



# BEYOND VIOLENCE

Breaking cycles of domestic abuse

THE CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL  
JUSTICE

## Executive summary

This is the Executive Summary of *Beyond Violence: Breaking cycles of domestic abuse*. To download the full report and complete list of recommendations, visit [www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk).

### I. Introduction

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This report argues that domestic abuse is a shocking and disturbingly prevalent hallmark of social breakdown – yet it exists inside every community. Very serious forms of domestic abuse are not uncommon in the UK: on average two women are killed every week by their partner or ex (in the year 2009/10, 94 women were killed and 21 men were killed by their partner or ex).<sup>1,2</sup> Domestic violence and abuse can also lead to fractured bones, extensive bruising, severe burns, chronic pain, stillbirths and suicide.

‘So many of my friends don’t bother with me now, they’re fed up of helping me split up with my boyfriend only to go back to him again – I can understand why they’re upset, he’s broken apart our flat and beat me up so many times, but I can tell he wants to change, and you can’t help who you love can you?’

Woman in an abusive relationship who contributed to CSJ consultation process

One in four women and one in seven men report being abused by their partner or ex; and one in four young adults lived with domestic abuse when they were children.<sup>3,4</sup> Domestic abuse accounts for approximately eight per cent of the total burden of disease in women

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- 1 In this report we use the term domestic abuse in the traditional sense, to refer to abuse in intimate partner relationships (current or ex), rather than abuse in other family relationships (sibling to sibling, or child to parent for example)
  - 2 Smith K, Coleman K, Eder S and Hall P, *Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Homicides, Fireman Offences and Intimate Violence 2009/10, Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10*, London: Home Office, 2010 [accessed via: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk) (04/07/12)]
  - 3 Chaplin R, Flatley J and Smith K, *Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Crime in England and Wales 2010/11*, London: Home Office, 2011 [accessed via: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk) (04/07/12)]
  - 4 Radford L et al, *Child Abuse and neglect in the UK today*, London: NSPCC, 2011a

aged between 18 and 44 years, and is a larger contributor to ill health than high blood pressure, smoking and weight.<sup>5</sup>

Even after the violence is over, victims are more likely to suffer from coronary heart disease, gastrointestinal problems, sexually transmitted infections and chronic pain.<sup>6</sup> Mental scars can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and substance misuse.<sup>7</sup> Less obvious but equally serious effects are isolation, lost opportunities and wasted potential. It impacts upon victims' employment, takes years off their lives and increases their vulnerability to further abuse.<sup>8,9</sup> The cost of all forms of abuse is approximately £15.7 billion per year.<sup>10</sup>

Domestic abuse is one of the strongest risk factors for suicide attempts.<sup>11</sup>

Abuse ranges from physical violence used by both partners in a couple during conflict to a strategic pattern of control, torture and subjugation inflicted by one partner upon the other. Although abuse that conforms to a pattern of coercive control inflicts particular harm on victims, it is not clear whether controlling forms of violence have more of an impact upon children living in the household than violent fights between parents. Through its threat to their caregiver(s), all violence and abuse between parents profoundly threatens a child's sense of safety.

Our findings, analysis and solutions are the result of in-depth examination of the research literature, consultation with people in the field of domestic abuse, work with adults and children who have suffered its impact, and original polling.

Research shows that living with domestic abuse between parents is as psychologically harmful to children as when they are direct victims of physical abuse themselves.<sup>12</sup>

The report applies a comprehensive, relationship-based understanding of domestic abuse to find solutions that have radical potential to end the problem and its harms. We do not address forms of domestic abuse specific to ethnic, sexual orientation, age, immigrant or other groups. Nor is this an exhaustive review of existing good practice, although reference is made

- 5 Vos T et al, 'Measuring the impact of intimate partner violence on the health of women in Victoria, Australia', *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 84, 2006, pp739–44
- 6 Campbell C and Haaken J, 'The school of hard knocks', *The Psychologist*, 24, 2011, pp512–15; Vives-Cases C, Ruiz-Cantero MT, Escribà-Agüir V and Miralles JJ, 'The effect of intimate partner violence and other forms of violence against women on health', *Journal of Public Health*, 33, 2010, pp15–21; Ellsberg M et al, 'Intimate partner violence and women's physical and mental health in the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence: an observational study', *Lancet*, 371, 2008, pp1165–72
- 7 Bonomi A et al, 'Intimate partner violence and women's physical, mental and social functioning', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 30, 2006, pp458–66; El-Bassel N, Gilbert L, Wu E, Go H and Hill J, 'Relationship between drug abuse and intimate partner violence: A longitudinal study among women receiving methadone', *American Journal of Public Health*, 95, 2005, pp465–70; Golding JM, 'Intimate partner violence as a risk factor for mental disorders: A meta-analysis', *Journal of Family Violence*, 14, 1999, pp99–132; Testa M, Livingston JA and Leonard KE, 'Women's substance use and experiences of intimate partner violence: A longitudinal investigation among a community sample', *Addictive Behaviors*, 28, 2003, pp1649–64
- 8 Walby S, *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, London: Women & Equality Unit, UK Department of Trade and Industry, 2004
- 9 Krause ED, Kaltman S, Goodman LA and Dutton MA, 'Avoidant coping and PTSD symptoms related to domestic violence exposure: A longitudinal study', *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 21, 2008, pp83–90; Lindhorst T and Oxford M, 'The long-term effects of intimate partner violence on adolescent mothers' depressive symptoms', *Social Science and Medicine*, 66, 2008, pp1322–33
- 10 Walby S, *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, London: Women & Equality Unit, UK Department of Trade and Industry, 2004; Walby S, *The Cost of Domestic Violence: Update 2009*, Lancaster: Lancaster University, 2009
- 11 Devries K et al, 'Violence against women is strongly associated with suicide attempts: Evidence from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women', *Social Science and Medicine*, 73, 2011, pp79–86
- 12 Kitzmann KM, Gaylord NK, Holt AR and Kenny ED, 'Child witnesses to domestic violence: A meta-analytic review', *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 2003, pp339–52

to many such examples upon which our solutions are designed to build. For them to be most effective they need to be embedded within a wider, in-depth response to social disadvantage and family dysfunction.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Breaking cycles of abuse

The clear message of this report is that the way we are tackling domestic abuse is failing to break abusive cycles in families:

- The impact on children of being a witness of domestic abuse tends to be underplayed but they are at risk of developing poor mental and physical health, failing at school and becoming a victim or perpetrator themselves, even if they are able to achieve safety;
- The parent who was the main target of the abuse may be unable to meet their children's emotional needs, because of the trauma they have experienced, and children are often left with significant and unresolved inner conflict. This contributes to the poor outcomes that too often characterise their lives;
- Acknowledging how tough it is to be a parent even once they or the abuser have left is not the same as criticising them. Help and support for parenting in families where abuse has taken place will only be available if the difficulties of providing loving care and attention are recognised in a non-blaming way;
- Similarly, victims are often unable to break free of the psychological drivers rooted in their own past experiences which can play some part in them becoming enmeshed in an abusive relationship in the first place and help explain an ambivalence towards the perpetrator;
- Programmes and other approaches to perpetrators tend to have a poor track record in addressing underlying motivators for abusive behaviour and thereby helping them to stop. Breaking cycles of violence and abuse is essential if perpetrators are not to take destructive patterns of behaviour into future relationships.

One reason why the therapeutic interventions victims and perpetrators need are not more widely available is because policy and practice currently, and almost exclusively, focus on the perceived male desire to control women, driven by patriarchal beliefs about identity and entitlement. Power, control and patriarchy are explanatory factors in many contexts of domestic abuse, but there are many others that are also significant, including poverty, substance misuse, psychological vulnerabilities rooted in people's past experiences (such as insecurity, jealousy, and dysfunctional ways of resolving conflict), and the dynamics that play out between two people in a relationship.

Therefore, as domestic abuse is about far more than power, control and patriarchy, effective solutions need to be drawn from a much fuller understanding of the problem. A common misconception prevails however; that acknowledging complex influences and relationship dynamics excuses perpetrators and moves the debate away from responsibility and choice.

<sup>13</sup> Centre for Social Justice, *Completing the Revolution: Transforming mental and health and tackling poverty*, London: Centre for Social Justice, October 2011 and Centre for Social Justice, *Making sense of Early Intervention*, London: Centre for Social Justice, July 2011

Holding perpetrators responsible and recognising key drivers to domestic abuse are not incompatible goals for policy and practice – our recommendations acknowledge the necessity of this both/and approach if victims' and children's needs are to be adequately addressed and recurring victimisation and perpetration prevented.

### 3. Relational dynamics between partners

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Relationships are dynamic and interactive: both partners may exert some measure of influence over the abusive patterns that develop and continue to play out – although this is not at all the same as saying that both are responsible or to blame for the abuse. Men and women in abusive relationships describe the complex ways in which their feelings and actions interact with each other: Research shows, for example, that a man's aggression towards his partner may or may not continue over time depending on whom he is with, and on whether or not his partner is also aggressive.<sup>14</sup> Women's levels of depression can also have some bearing on men's violent behaviour, as well as being exacerbated by it.<sup>15, 16</sup>

The blame for the abuse lies solely with the person perpetrating it; but taking into account the relationship between the two people is key to understanding it.

Looking at both partners in this way sheds greater light on the relationship, the lived experience of both partners and their own potential to bring about change. It is essential to bringing an end to domestic abuse – for example, by enabling therapists to help couples who want to develop non-abusive relationships following abuse more effectively.

### 4. The pronounced and negative effects of domestic abuse on children

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Children often develop anxiety, depression and aggression as a consequence of living with domestic abuse. Approximately two-thirds of child witnesses show more emotional or behavioural problems than the average child.<sup>17</sup> Living with abuse also makes the rest of their lives much harder because of the way it affects their perceptions of themselves and other people. These shape their self-worth, identity, and ability to relate to others in child- and adulthood, making it much more difficult to succeed at school and develop friendships.

Although it is by no means inevitable, childhood exposure to domestic abuse is one of the most powerful predictors of becoming both a perpetrator and a victim of domestic abuse as an adult.<sup>18</sup> Living with domestic abuse:

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14 Capaldi DM, Shortt JW and Crosby L, 'Physical and psychological aggression in at-risk young couples: Stability and change in young adulthood' *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 49, 2003, pp1–27

15 Borochowitz DY and Eisikovits Z, 'To love violently: Strategies for reconciling love and violence', *Violence against Women*, 8, 2002, pp476–94

16 Kim HK, Laurent, HK, Capaldi DM and Feingold A, 'Men's aggression toward women: A 10-year panel study', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70, 2008, pp1169–87

17 Kitzmann KM, Gaylord NK, Holt AR and Kenny ED, 'Child witnesses to domestic violence: A meta-analytic review', *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 2003, pp339–52

18 Ehrensaft MK, Cohen P, Brown J, Smailes E, Chen H and Johnson JG, 'Intergenerational transmission of partner violence: A 20-year prospective study', *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 71, 2003, pp741–53

- Makes it harder to learn skills for effectively expressing negative emotions and resolving conflict;
- Teaches that others tend to be untrustworthy; children may become hypersensitive to signs of abandonment and betrayal, and lash out with anger in an attempt to prevent these fears from being realised;
- Divides people into either victims or perpetrators so that young people forging their own identity feel restricted to these two choices with a knock-on effect on their behaviour;
- Creates feelings of insecurity and low self-worth; if maintaining a positive sense of themselves requires becoming heavily dependent on others this can be a factor in them remaining in relationships even if they turn abusive.

## 5. Preventing revictimisation

A high proportion of victims leaving abusive relationships are at risk of returning to their abusive partner or becoming involved with someone else who is also abusive.

- Between 40 and 56 per cent of women experiencing domestic abuse have had a previously abusive relationship;<sup>19</sup>
- In one study, 66 per cent of refuge residents had previously left and returned to their abusive partner; 97 per cent of these women had done so on multiple occasions.<sup>20</sup>

People return to an abusive partner for a wide range of reasons:

- Practical problems such as a lack of financial resources, social support and housing options;
- Fear of the separation triggering worse abuse;
- Feelings of love and dependency towards the perpetrator; often fuelled by insecurity and low self-worth which have spiralled within the relationship;
- Expectations of themselves or the relationship (for example, that they can rescue their partner) which may, paradoxically, increase their commitment to it the worse it becomes.<sup>21</sup>

The impact of domestically abusive relationships is cumulative; much of the harm associated with domestic abuse is due to multiple victimisations.<sup>22</sup>

Again, recognising a victim's vulnerability to further abuse in no way equates to holding her or him responsible for it. Without understanding their complex feelings and fears, people might be tempted to blame victims for staying with or entering into new abusive relationships.

19 Alexander PC, 'Childhood trauma, attachment and abuse by multiple partners', *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy*, 1, 2009, pp78–88; Kemp A, Green BL, Hovanitz C and Rawlings EI, 'Incidence and correlates of post-traumatic stress disorder in battered women', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 10, 1995, pp43–55; Woffordt S, Mihalic DE and Menard S, 'Continuities in marital violence', *Journal of Family Violence*, 9, 1994, 195–225; Coolidge FL and Anderson LW, 'Personality profiles of women in multiple abusive relationships', *Journal of Family Violence*, 17, 1994, pp117–31

20 Griffing S et al, 'Reasons for returning to abusive relationships: Effects of prior victimisation', *Journal of Family Violence*, 20, 2005, pp341–48

21 Few AL and Rosen KH, 'Victims of chronic dating violence: How women's vulnerabilities link to their decisions to stay', *Family Relations*, 54, 2005, pp265–79

22 Bogat GA, Levendosky AA, Theran S, Von Eye A and Davidson WS, 'Predicting the psychosocial effects of interpersonal partner violence (IPV): How much does a woman's history of IPV matter?', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 2003, pp1271–91; Coolidge FL and Anderson LW, 'Personality profiles of women in multiple abusive relationships', *Journal of Family Violence*, 17, 1994, pp117–31

Moreover, if ongoing (and accumulating) vulnerability is ignored, victims themselves are given little chance to understand and address it; support and help that engage with the deeper psychological forces at play is essential.

‘For the first time in my life I opened my eyes and really looked at patterns my relationships had followed and how I could change the future and take control of my life and my happiness.’

Survivor of domestic abuse who has been through the Pattern Changing Programme (helps survivors address vulnerabilities to reduce the risk of further abuse)<sup>23</sup>

## 6. A broader understanding about domestic abuse should improve policy and practice

Over the past three decades, violence and abuse in couple relationships has turned from being seen as ‘just a domestic’ into a recognised social problem, with an appropriately uncompromising response. However, the prevalence and persistence of both domestic abuse and its harmful consequences suggest that efforts have been of questionable effectiveness. Our analysis suggests they have been hampered by three limiting perspectives.

### 6.1 Power, control and patriarchy

Practice in the domestic abuse field views it as being primarily about men enacting violence against their female partners in order to control and dominate them. Men are seen as motivated to be violent against women because they have been socialised by patriarchal influences in society which teach them that they are superior to women and deserve to be in control. Women are seen as remaining in abusive relationships because the patriarchal order leaves them without the material resources and confidence to leave.

The logical response to the ‘power and control’ approach emphasises providing safety and resources for female victims fleeing abuse, a punitive response to male perpetrators via the criminal justice system, prevention campaigns aimed at challenging patriarchal attitudes, and treatment programmes that challenge and confront male perpetrators about the controlling and sexist motivators behind their behaviour.

The ‘power, control and patriarchy’ narrative that emerged through feminist thinking has helped to place domestic abuse firmly within social and political discussion. This, in turn, has led to the development of an uncompromising and robust response to domestic abuse that has gone a very long way to demolish any social legitimacy it ever had – a straightforward message is often initially necessary to get people listening and acting. The contribution of feminism to past and ongoing debates and action on this subject has been considerable and welcome in very many ways.

23 McTiernan A and Taragon S, *Evaluation of Pattern Changing Courses*, Devon: ADVA Partnership, 2004

However, as movements move from the margins to the mainstream, they need to adapt to the complexities of the problems they are aiming to address.

Undue reliance on this simplistic model of domestic abuse means that:

- Little is done to help victims address vulnerabilities that place them at risk of future abuse;
- Perpetrator programmes have questionable effectiveness, with little attention to improvement and evaluation;
- Prevention campaigns primarily aim at challenging attitudes, rather than helping people learn how to avoid or step out of unhealthy relationship patterns;
- Little attention is paid to the needs and voices of people who are impacted by domestic abuse that does not fit the stereotypical pattern; they include male victims, female perpetrators, couples where the abuse is mutual, and couples with abusive relationships who want the abuse to end but the relationship to be sustained;
- Links between domestic abuse and both substance misuse and poverty are insufficiently addressed, despite the proven effectiveness of approaches which take both into account.

We argue that the structures and processes of government should prioritise support to strengthen family relationships and there should be a cross-government family strategy within which an expanded domestic abuse remit should sit. The current Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy emphasises the gendered aspects of domestic abuse at the expense of others. Placing it within a government framework for families would enable a more full understanding of domestic abuse to guide policy, ensuring a focus on the family relationships that are at the heart of the problem.

Yet we cannot ignore power, control and patriarchal influences in domestic abuse. These are important facets of some of its worst forms, and we recommend that the law take control and subjugation in domestic abuse *more* seriously than it currently does.

## 6.2 Limitations of the law and legal system

The criminal justice system (CJS) recognises more than at any point previously the seriousness of crimes within a domestic context, and this owes much to campaigners against violence against women. However, in most cases of domestic abuse, the aims of the CJS to deliver justice, punish and rehabilitate offenders, and protect the innocent, remain elusive.<sup>24</sup> Fundamentally the law and legal system were not designed with domestic abuse in mind and they still both misapply understandings of other sorts of crime to it.

As the law emphasises incidents, rather than patterns of behaviour, it fails to give adequate recognition to the serious wrongdoing inherent in strategic patterns of control and subjugation. Primary aspects of the *operation* of the CJS also work against achieving justice in cases involving complex intimate relationships – for example, adversarial processes and the clear distinction between victim and perpetrator, emphasis on victim testimony, and the high standard of proof required before there is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

<sup>24</sup> As stated in the Aims and Objectives section of [www.cjsonline.gov.uk](http://www.cjsonline.gov.uk), (cited on <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus548.html> (23/07/12))

There is a fundamental mismatch between a) the law's definitions of both wrongdoing and what is a useful, just response, and b) the realities of these in cases of domestic abuse. Hence profound changes to the law and alternative routes to justice are required.

### 6.3 Children's needs are not adequately prioritised and routinely go unmet

In most cases of domestic abuse, there are children involved.<sup>25</sup> Despite the growing evidence base of how they are impacted by domestic abuse, much of the practice of those working with families where it exists has not caught up. Thousands of children are being left at risk and/or without help to deal with the burden of problems domestic abuse has placed upon them.<sup>26</sup>

Children need to be free of both current and future domestic abuse. Many need help in overcoming mental health consequences, such as post-traumatic stress, but also more subtle psychological difficulties that place them at risk of relationship problems and abuse in the future including unresolved emotions about their parents.

Acknowledging these needs focuses attention not only on children living in abusive homes but also on those who are at risk of doing so again in the future (for example, because their mother is revictimised), or suffering its psychological consequences. The best way to help these children recover and remain free of domestic abuse is by helping their parents to forge better relationships with the children themselves, new partners and (if this is at all possible) each other. Supportive relationships with their parents and other trusted adults can lessen the harm of domestic abuse.<sup>27</sup> Many children will also need therapeutic help.

We argue for a response to children's needs that recognises a) the importance of all family relationships to their wellbeing and b) their life trajectories beyond the immediate moment of risk. Too often this response is lacking because:

- Too sharp a focus on the needs of the victimised parent in victim services can deprioritise those of the child (for instance, difficult questions about the victimised parent's ability to keep children safe and meet their emotional needs are often not raised);
- There are few services for child protection workers to refer on to and too few resources to keep track of children who remain at risk even after leaving the immediate abusive situation;
- In some child services there is an inadequate awareness of the nature of harm caused to children from domestic abuse;
- Across services there is a lack of motivation and skill to engage with abusive fathers;
- Health services often miss opportunities to help victims and their children yet they play a particularly significant role; a large number of victims do not readily identify themselves as such and will only ever be seen professionally in this context. Health workers' ability to help them recognise abusive behaviour in their lives can be essential to help them and their children achieve safety and access support.

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25 Howath E, Stimpson L, Barran D and Robinson A, *Safety in Numbers: A Multi-site Evaluation of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Services*, London: The Henry Smith Charity, 2009

26 Radford L, Aitken R, Miller P, Ellis J, Roberts J and Firkic A, *Meeting the needs of children living with domestic violence in London: Research Report*, London: NSPCC and Refuge, 2011 b

27 Holt S, Buckley H and Whelan S, 'The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and young people: A review of the literature', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32, 2008, pp797–810

Children at risk from or suffering domestic abuse and its consequences need to be identified and supported early. And they need help that is co-ordinated, prioritises family relationships and is mindful of both long- as well as short-term impact. This approach has the potential to transform families and life stories, thereby doing much to prevent violence and abuse in the future.

## 7. Polling

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Through our original polling conducted by YouGov in April 2011 (2,481 British adults) and May 2011 (2,234 British adults) we found that:

- 80 per cent said domestic abuse was not taken seriously enough in society;
- 82 per cent consider witnessing domestic abuse to be as harmful to children as being a direct victim of abuse themselves;
- 54 per cent say the main cause of domestic abuse is the perpetrator; another 25 per cent think it is the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim; less than one per cent think the main cause is the victim;
- 62 per cent feel that we can only help perpetrators of domestic abuse to stop if we understand the individual reasons behind their behaviour;
- 73 per cent agreed that if we want to tackle domestic abuse we have to recognise that many perpetrators have themselves been victims of abuse;
- 90 per cent of those expressing an opinion think public money should be available to provide children affected by domestic abuse with counselling or therapy;
- 74 per cent of those expressing an opinion think it would be effective to provide more therapeutic help to couples whose relationship has involved abuse, but who now want to explore sorting it out and staying together;
- A quarter of those polled consider helping young people to develop healthy relationships to be the single most important action to prevent domestic abuse.

## 8. Recommendations

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The rationale and evidence for each of our recommendations indicates that their implementation would lead to a dramatic reduction in domestic abuse and its deleterious effects on individuals, families and society, drawing substantial savings over the short- and long-term. A selection are outlined below.

### 8.1 Effectiveness at the heart of practice

To establish effectiveness as a key driving force in intervention, we recommend that:

- Where domestic abuse services have evidence of their cost-effectiveness, they and the services they benefit work towards creating payment-by-results commissioning frameworks, including using social impact bonds.

- All domestic abuse services put in place processes for routine evaluation. Local authority and other commissioners should work towards only funding services which are subject to evaluation and provide evidence of their effectiveness.
- Service user involvement in the design, practice and evaluation of domestic abuse services should be built into their contracts and budgets.

## 8.2 Prevention

To prevent domestic abuse before it ever begins, we recommend that:

- A core skill-based module focused on helping adolescents to build equal and non-abusive relationships is included within the curriculum (e.g. in PSHE, Citizenship or run during tutor group time) and is backed up by a supportive school culture and learning across other subjects.
- The Government, local authorities and other commissioners/funders (including agencies that benefit from local reductions in domestic violence) build on current relationship support through Couple and Relationship Education Programmes which have proven effectiveness in improving relationships in couples at risk of violence. Given the importance of family stability to children's outcomes, this should become an important aspect of Troubled Families programmes. There is a strong role for voluntary and community organisations to play in delivering programmes in disadvantaged areas.
- Couple Relationship Education (CRE) and therapy programmes for high-risk couples do not exclude couples who have experienced abuse in their relationship but want to explore staying together. Appropriate safeguards and selection criteria should be applied to minimise unethical and unhelpful practices. CRE programmes should only be offered if abuse more closely corresponds to 'situational couple violence' than coercive control.

## 8.3 Victims

To help victims escape abuse and recover from its consequences we recommend that:

- Local commissioners fund the implementation of multi-agency meetings for high-risk victims (for example, implementing the IDVA and MARAC model as this has proven effectiveness and is evaluated on an on-going basis) to meet the needs of the local population.
- NHS trusts and other relevant bodies mandate skill-based group training of at least one day for the health professional groups most likely to come into contact with victims of domestic abuse: midwives, health visitors, GPs and clinical staff in substance misuse, community mental health and emergency department services.
- Services used by domestic abuse victims offer support that helps them avoid being revictimised and, by developing new beliefs and skills, enables them to move on from vulnerabilities such as low self-esteem and insecurity.
- Reiterating the recommendation from our earlier report, the DH should explicitly propose to commissioners a pricing tariff for Any Qualified Provider (AQP) commissioning for talking therapy which allows for 'pure' Payment by Outcome contracts to be written for services which operate to standards of NHS safety, but supply therapies beyond NICE guidelines.

- Local commissioners should specify that refuges model themselves along the principles of therapeutic communities with all refuge workers given training, both at the start of their work and at regular intervals, that enables them to understand the social and psychological influences on domestic abuse, its interpersonal dynamics and its impact upon victims and children.

## 8.4 Perpetrators

To bring more perpetrators to justice where warranted and help them to stop behaving abusively and develop positive relationships, we recommend that:

- Only perpetrator programmes following key principles for effectiveness are commissioned such as programme flexibility to take account of perpetrators' individual drivers, motivations and behaviour patterns. This may lead to models having at least two 'streams' – one for perpetrators involved in strategic, controlling abuse and the other for those with more 'hot emotional' reasons behind their behaviour. Funding should be redirected from 'traditional' approaches towards these programmes and towards rigorous research into the outcomes of the Duluth, CBT and new models, so that effectiveness directs future commissioning practice.
- All community perpetrator programme providers develop, implement and evaluate social marketing campaigns designed to encourage perpetrators who have some motivation to change to access their treatments.
- Home Office and the NHS tender for a number of pilot perpetrator treatments embedded within substance misuse settings, along the lines of those we have described here to compare their effectiveness in reducing domestic abuse recidivism with existing community and probation-led programmes.
- Consideration be given to a new serious criminal offence whereby a prosecution can be brought on the basis of a 'course of conduct' in which a person has acted strategically to control, isolate, intimidate and/or degrade their victim.
- The Home Office and/or the Ministry of Justice should pilot a number of restorative justice programmes specific to domestic abuse in the UK (building on best practice in international RJ programmes for domestic abuse) to determine their effectiveness in bringing more offenders to justice, increasing victim satisfaction and sense of justice, reducing re-offending and reducing costs. In accordance with best practice guidance, we envisage RJ programmes to be unsuitable when abuse conforms to coercive controlling patterns.

## 8.5 Children

To ensure children's needs are at the forefront of a comprehensive response to domestic abuse we recommend that:

- The Social Work Reform Board's Professional Capabilities Framework should give specific attention to the knowledge and skills necessary for working with families with domestic abuse including: a) skills for working with domestically abusive fathers, b) skills for working with couples where violence is mutual, and c) knowledge about the ongoing risks of harm and psychological difficulty to children *after* they have left the domestically abusive home.



- Children who are living or have lived with domestic abuse should be provided with an offer of early help, whether or not they are displaying symptoms that merit a mental health diagnosis. We see a clear role for the new Early Intervention Foundation in identifying and informing the full range of local commissioners about best programmes and approaches for helping children identified at an early stage.
- All local authorities come together with statutory and voluntary agency partners to design and implement a system of integrated multi-agency working that proactively identifies at-risk children and responds to them and their families with a timely offer of help (for example, along the lines of the Partnership Triage Approach in the London Borough of Hackney).
- Both central government (for example the Department for Education) and local authorities should fund and evaluate pilot programmes aimed at building restorative mother-child and father-child relationships following domestic abuse in the home. Voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises with experience in supporting children following domestic abuse or maltreatment would likely play a significant role in developing and implementing these programmes.

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## About the Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) aims to put social justice at the heart of British society.

Our policy development is rooted in the wisdom of those working to tackle Britain's deepest social problems and the experience of those whose lives have been affected by poverty. We consult nationally and internationally, especially with charities and social enterprises, who are the champions of the welfare society.

In addition to policy development, the CSJ has built an alliance of poverty fighting organisations that reverse social breakdown and transform communities.

We believe that the surest way the Government can reverse social breakdown and poverty is to enable such individuals, communities and voluntary groups to help themselves.

The CSJ was founded by Iain Duncan Smith in 2004, as the fulfilment of a promise made to Janice Dobbie, whose son had recently died from a drug overdose just after he was released from prison.

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July 2012

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