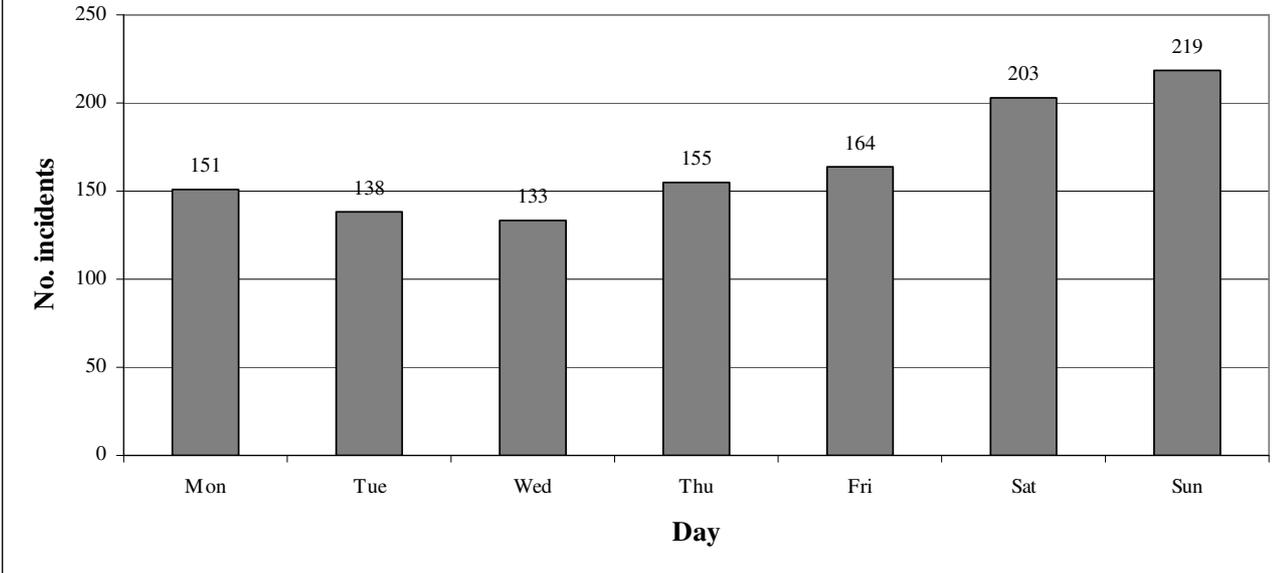


Included in the ‘other’ category were a: hospital; community centre; hotel; school; restaurant; shop; nightclub; sports centre; and GP surgery. Incidents involving ex-husbands, ex-wives and ex-partners were more than twice as likely to take place outside the home than those involving current husbands, wives and partners (14% compared with 6%).

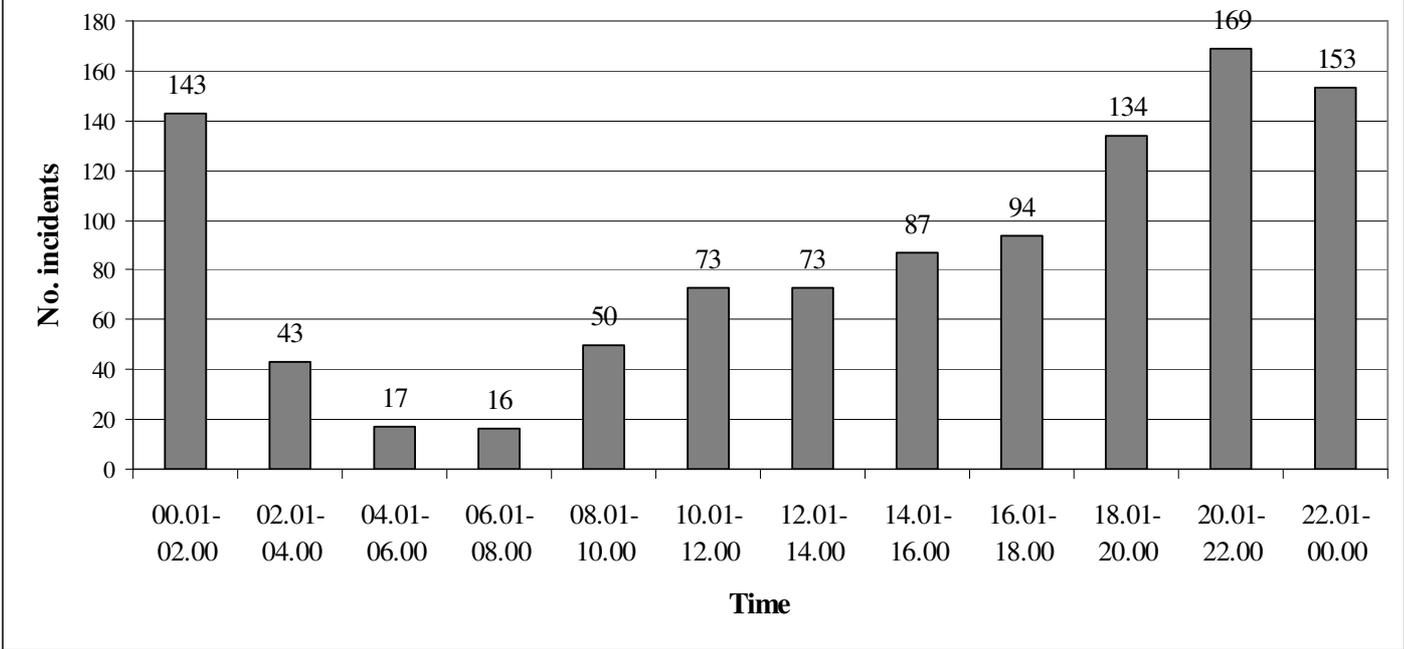
2.3.2 Day and time of incident

As the following two graphs show, most incidents reported to the police were on a Saturday or Sunday. Incidents were least likely to be on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Incidents were far more frequent between 18.00 and 02.00 than during other times. In fact, incidents occurring during these eight hours accounted for 57% of all incidents.

Graph 2.6 Day of week incident reported to police

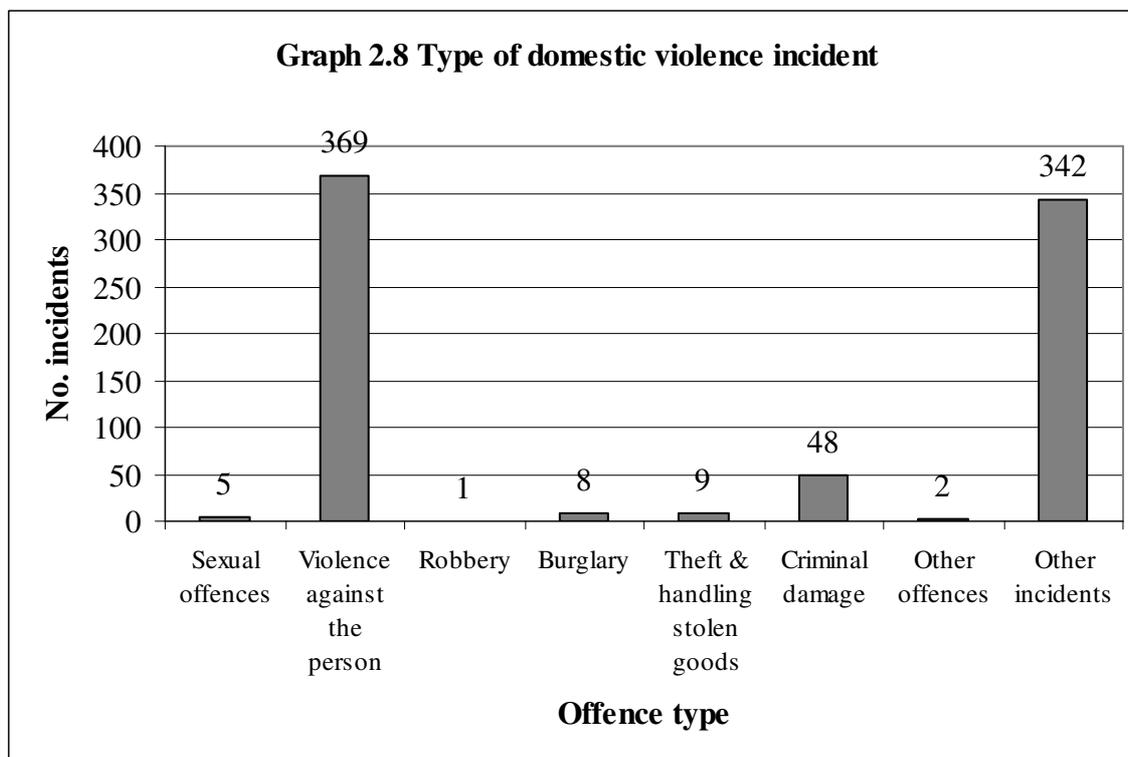


Graph 2.7 Time of incident



2.3.3. Nature of domestic abuse incident

Domestic abuse incidents cut across a range of crime types. The nature of the incident is shown in the Graph below.



Violence against the person offences were the most common type of domestic violence reported to the police (n=369). Within the violence against the person category, assault ABH was the most frequent (n=207) followed by common assault (n=86) and harassment (n=56).

A large proportion of incidents were ‘other incidents’ – i.e. no criminal offence was deemed to have taken place (n=342).

Criminal damage was the next most frequent incident type (n=48), and within this category the damage caused was most often to a dwelling (n=28). The most serious incidents within the two months were: rape (n=2); assault GBH (section 18) (n=4); assault GBH (section 20) (n=1); sexual assault (n= 3); attempt to choke or suffocate (n=2); threat to kill (n=1); false imprisonment (n=1); and child destruction (n=1).

2.4 Criminal justice system outcomes

Nationally domestic abuse accounts for a quarter of all violent crime. Although there is a high number of domestic violence incidents reported to the police, very few incidents result in any action being taken except for police attendance. This is also apparent from the Bristol data.

As predicted, the number of initial incidents reported to the police dropped sharply through the criminal justice system, culminating in a conviction rate of just one in 21 incidents (4%). Only 3% of incidents resulted in a medium (community) or high (custodial) tariff sentence.

What this means is that the vast majority of perpetrators of domestic abuse are not receiving any criminal justice sanction for their behaviour. This low likelihood of a perpetrator receiving a criminal justice sanction means that there is an increased need for some form of non-criminal justice intervention.

An in-depth analysis of attrition through the criminal justice system is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.5 The frequency of domestic abuse in Bristol

In 2005 a total of 5,239 domestic abuse incidents in Bristol were reported to the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. These relate to partner abuse (partner or ex-partner abuse) and exclude familial abuse. If familial abuse was also included this figure would be far higher. July saw the highest number of incidents (499) and November the lowest (365). **This equates to just over 14 intimate partner domestic violence incidents reported to the police per day - more than one every two hours.**

Different research methods provide different estimates of the level of under-reporting of domestic abuse to the police. If we take one of the most conservative estimates - that calculated from the British Crime Survey – we find that around one in five incidents are reported to the police⁴. **This would take the true frequency of domestic abuse in Bristol to 26,195 incidents per annum, 70 per day, or nearly three every hour.**

⁴ A report rate of 23% for women who are victimised and 8% for men

CHAPTER THREE – ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PRACTICE

*'He knew what he was doing to me was wrong, but at the same time he could not stop himself without outside help'
(Survivor of Domestic Abuse)*

3.1 Current work with perpetrators

Organisations in Bristol were doing different forms of work with perpetrators (this chapter refers to the 28 organisations interviewed for this research – see 1.6.4). Some were doing direct work, in that they were doing work with perpetrators who were identified as such. Most, however, were working indirectly with perpetrators. In other words they were aware that a proportion of their clients were likely to be perpetrators of domestic abuse but they were a) not working at all with them regarding those issues or b) were treating the domestic abuse as secondary to the primary issue being addressed (e.g. alcohol or drugs). For example, these were typical responses when asked whether they work with perpetrators of domestic abuse:

'Its possible that we do since we work with a range of people from different backgrounds but its not something that we ask people about' (Voluntary sector mental health organisation).

'Probably, in normal patient circumstances. It is very common to come across it when dealing with patient's issues' (GP surgery)

Not surprisingly, criminal justice organisations (specifically the police and probation) reported doing the most direct work with perpetrators. The nature of this work varied depending on what stage in the criminal justices system the perpetrator was at. In the three month sample period for this research (September, October and November 2005) Avon and Somerset constabulary dealt with 1,163 domestic abuse incidents in Bristol (this figure relates only to partner abuse – familial abuse figures would be higher). The Probation Service run eight Integrated Domestic Abuse Programmes (IDAPs) across Avon and Somerset, including three in Bristol. At the time of interview (February 2006) they had 180 men on the waiting list and a six-month delay before a place could be found for someone on the list.

A voluntary sector relationship counselling organisation also reported seeing a large number of domestic abuse perpetrators – around 250 to 350 per annum. In 151 of these cases last year the domestic abuse was one of the presenting issues (this 151 accounted for 13% of the organisation's total case load) but in the other cases the domestic abuse was more hidden and emerged more subtly in discussions about the relationship.

None of the other organisations were able to estimate how many perpetrators they saw per annum because of the indirect nature of their work with perpetrators.

3.2 Referral routes

Tracking the referral routes made by different organisations proved to be a very complex exercise, and it became obvious that there were no clear patterns. Perpetrators currently appear to be referred randomly to different organisations, generally ending up somewhere in the healthcare system:

'We have on occasion referred the men to a psychologist or psychiatrist if they have asked us to. However, we mainly work with the women and children. If we know there is domestic abuse we would discuss it with the police and social services because of the risk to children as child protection issues.' (Voluntary sector children and young people's organisation).

'All we can say is "well why don't you go to your GP or try and get counselling, go down that route". We've nothing to offer people. It's not necessarily that these are the appropriate places – they're the only places.' (Police)

Some organisations said that they would make referrals to specialist survivor services, assuming either that as a domestic abuse service they would deal with both victims and perpetrators or hoping that they would know of services for perpetrators. This means that it is very important that specialist domestic abuse services and other women's groups are aware of any services that are set up for perpetrators of domestic abuse because they are likely to act as one step on a referral route.

3.3 Different organisation's responses to the same situation

As a way of assessing how different organisations would react to the same situation we asked respondents to read a hypothetical case study and describe a typical response from their organisation. The first of these case studies was designed to see how an organisation would respond to a woman in a high-risk situation who was asking for support for her partner.

'Jayne' and 'Ben'

You have been in contact with Jayne for a few months. Recently she has disclosed to your organisation that her male partner Ben has been increasingly controlling and violent. After he 'loses it' he gets upset, locks himself in the bathroom and says he's sorry but he can't control his actions.

You are concerned about Jayne's safety, particularly as she is 6 months pregnant and already has one young child. However, Jayne seems unconcerned for her own safety and only seems to be focused on getting help and support for Ben.

While there was no 'correct' response, we were looking for a prioritising of Jayne and her child's needs *before* the needs of Ben were addressed. Twenty-one organisations (out of the 28 taking part) put the needs of Jayne and her child before Ben. Most organisations realised that Jayne's needs should be prioritised because of having a young child and being pregnant. For example:

'This referral would be prioritised as urgent due to her young child and pregnancy. She would be offered an early appointment, a full risk assessment would be done including risk to her and her children.' (Voluntary sector alcohol organisation)

Most of the respondents suggested a multi-agency response, with organisations suggesting referrals in terms of child protection (police, social services), health (midwives, health visitors, GP) and specialist services for Jayne (Next Link, Women's Aid helpline) and for Ben (anger management, counselling, RESPECT helpline).

Four organisations had an equal focus on Jayne and Ben, one organisation focused solely on the child and two focused on the needs of Ben:

'Let the two of them come to me, then I will make an assessment. Then I would see Ben on his own and identify what triggers the violence. I would offer counselling and psychotherapy and suggest this gentleman comes to see me on a regular basis. He may need anger management to direct the negative action into a positive one. If this is not successful I would advise them to seek more professional help and I would suggest she goes to the police and gets an injunction out against him (Specialist Black and other minority ethnic organisation).

The second case study focused on a man who was already in contact with the organisation for a different matter when he disclosed being a domestic abuse perpetrator who wanted to change his behaviour:

'Jason'

You have already had contact with Jason on a number of occasions when he discloses that he is being abusive towards his partner. You are working with Jason on other matters but do not feel that you have the appropriate skills to deal with him in relation to the domestic abuse. He asks you where he can go to learn how to change his behaviour.

Generally, organisations were aware that there are no specialist domestic violence perpetrator services available outside of the criminal justice system. However, because of his apparent willingness to change organisations offered referrals to services that might be able to help with some of the other issues (particularly drug or alcohol abuse) that might have some (non-causal) relationship to his violent behaviour:

'If he is not involved with probation, there is no provision. We would, however, offer counselling to try to address what might be contributing to his violent behaviour; for example alcohol misuse, drug misuse. We would try to encourage him to go to his GP to get a specialist referral to the psychiatrist or psychologist.' (Voluntary sector family support organisation).

'We might be able to offer him support around his domestic abuse, particularly if this involved a heavy alcohol consumption. We would work very hard to motivate him towards abstinence and then support him in maintaining this. It is very likely that the risk of domestic abuse would be dramatically reduced. If there were further issues underlying his behaviour those could be addressed in our group programme or one-to-one sessions. We would also see what local agencies were available near where he lived and refer as appropriate.' (Statutory sector alcohol organisation)

While the organisations were not suggesting that domestic abuse is caused by drug and/or alcohol abuse, dealing with the drug/alcohol abuse without tackling the domestic abuse directly can leave partners and children in a dangerous position.

The phone lines run by 'Parentline' (in Bristol) and Respect (nationally) were mentioned as places some organisations would refer to. However, it was health services (mainly GPs or counsellors) that most organisations thought would be most appropriate to Ben's needs (in the absence of a perpetrator programme):

'Counselling is a process. We don't condone domestic abuse. We challenge, we explore the client's views to change and its that person's choice to change. Again, 'changing' – that's a process. I don't believe in referring to things like anger management as we don't just change a person through going for anger management only. It is a total process of change of behaviour, not just anger management.' (Voluntary sector counselling organisation)

CHAPTER FOUR – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

'It might have made him realise what he was doing was wrong and not normal'

(Survivor of Domestic Abuse)

4.1 Availability of services in Bristol for perpetrators of domestic abuse

The vast majority of respondents to the needs assessment said there were not enough services for perpetrators of domestic abuse in Bristol (79%, 22 out of 28) and the other respondents said that they did not know whether there were enough services. Hence, no one thought that there *were* enough services. Most of the responses centred on the lack of services for men *who had not been convicted of a criminal offence* (i.e. the need for voluntary, community-led services):

'We deal with perpetrators who are not convicted and therefore services from organisations such as the probation service are not available to us.' (Statutory sector organisation)

'They simply don't exist – it's a fact! I know there are one or two services if they are in prison or come to the attention of the criminal justice system, but few of our clients are in that situation. If we really felt a perpetrator was going to leave and do something we would phone the police without question but I don't think we've had to do that yet. But in terms of the people we see who are not involved in the criminal justice system – we don't send them to anger management because we don't think it's safe, and once you rule that out there's not a lot left.' (Voluntary sector relationship counselling organisation)

Others pointed out that even within the criminal justice system there can be long waiting lists for the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) and that the sentence must be of a suitable tariff and length for an IDAP referral to be possible. One organisation pointed this out in terms of the prison programme:

'I'm a qualified social worker and I remember there was a little kiddy who got held out a balcony by his dad. The woman and child were both experiencing extreme domestic violence. The bloke was sent to prison and because he got a 9 month sentence and not a 12 month sentence he was not able to get IDAP type stuff. Not only did you have to be convicted but you also had to have a sentence of two months. There was this perfect window of opportunity but he didn't have anything while in prison. He was done for ABH on a child, there was piles of evidence, but no one was interested in providing a service. If you've got that response for someone who has been convicted, what chance have you got for someone who hasn't been?' (Statutory sector children and young people's organisation)

4.2 Is there a need for a perpetrator programme in Bristol?

Nearly all of the respondents said there was a need for a voluntary perpetrator programme in Bristol (93%, 26 out of 28) and the other respondents said that they didn't know whether there should be a programme. **Hence, no one thought that there should not be a perpetrator programme.** However, some respondents who generally agreed there should be a programme only supported with some caveats (these are discussed after this section).

The reasons given (by respondents in the needs assessment and in the interviews with members of the perpetrator subgroup) to explain why a perpetrator programme is needed in Bristol are listed below:

- Because so many perpetrators do not receive a criminal conviction
- Working solely with victims is like sticking a plaster on the situation
- Some female clients of domestic abuse have accessed support services in relation to the same perpetrator
- Men may go on to abuse other women in new relationships
- Needs to be something for men where their partner wanted them to change but to continue the relationship
- Because prevention is better than cure – to prevent more serious offences being committed
- To prevent escalation of abuse
- It would allow intervention in unreported but serious cases
- To give perpetrators the opportunity to access support and to change – ‘because patterns cannot be broken by magic’
- To allow diversion from the criminal justice system

The most frequent answer out of those listed above was the lack of appropriate criminal justice sanctions for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

‘It is vital to have a perpetrators programme for men who are not convicted because we have struggled for years with the problem of how to work and who can work with men who are not within the criminal justice system’ (Voluntary sector family support organisation).

This lack of appropriate criminal justice sanctions generally led on to the second most frequent point made, about repeat offending against the same or new partners:

‘If men are not convicted and they come to the programme they can be motivated there to change their behaviour. I don’t think putting them in prison is always helpful because they will come out later, rejoin the family or join another family and be violent again – no changes take place.’ (Statutory sector mental health organisation)

This also linked in with the ‘sticking plaster’ analogy used by many of the members of the perpetrators subgroup:

Domestic violence services can support women to move on – but that leaves men to go on to different women. We’ve had a couple of clients that have involved the same perpetrator - its just sticking plasters on the situation. (Voluntary sector specialist domestic abuse service)

The sample of women using specialist domestic abuse services were also asked whether they would have liked their partner or ex-partner to have gone on a voluntary programme. Although doubts were expressed about whether they actually would have attended (this is discussed in the next section), all the responses were positive. The responses focused on giving perpetrators the opportunity to learn non-abusive responses and behaviours:

‘Yes, because then he might see himself differently and not be so possessive over women.’ (Woman survivor)

'Yes, because if there would have been help before things escalated, maybe the marriage could have been saved. He would have had an opportunity to learn other ways to deal with his emotions.' (Woman survivor)

'Yes, it would have been good to have had a programme. He would have had the opportunity to find why he is abusive and how he can change to express his anger in a different way.' (Woman survivor)

'Yes, to help explain ways he could have calmed down.' (Woman survivor)

Although there was widespread support for a voluntary, community based domestic abuse perpetrator programme, a number of organisations in the needs assessment, as mentioned above, did have some concerns and gave caveats to their responses. These are listed below:

- If there are limited resources it shouldn't be all used on running programmes for perpetrators because we need support for victims
- If its been shown to be effective
- If its done in a way that doesn't put women at risk
- A voluntary programme should not replace custodial sentences for perpetrators
- It needs to be run alongside a programme of support for victims and their children
- It should be able to cater to different types of perpetrator using different methods
- More than one programme – of different lengths/intensities

Although the question of effectiveness can be difficult (as highlighted in Chapter 2), most of the other caveats would be addressed by working within the remit of Respect's *Statement of Principles and Minimum Standards of Practice for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated women's services* (see Respect website), which the BDAF perpetrators subgroup have already agreed should be met if a programme is established.

4.3 Potential take-up of services

We asked the sample of women using specialist domestic abuse services whether they thought their partner or ex-partner would have attended a perpetrator programme, and the responses were not positive. Most of the women (9 out of 13) said that their ex/partners did not acknowledge that their behaviour was wrong and therefore would not have volunteered to attend a perpetrators programme:

'No, he wouldn't have accepted he had a problem. Nothing would have persuaded him.' (Woman survivor)

'Don't think he would have attended because the culture believes women are second class. Don't think he could have been persuaded.' (Woman survivor)

'Very unlikely, but I would certainly try to persuade him. He doesn't think he has a problem.' (Woman survivor)

The other four survivors thought that there were some times that their ex/partner might have considered attending, particularly if it was recommended by Social Services or other professional.

Ensuring that men were aware of the programme at a time when they were willing to consider change was seen as important by the women:

'There were times when he would have accessed a programme if it would have been available, when he was younger and 'fed up' with this violence and wanting to change it.' (Woman survivor)

'Yes, because he could keep the family he had. I think seeing a domestic violence worker would have persuaded him.' (Woman survivor)

These comments have implications for how a programme is advertised, and a great deal of thought needs to be put into the wording and imagery used. It may be necessary to think about different forms of advertisement e.g. radio, newspapers, posters and leaflets in agencies. It will also be important to pilot these, perhaps with men on the IDAP or with the first cohort of men attending a programme. It might be useful to give examples of types of behaviour that the programme is designed to address rather than emphasising terms such as 'domestic abuse' and 'violent behaviour'.

Organisations, however, were more optimistic – at least about the number of men they would refer to the programme. Some said they would ask more questions about the perpetration of domestic abuse if they knew there was a referral route available to them:

'... if there was something available for perpetrators we would explore this with the client more' (Healthcare professional)

Out of the 27 organisations interviewed as part of the needs assessment, 23 organisations said that they would make referrals to the programme. Most said that these referrals would more accurately be described as 'signposting' than making a formal referral. There was a slight shift from the beginning of the interview in some cases, with a few organisations saying they did not come into contact with perpetrators at the beginning but saying they would make referrals by the end of the interview. This is probably because organisations are more willing to accept that they do work with perpetrators if they are not expected to add this to their existing stretched workload (linking again to the quote above about exploring this with the client more).

Regarding the number of referrals, some organisations were not able to give an estimate except that it would be a lot! The words 'numerous' and 'plenty' were offered as responses. Others were more exact and answers ranged widely from one organisation saying 10-15 per annum to some saying over 100. These responses tied in with the statements from the women above suggest that the programme will have a high referral rate from which there will follow a proportionately low up-take.

4.4 Awareness raising of services

Respondents were asked whether they thought their organisation would be an appropriate place to 'advertise' a programme. Most (70%, 19 out of 27) said that they did think their organisation would be an appropriate place:

Some organisations thought that advertising services for perpetrators would also act as a useful awareness-raising tool for women:

'Yes, because so many women and children attend our services who are living with "undisclosed" domestic abuse. If we are advertising the programme, we would raise the women's awareness as well.' (Community organisation)

Others highlighted that if services were advertised openly rather than relying solely on referrals from practitioners then it would attract self-referrals and people may be more dedicated:

'It's all about information being made available to patients. I would have thought that the most successful stuff is people doing self-referral. People are prepared to change, so people are on the look out for information' (GP surgery)

One organisation was concerned that if they were 'promoting' a programme they would want to make it clear that they as an organisation could not afford to pay for their clients to attend, meaning that a programme would need to be either free or self-funding.

The remaining 8 organisations either said that they would not be an appropriate place at which to advertise services for perpetrators or that they did not know if they would be able to advertise such services. The reasons for their organisation not being suitable were quite straightforward ones, for example because they did not have a fixed location in which they saw their clients:

'No, because we don't actually have any clients that come and see us at our office – we work in the community' (Voluntary sector legal organisation)

Services which worked solely with female victims of domestic abuse did not think their organisation would be appropriate to advertise services for perpetrators overtly, however they did see the value of being fully aware of services for referral purposes:

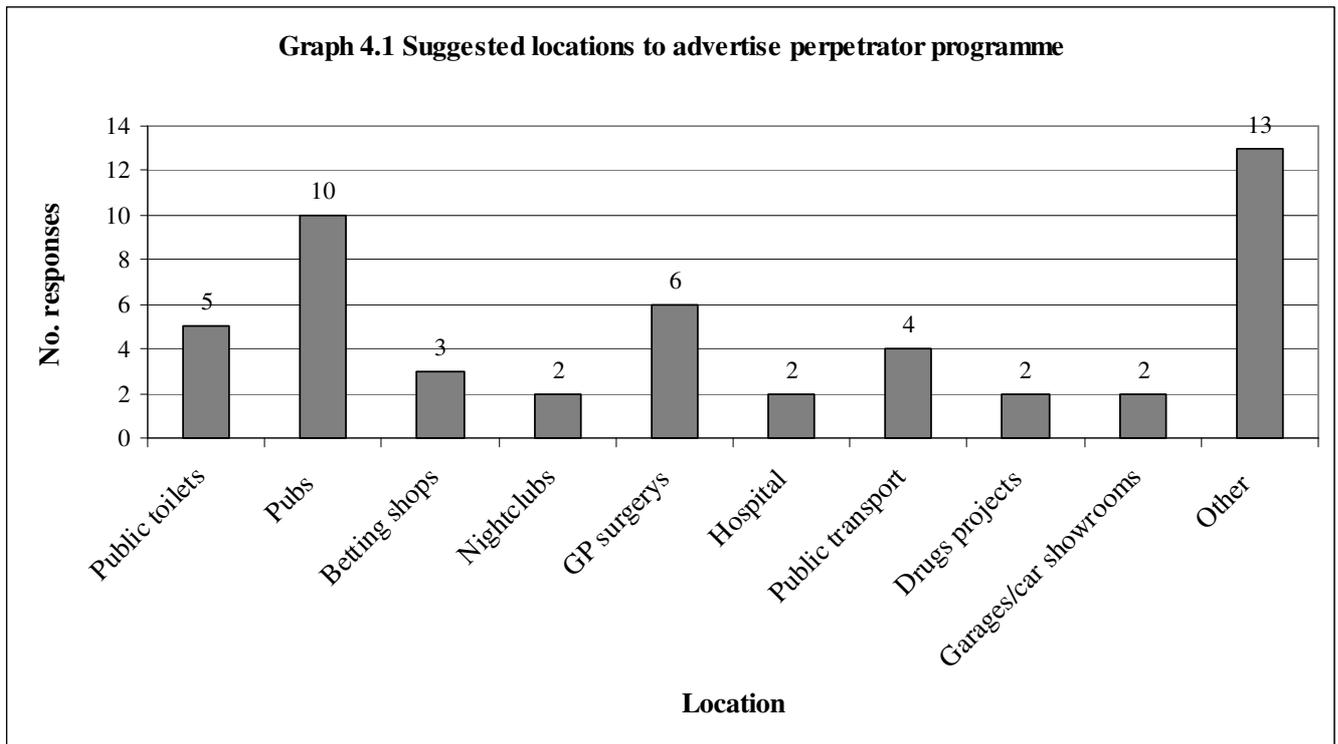
'That's a difficult question to answer - we generally only have access to victims/survivors and not perpetrators. Our client group might have strange feelings about us doing perpetrator work. We would be best off just telling clients about the programme when it was appropriate' (Voluntary sector specialist domestic abuse organisation)

'No, we only support female service users. However, it would be useful information for staff to be aware of so they can signpost male callers or other professionals' (Voluntary sector specialist domestic abuse organisation)

Although organisations were not asked directly about the form and content of potential 'adverts', two pointed out that it would have to be suitable for their organisation:

'Yes, we'd advertise it all over the place. But the imagery would be important. If you think of the group of people who are paying to come here, and for quite a number this is an awakening. If you blast them with zero tolerance high octane guilt and blame posters they'll just back off. That will not be conducive to persuading them to go. So although they will have to take responsibility – and all those things I understand – they have to also have a sense there's something in it for them.' (Voluntary sector relationship counselling organisation)

The sample of women using specialist domestic abuse services in Bristol were also asked where they thought posters and leaflets should be put up if a perpetrator programme started in Bristol (i.e. where would your partner/ex partner be likely to read them? The responses are shown in Graph 4.1 below:



Nearly all of the women (10 out of 13) said that the programme should be advertised in pubs. GP surgeries, public toilets, public transport and betting shops were all mentioned on three or more occasions. Included in the 'other category' are places that were only mentioned once (warehouses, internet chat rooms, wholesalers, work canteens, the Evening Post, churches, barber shops, shops, TV, library, gyms, restaurants and community centres).

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

- Evaluations indicate that perpetrator programmes can have a positive impact and result in change for some men. However, research on perpetrators is in its infancy and there are many as yet unanswered questions. The largest, most robust evaluation to date took place in the USA and found that the majority of men reached sustained non-violence, with around 20 per cent continuing to reassault (Gondolf, 2004). The evaluation also found that the strongest and most consistent predictor of reassault was the woman’s perceptions (i.e. likelihood of reassault) and that a programmes’ success was dependant on the wider intervention system of which the programme was just one part. Hence, rather than a voluntary perpetrator programme being an alternative to the criminal justice system, it is vital that it works as part of a coordinated approach to tackling domestic abuse.
- A total of 76 statutory and voluntary sector organisations were approached to take part in the study, which resulted in 28 interviews (a response rate of 37%). The most frequent explanation for not taking part in the research was that it was not relevant to their organisation because they did not work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. However, it was also clear that many of these organisations *would* come into contact with perpetrators – in some cases on a day-to-day basis. This suggests either a lack of awareness about what constitutes domestic abuse or a lack of inclination and active avoidance of working with perpetrators.
- A domestic violence incident is reported to the police every two hours in Bristol. Taking into account underreporting, this figure is likely to be closer to three incidents per hour.
- It is likely that the programme will have a high referral rate from which there will follow a proportionately low up-take with high attrition in the early stages.
- There was evidence of enormous need and support for the development of a voluntary programme for domestic abuse perpetrators in Bristol, both from professionals and from women survivors. At present, inappropriate and unsafe referrals are being made because of the lack of service provision for perpetrators (e.g. referring perpetrators into mental health services can serve to reinforce their belief that domestic violence is not their fault).
- Perpetrators were unlikely to have their actions sanctioned through the criminal justice system. Incidents reported to the police dropped sharply out of the criminal justice system at each stage – arrest, charge, prosecution, conviction and sentence - culminating in a conviction rate of just one in 21 incidents (i.e. 4% of incidents reported to the police resulted in a conviction). Only 3% of incidents resulted in a medium (community) or high (custodial) tariff sentence. This means that the vast majority of perpetrators of domestic abuse are not receiving any criminal justice sanction for their behaviour, in turn meaning there is an increased need for some form of non-criminal justice intervention. However, the criminal justice system must also elicit a more certain response to domestic abuse in order to support the voluntary programme.

5.2 Recommendations

- A voluntary perpetrator programme should be set up in Bristol. Nationally, most major cities have services of this nature and Bristol is an exception. To ensure safety and professional practice this programme should adhere to Respect's Statement of Principles and Minimum Standards of Practice for Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes and Associated Women's Services. The Respect Principles place the safety of women and children as central to the work of perpetrator programmes. Therefore, perpetrator programmes should never be run in isolation – the provision of a specialist, pro-active women's service to accompany the programme should be treated as a core component and not an optional extra.
- It is probably the case that perpetrators do not necessarily fit some organisations' stereotypes of them, and awareness raising and training should be offered to all organisations not just those that offer specialist domestic abuse services.
- An evaluation of effectiveness should be incorporated into the funding and operation of a programme. Effectiveness should be based on pre-defined criteria and should include measures of changes in safety for women and children as well as change for men.
- Further investigation should be conducted into why such a large proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators who are given a community sentence are not being sent on the IDAP as part of the sentence. Magistrates may need updated training about sentencing options available to them. The use of cautions in domestic abuse incidents should also continue to be monitored.
- Although the perpetrator programme will be held outside of the criminal justice system, some major steps forward by the criminal justice system are needed in order to ensure its success. It is not only time for perpetrators to change; it is time for change in Bristol.

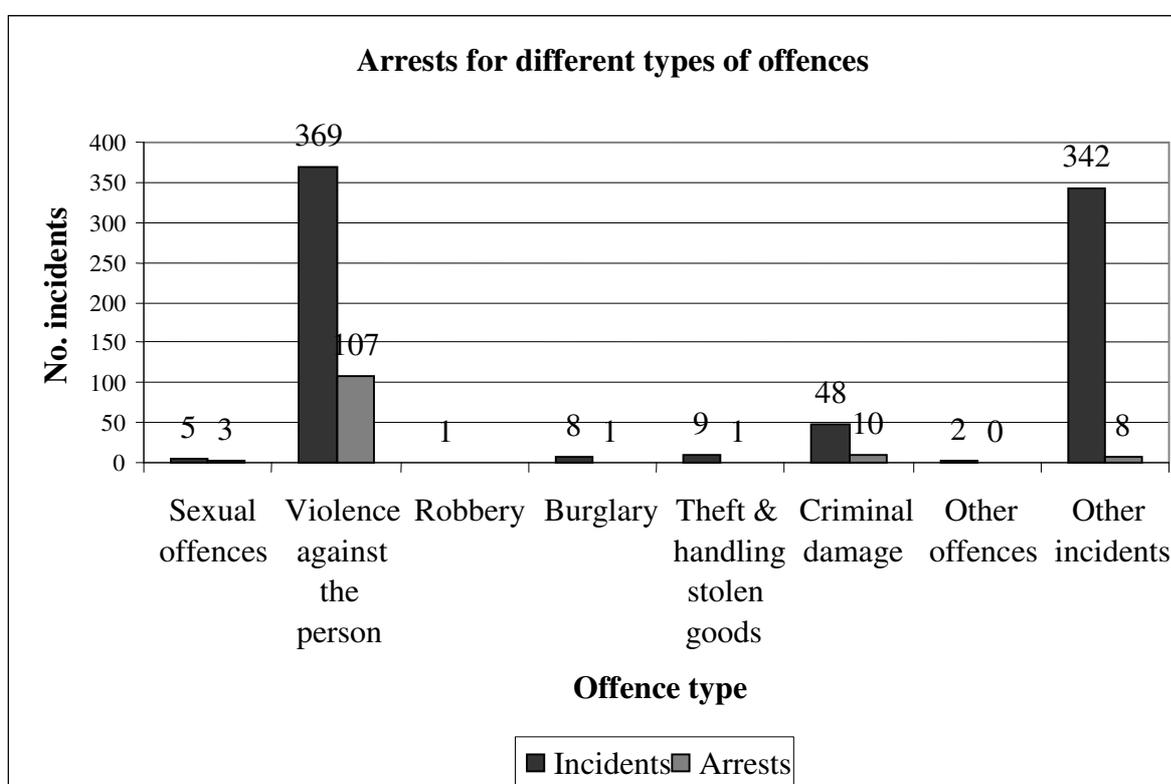
APPENDIX A – CASE OUTCOMES

Incident tracking

A total of 784 incidents from October and November 2005 were tracked from initial report to the police through to court outcome. As other studies highlight, there is a very low conviction rate in domestic abuse cases, and even if the perpetrator is convicted the sentence is generally one of ‘low tariff’ (e.g. conditional discharge or fine). Therefore, it was predicted that there would be a high number of initial reports, followed by a significant drop through the arrest and charge stages, culminating in a small number of convictions with medium to high tariff sentences (e.g. community rehabilitation orders or imprisonment).

Incidents resulting in arrest

In total, 130 of the 784 incidents resulted in arrest (17%). *Thus, a domestic abuse suspect was arrested in only one in six incidents.*

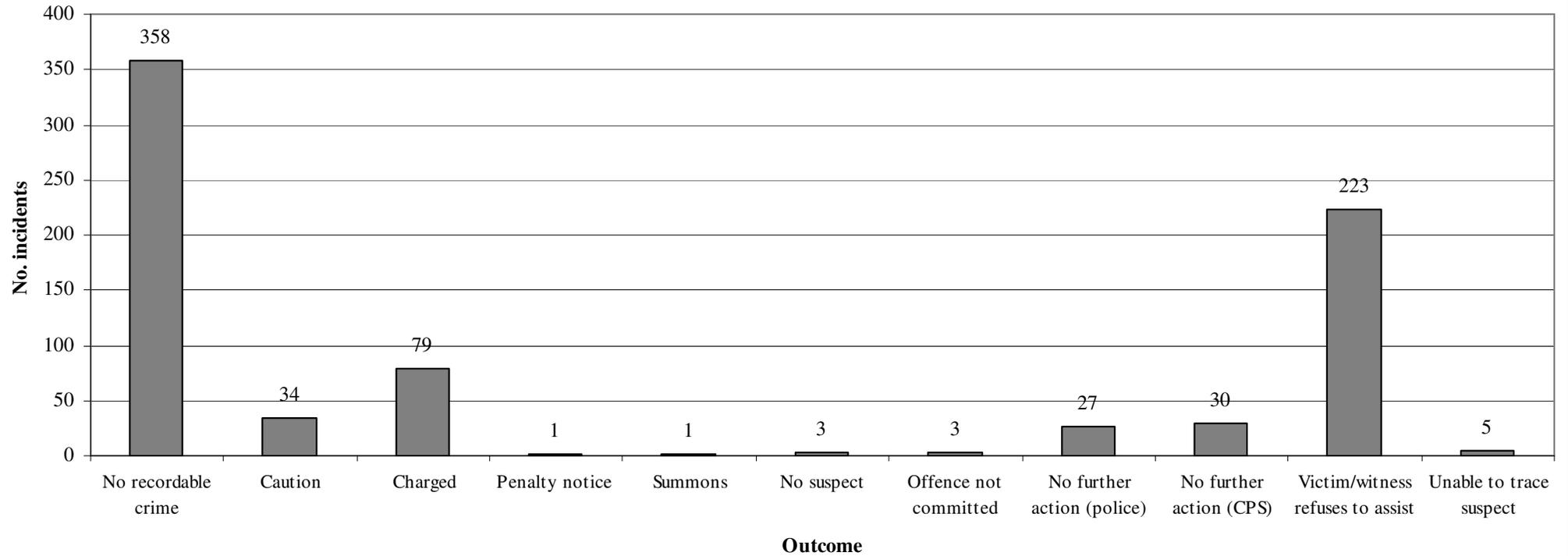


Arrests were most likely to be made in incidents that included sexual offences (arrests made in 60% of this type of incident – although the numbers are very small) and violence against the person (arrests made in 29%). Only 2% of other incidents resulted in arrest, however this is not unexpected because an arrest could not be made for a criminal offence in incidents in this category – an arrest was only possible to prevent an offence from taking place (e.g. arrest for breach of the peace).

Incidents resulting in charges

In total, 79 of the 784 incidents resulted in the suspect being charged with a criminal offence (10%). *Thus, a domestic abuse suspect was charged in one in ten incidents.* The graph overleaf shows what happened to incidents at the charge stage.

Outcome at charge stage



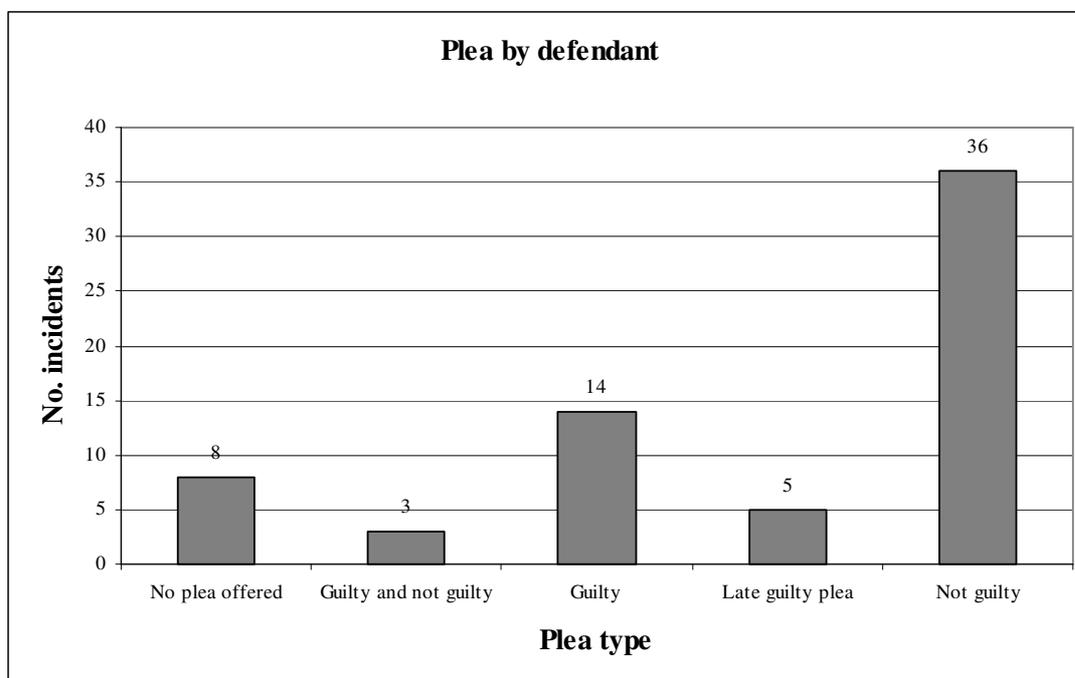
N.B. Reason for no charge missing data for 20 incidents.

Most frequently there were no charges brought because no recordable crime was deemed to have been committed (358 of the 784 incidents, 46%). The next most frequent reason for cases not progressing was if the victim or key witness (generally the same person in domestic abuse cases) refused to assist (223 of the 784 incidents, 28%). Since prosecutions can now be brought in cases where the victim/key witness withdraws their statement this means that there is an opportunity here for the police to collect additional evidence (photographs etc) in order to reduce attrition at this stage. Alternatively, if additional support were given to victims/key witnesses at this stage there may be fewer refusals to assist. In total, 57 incidents received ‘no further action’ (7%). The CPS were slightly more likely to ‘no further action’ an incident than the police were (30 incidents compared with 27). When the CPS ‘no further actioned’ an incident it was generally for evidential reasons (in 29 incidents) rather than because of public interest reasons (in 1 incident).

Police cautions⁵ were given in 4% of incidents (34 out of 784). It is worth noting that a police caution can only be given if the suspect admits the offence. Out of the 34 cautions given, 19 were for Assault ABH and a further 11 were for Common assault. One caution was given for Criminal Damage and two for Harassment. More worryingly, a caution was given for an incident that resulted in a one-inch knife wound to the victim in an incident logged as Wounding GBH Section 18. *The use of cautions in domestic abuse incidents should continue to be monitored.*

Plea by defendant

Out of the 79 incidents where charges were brought, the plea was recorded in 66. Most frequently, in over half of the incidents where charges were brought, the defendant pleaded not guilty to all charges (36 out of 66, 55%). In a further 3 incidents the defendant pleaded not guilty to some of the charges against him but guilty to others and in 8 incidents no plea was offered. One in five defendants pleaded guilty (14 out of 66, 21%) and a further 5 made a late guilty plea.

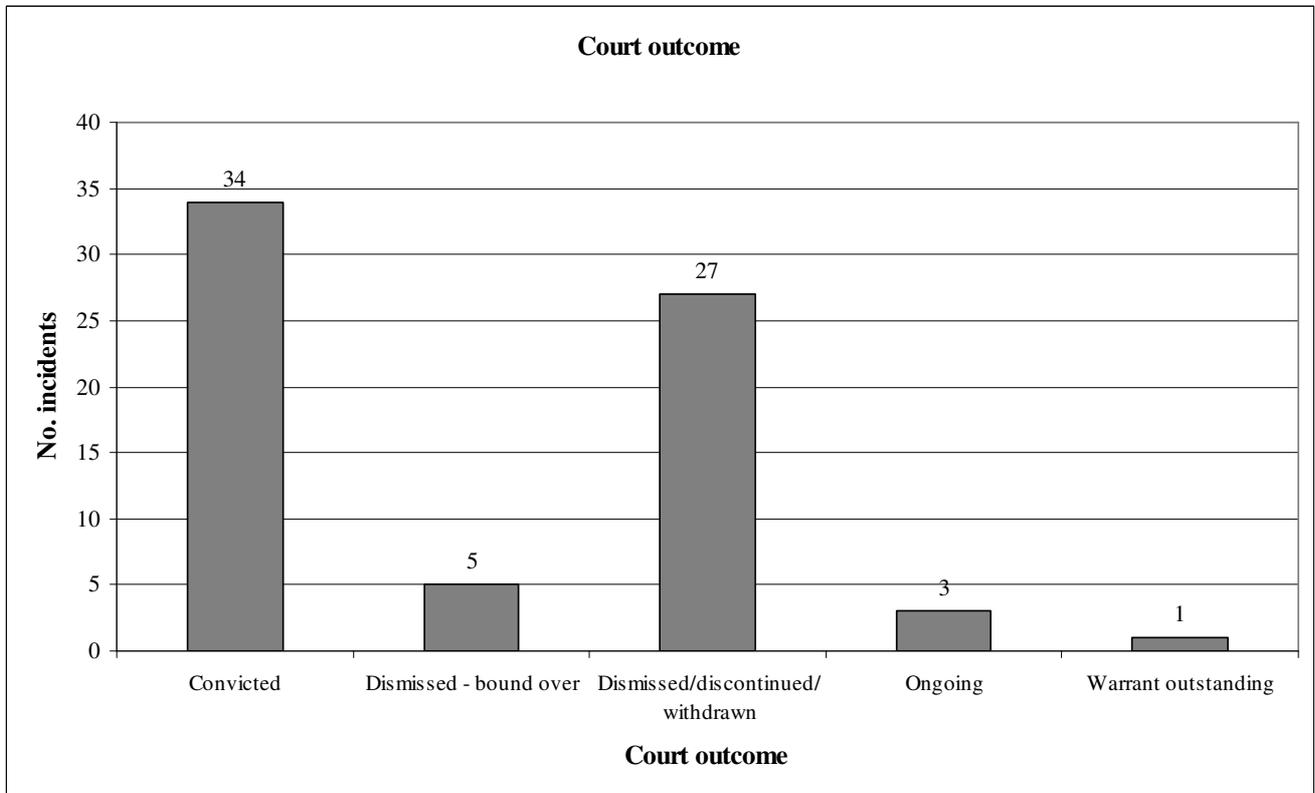


N.B. missing data for 13 incidents

⁵ A caution is a formal warning given by or on the instructions of a senior Police Officer to an adult who has admitted he is guilty of a criminal offence. It is generally used for minor, less serious offences but can be taken into consideration by a court if the person is convicted and sentenced for a further offence.

Incidents resulting in conviction

In total, 34 of the 784 incidents resulted in a conviction (4%). *Therefore, a domestic abuse suspect was convicted in one in 25 incidents.* The graph shows what happened to incidents at the court stage.



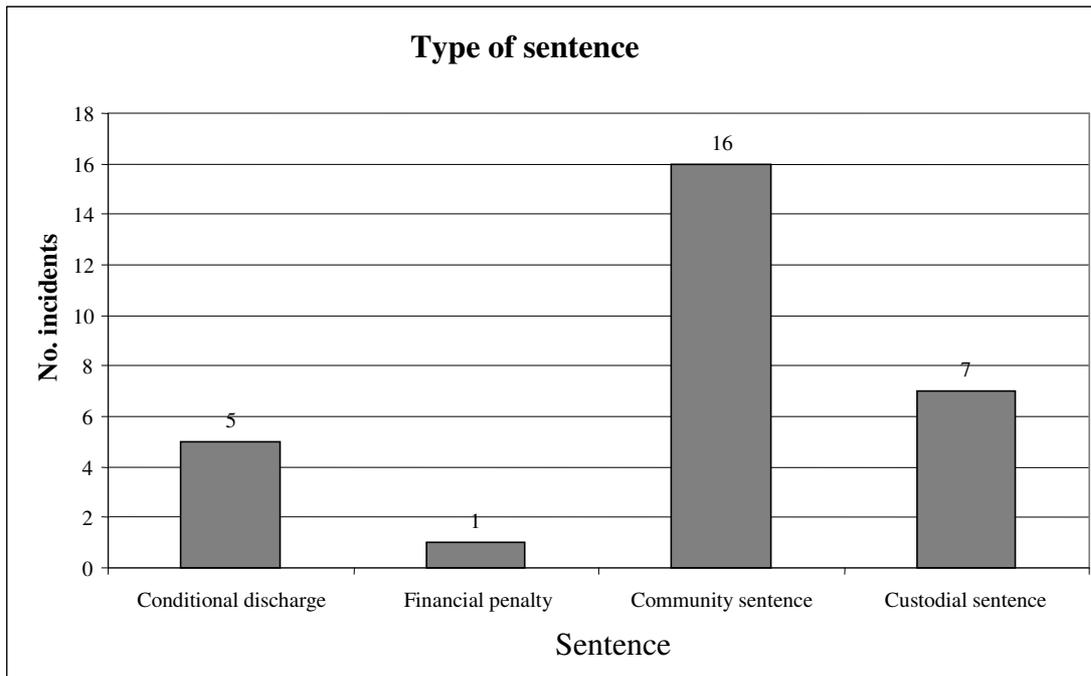
N.B. missing data for 9 incidents

Nearly half the incidents that reached court resulted in a conviction for a criminal offence (34 out of 70, 49%). Around the same number of incidents were dismissed, discontinued or withdrawn (32 incidents), however in 5 of these incidents the perpetrator was bound over to keep the peace (for between 6 and 12 months for sums of between £100 and £250). In 7 of the incidents that were dismissed, discontinued or withdrawn, the victim was listed as being responsible (and in one incident it was suggested that the victim should be prosecuted for wasting police time after withdrawing their evidence).

Sentence type

In total, 7 of the 784 incidents resulted in the suspect being convicted and given a custodial sentence (0.9% - less than one in a hundred). A total of 16 of the 784 incidents resulted in the suspect being convicted and given a community sentence (2% - one in fifty).

The graph overleaf shows the sentences given to those who were convicted. The most frequent type was a community sentence (community punishment orders and/or community rehabilitation orders) (given in 55% of incidents where perpetrator was convicted). The seven custodial sentences ranged in length between one week (for criminal damage) to 15 months for three counts of assault, the last of which was committed while on bail for a previous assault against the same woman (level of assault not specified).



N.B. missing data (awaiting sentence) in 5 incidents

Of the 16 incidents that resulted in a community sentence, only six (38%) specified the Probation-run Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP), which is the accredited criminal justice programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse in Bristol. Worryingly, one perpetrator who mounted a sustained physical attack on his partner in front of a child was sentenced to an Aggression Replacement Therapy rather than to the IDAP. Further investigation should be conducted into why such a large proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators who are given a community sentence are not being sent on the IDAP as part of the sentence.

Summary

As predicted, the number of initial incidents reported to the police dropped sharply through the criminal justice system, culminating in a conviction rate of just one in 21 incidents (4%). Only 3% of incidents resulted in a medium (community) or high (custodial) tariff sentence.

What this means is that the vast majority of perpetrators of domestic abuse are not receiving any criminal justice sanction for their behaviour. This low likelihood of a perpetrator receiving a criminal justice sanction means that there is an increased need for some form of non-criminal justice intervention. However, an effective criminal justice system is central to the success of a voluntary programme as an essential part of a coordinated approach.

APPENDIX 2 - QUESTION GUIDE

PART ONE: THE WORK OF YOUR ORGANISATION

1. Does your organisation work with perpetrators of domestic abuse? (Is this indirectly as part of your general work or do you do direct, specific work with perpetrators?)
2. Please describe the type of work you do with domestic abuse perpetrators.
 - a) Approximately how many perpetrators do you work with per year?
 - b) Approximately what proportion of your caseload does this account for?
3. Do organisations refer perpetrators of domestic abuse to you? (Please explain your answer)
 - a) What type of organisations make referrals to you?
 - b) Approximately how many referrals are made to you per year?
4. Do you refer perpetrators of domestic abuse to other organisations? (Please explain your answer)
 - a) What type of organisations do you make referrals to?
 - b) Approximately how many referrals do you make per year?

PART TWO: REACTING TO REQUESTS FOR HELP

Please read the following ‘vignettes’ (hypothetical case studies) and tell us how a worker or volunteer from your organisation might respond.

‘Jayne’ and ‘Ben’

You have been in contact with Jayne for a few months. Recently she has disclosed to your organisation that her male partner Ben has been increasingly controlling and violent. After he ‘loses it’ he gets upset, locks himself in the bathroom and says he’s sorry but he can’t control his actions.

You are concerned about Jayne’s safety, particularly as she is 6 months pregnant and already has one young child. However, Jayne seems unconcerned for her own safety and only seems to be focused on getting help and support for Ben.

‘Jason’

You have already had contact with Jason on a number of occasions when he discloses that he is being abusive towards his partner. You are working with Jason on other matters but do not feel that you have the appropriate skills to deal with him in relation to the domestic abuse. He asks you where he can go to learn how to change his behaviour.

PART THREE: GENERAL VIEWS

- 1) Do you think there are enough services for domestic abuse perpetrators in Bristol? (Please explain your answer)
- 2) Do you think a domestic abuse perpetrators programme should be set up in Bristol for men who are not convicted for a criminal offence? (Please explain your answer)

- 3) Would your organisation be likely to make referrals to the programme? (Approximately how many per year?)
- 4) Do you think your organisation would be a suitable place to advertise a programme? (Please explain your answer)

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