



**Title:** From Good Intentions to Good Practice: Mapping Services Working with Families Where there is Domestic Violence

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**SCS topic headings:** Personal Safety; Home Safety; Safety of Vulnerable Groups; Partnership Working; Evaluation and Monitoring

**This document is a REVIEW of effective intervention approaches.**

## **Summary of the intervention's aim**

The research aim was to establish the range and extent of service provision circa 2000 across the UK for families where there is domestic violence. The project set out to:

- identify and map examples of family support work with women, children and men within both the statutory and voluntary sectors throughout the UK
- identify innovative work in relation to domestic violence and family support in both the voluntary and statutory sectors
- develop a framework through which examples of good practice can be identified.

## **Outcomes**

The report is structured in two sections:

1. A mapping exercise of domestic violence family support provision. Its aim is to provide an accurate reflection of the range and extent of work with families where there is domestic violence requires a broad view of practice and provision. To understand the situation, the researchers mapped data regarding the following topics:
  - **Women's Aid and women's refuge, outreach and advocacy services- mapping data regarding:** General provision of services; Partnership and joint inter-agency

working; Underfunding; Details of provision; Services for women; Services for children; Outreach services; Training and practice guidance; Monitoring and evaluation.

- **Children’s organisations– mapping data regarding:** Provision of services; Screening; Referrals and agency links; Safety; Training; Policies; Monitoring and evaluation.
- **Social services departments: statutory sector– mapping data regarding:** Provision of services; Children’s service plans; Social services and domestic violence forums; Specialist domestic violence workers; Staff training; Screening for domestic violence.
- **Perpetrators’ programmes- mapping data regarding:** Methodology and response rate; Policy and good practice; Form of attendance and selection criteria; Models of intervention; Women’s safety; Duration; Non-completion rates; Training; Inter-agency involvement; Wider influence; Size of groups; Programme facilitators.

## **2. Good practice indicators**

The authors define ‘good practice indicators’ as specific developments which are essential to good practice, that should be aspired to, and which can be used as parameters in evaluations.

A conceptual framework of principles was established with regard to good practice through a recursive process of triangulating information from a number of different sources: the data mapping survey results (stage 1); from a range of definitions and documentation which were attached to many of the questionnaires; from the specific case studies which supplemented the general mapping data; and from previous research and practice. The framework devised the following eight good practice indicators below:

### **Good Practice Indicator 1: The use of definitions of domestic violence**

- Definitions should acknowledge diversity and the gendered nature of domestic violence, and include different types of abuse
- Definitions should acknowledge the issue of power and control.

### **Good Practice Indicator 2: The use of monitoring processes and screening**

- Systematic screening using a protocol of questions
- Mechanisms for recording
- Guidance and supervision
- Training
- Feedback mechanisms.

**Good Practice Indicator 3: Good practice guidelines and domestic violence policies**

- Safety and confidentiality
- Involvement of the survivors of domestic violence and their representatives in refuge and advocacy services
- Attention to diversity and equality
- Working together within a wider strategy
- Development of a broad range of policies, guidelines and clarity in the referral system
- Building on policies which have already been well developed in other areas
- Policies embedded within the organisation
- Detailed guidelines.

**Good Practice Indicator 4: Safety measures and safety-oriented practice**

- Safety planning
- A range of organisational measures
- Supporting mothers as a response to child protection
- Worker's safety.

**Good Practice Indicator 5: Training– raising awareness, exploring values, developing skills**

- Training large numbers of employees
- Training beyond initial awareness- raising leading to a range of specialist courses
- A rolling programme of domestic violence training
- The integration of the training strategy into operational planning for domestic violence services
- A strategy for financing and providing ongoing training
- Training quality, equality issues and service users' voices.

**Good Practice Indicator 6: Evaluation–ensuring effective responses**

- Independent evaluation
- Follow-up.

**Good Practice Indicator 7: Multi-agency integration and coordination – working together**

- Consistency of service across and within agencies
- Confidentiality, permission and agreement
- The full and active involvement of women's refuge, outreach and support services
- Equality issues and active consultation with abused women and children
- Clarity of response
- Monitoring of effectiveness and evaluation of inter-agency coordination
- Improved resourcing.

**Good Practice Indicator 8: Specific working with women and children**

The review also presents examples and evidence from seven case studies. These serve to illustrate innovative practice in a range of settings. Each project shows some, although not all, of the good practice indicators and most have yet to be evaluated.

### **Summary of evaluation conclusions**

The mapping of domestic violence provision through social services departments showed that significant steps have been taken to improve services, as well as the infrastructure to recognise and respond to domestic violence.

A criticism at the time (circa 2000) was that provision was geographically patchy. Whilst some areas of the UK provided a comprehensive range of services, in other localities there are no designated domestic violence services provided through the social services departments.

The survey data revealed a large array of services offered either by refuge and outreach services alone or in partnership with other agencies. However, these services were generally not thought to be adequate to meet the level of need, and it appeared that all refuges fell far short of being able to accommodate all the families who approached them.

The vast majority of the children's organisations surveyed come across domestic violence in their support work with families and many developed ways of working with the resultant issues as a part of their general remit. Yet very few services were specifically aimed at supporting families experiencing domestic violence or have staff designated to deal with these issues.

Domestic violence tended not to be screened for or monitored, and policy development was lacking in many local services. While safety of staff was taken into consideration by nearly half of the services, there was an identified need to further develop safety measures with regard to service users.

### **How the evaluation gathered information for findings and conclusions**

The overarching methodology was a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data. Following a literature review, the research design was divided into two stages:

#### **Stage 1: A national mapping survey of provision (Quantitative data)**

Mapping perpetrators' programmes was conducted by questionnaire survey of National Practitioners' Network (NPN) members (backed up by attendance at the spring 1999 NPN meeting) and of all 91 UK probation services. (NPN has now developed into RESPECT: The National Association for Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes and Associated Support Services.) Twenty-six responses were obtained about services being offered: six from the voluntary sector and 20 probation services (of the latter, seven reported partnership arrangements for the main or a

complementary service, such as work with partners). Nineteen of the respondents were involved in specialist provision for perpetrators, including or solely based on groups in 18 cases.

Women's refuge, outreach and advocacy services were surveyed with the cooperation of WAFE, using a questionnaire which they had developed for use in wider surveys, including those conducted for the DETR. Responses to this questionnaire were coordinated by Women's Aid in England through an individual telephone interview with each project in England. The research team similarly surveyed refuges in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. An almost 100% response rate was obtained, with questionnaires completed for a total of 326 refuge projects.

The questionnaire elicited information (mainly quantitative in nature) about refuge services, about outreach, aftercare and advice services, and about training, consultancy and public education work. These data were supplemented by consultation with key officers, and by an analysis of policy and practice documents and guidance

#### **Stage 2: Qualitative data**

Data from the literature review, questionnaires, and case studies were used to develop and elaborate the framework of good practice indicators.

**Further details about the SCS evaluation of this report are available on request. Please contact [info@scsn.org.uk](mailto:info@scsn.org.uk)**

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