

Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Strategic Reference Group on Perpetrators:

Summary note

Monday 12th July 12-2pm

Attendees:

- Chair: Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office
- Matt Ansell, The Association of Directors of Children's Services
- Chris Edwards, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
- Jo Todd, CEO, Respect
- Yasmin Khan, Welsh Government, with Cerys Miles, Ministry of Justice
- Dame Vera Baird, Victims' Commissioner
- Louisa Rolfe OBE, National Police Chiefs' Council
- Shana Begum, Drive and SafeLives Pioneer
- Kerry, Expert by Experience Network Women's Aid
- Ella Thomas, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners on behalf of Susannah Hancock
- Kate Henderson, National Housing Federation
- Cllr Louis Samuel, Local Government Association
- Katherine Perks, Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Kate Davies CBE, NHS England
- Kenny Gibson, NHS England
- Sarah Clarke, Magistrates Association

Guest speaker:

Lynne Abrams, Home Office

Survivor Support and Administration:

- Veronica Oakeshott, Drive Partnership
- Safia Sangster, Drive Partnership
- Sophie Francis-Cansfield, Women's Aid
- Rachel Ozanne, Drive Partnership
- Andrea Campos-Vigouroux, Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office

Summary: This first meeting was an opportunity for the Chair to introduce the purpose and scope of the group and for members to get to know each other.

Detail:

1. Welcome from Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs

Nicole welcomed attendees describing the group as a unique opportunity to make progress to hold perpetrators of domestic abuse to account and stop abusive behaviour. She made the following further points:

Context: There is a legal commitment for the government to produce perpetrator strategy by April 2022 as part of the Domestic Abuse Act. There is a breadth of work within each member's own area, but the ambition of this reference group is to have concentrated conversations and bring each other up to speed for cross-sector collaboration, to support each other and share knowledge on what is working well with perpetrator work and what funding is needed. There will be operational and policy opportunities this group can work together to influence.

There has always been a worry that there is not enough funding for the most basic victims' services responding to violence against women and girls. Perpetrator work does not want to take funding from victims' services, more funding is needed across the board so both areas are resourced. There

is increasing Interest in what is working across areas such as the criminal justice system, health, housing etc. to build knowledge and understanding and forward plan.

Members roles: Members are leaders in their own right and have access to networks through their roles. Members were asked to consider that while representing yourself and your organisation, they should bring in views from their sector and suggest experts who might present to the group.

Nicole gave further information about the statutory role and powers of the office of the DA Commissioner. She explained her role is for England and Wales (on non-devolved matters). Yasmin Khan and Cerys Miles will be able to share detailed knowledge of this as well as highlighting best practice as Wales has been leading on innovating approaches in many of these areas.

Administration: Drive Partnership is providing the secretariat through funding from the National Lottery. Work will go on between each meeting to progress specific issues and maximised opportunities and partnerships within the group.

Meeting tone and record: Nicole asked for the meeting tone to be cooperative and open in terms of discussion and asking questions. To facilitate confidence in asking questions full minutes will be disseminated to members only. A public summary note will be proactively shared with key stakeholders in the sector and published on the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's website. This will also include foresight of the next meeting topic to help ensure communications into the group and opportunities for stakeholders to feed in.

Timescales: Approximately 2 meetings to influence the perpetrator strategy then 3 meetings to consider implementation and other cross-sectoral issues. Each meeting will consider a concentrated area of discussion, recognising areas where there is significant underdevelopment and how we can influence the strategy, spending review bids etc.

Survivor engagement: Two important members of the meeting are Shana and Kerry who are survivors and experts by experience. We are incredibly lucky to have them to share their experiences and perspectives with the group. They will also be feeding into thinking about meaningful inclusion of lived experience in future meetings to equally feed in and influence upcoming opportunities.

2. Each participant was invited to introduce themselves and reflect on key areas they wished to consider – part A

This was taken in two halves. For the second half please refer to agenda item 4.

Please click through link for details.

[Matt Ansell](#)

[Chris Edwards](#)

[Jo Todd](#)

[Yasmin Khan and Cerys Miles](#)

[Vera Baird](#)

[Shana Begum](#)

[Kerry](#)

3. Presentation by Lynne Abrams, Head of Interpersonal Abuse Unit at the Home Office: an overview of current Home Office thinking for the perpetrator work

Lynne presented on the following:

Policy and funding context

- Development process of the VAWG strategy
- Perpetrator work: HO is expanding and developing support for survivors but also perpetrators

- Current HO activities: investment in PCCs perpetrator programmes, 15 research projects into DA perpetrators, helplines, how better to predict risk, test and refine the Recency Frequency Gravity algorithm, reviewing and understanding risk and risk assessments.
- DA Perpetrator strategy: duty on government to publish within 1 year of the DA Act.

The VAWG call for evidence identified key priorities regarding prevention and perpetrator work:

- Current post code lottery in level of provision, need to expand perpetrator programmes.
- Quality assurance and understanding best practice
- Early intervention and primary prevention:
- Data collection, understanding intersectionality and demographics of both victims and perpetrators.
- Training at community level: GPs, substance misuse and counselling services.
- Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and reviews of DHR demonstrating that statutory services have lots of opportunities to intervene before fatality.

Current HO work:

- Increased funding 25 million for 2021/22 (significant area of investment but also learning: understanding what is working and not working) increasing availability of perpetrator provisions, further research to build on good practice.
- Standards and quality assurance.
- Extend existing services that are already funded.
- Programme of work in entirety is subject to evaluation.

She talked about the DA Act and the likely breakdown of the DA Act statutory guidance.

4. **Each participant was invited to introduce themselves and reflect on key areas they wished to consider – part B** Please click through link for details.

[Louisa Rolfe](#)

[Ella Thomas on behalf of Susanne Hancock](#)

[Kate Henderson](#)

[Cllr Lois Samuels](#)

[Katherine Perks](#)

[Kate Davies](#) and [Kenny Gibson](#)

[Sarah Clarke](#)

5. **Next steps**

Nicole asked for everyone to send feedback on the Terms of Reference; feedback on proposed schedule of meetings, especially and send any questions for Lynne.

6. **Chair's Thank you**

Nicole recognised the enthusiasm and expertise in this group, and hoped she could make the most of members' time to affect change. She thanked Shana and Kerry and all other members for attending and contributing to this first meeting.

Annex 1. Details of Members Priorities – click on the triangle to see these/ hide these

1. Matt Ansell (*Families, Communities & Young People Policy Committee Member, The Association of Directors of Children's Services, also Operations Director Children & Families, Hertfordshire County Council*)

Matt will feed thinking from the group into the Association of Directors of Children's Services and draw on his access to best practice models. He is particularly interested in availability of quality perpetrator services, child and adolescent to parent abuse, workforce development, multi-agency risk management and primary prevention with young people.

2. Chris Edwards (*National Lead for Domestic Abuse Policy and Regional Probation Director for Greater Manchester, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service*)

Chris gave an overview of changes in probation sector relevant to DA work, including noting that probation will *deliver in house community services or interventions that follow 3-tier model: Building Better Relationships programme, structured interventions that are going through a quality assurance process, 1-1 toolkits (Chris is directly involved with the latter)*. He has reintroduced a national probation forum on domestic abuse and has the DA polygraph trial in his area of Manchester (also in North East, Northwest, Yorkshire & The Humber). He hopes to be able to align probation delivered interventions with those of other local organisations within geographical footprint. He's also interested in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

3. Jo Todd (*CEO, Respect*)

Jo welcomed the establishment of the group as a key shift in putting perpetrators in the spotlight and holding them accountable. She committed to acting as a bridge between the women's sector and the reference group and back again. Jo described her priorities as putting survivors including children at the centre, quality assurance, infrastructure and workforce development and building a range of interventions.

4. Yasmin Khan (*National Advisor Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence, Welsh Government*)

Yasmin explained that the Welsh Legal landscape is different to English regarding domestic abuse thanks to the 2015 Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act which has driven important progress in this area. Her priorities are improving the breadth of programmes available including specialist interventions e.g., for forced marriage, delivery and content; and investment in research on impact of community education programmes. Dr Cerys Miles (Former Head of Perpetrator Policy for Welsh Government) talked about work of the Welsh government on issues such as guidance to public servants on working with perpetrators and the importance of early intervention and prevention. She hopes the group can influence the perpetrator strategy to align with next iteration of the VAWDASV strategy in Wales.

5. Dame Vera Baird QC (*Victims' Commissioner*)

Vera's sole interest is to ensure victims are properly protected. In order to achieve this there is a need to develop an evaluated matrix of perpetrator services and consider how to get people onto

them (criminal justice and non-criminal justice routes). She hopes the group will think about wider gaps in programme provision e.g. for perpetrators of stalking, or sexual violence and support with research. She wants to see adequate funding for perpetrator work that is separate from victims' funding.

6. Shana Begum (*Drive and SafeLives Pioneer*)

Shana shared her experience of 25 years lived experience of DA, 3 honour killings and two forced marriages. She works as a Domestic Abuse Protection Officer within her Local Authority and works in third sector on DA issues. She has experience of both sides of delivery: being a service user and a service provider. She is a DA Champion for PCC network and interested in strategic leadership within local authorities and wider statutory agencies to hold perpetrators to account.

7. Kerry (*Women's Aid Expert by Experience*)

Kerry fled 11 years ago from multiple forms of abuse. She found services post-separation to be victim-blaming, focusing on perpetrator needs with consistent focus on him rather than her needs. She found that statutory services were often manipulated by the perpetrator. She currently sits on the Cafcass Learning and Improvement Board as Women's Aid Experts by Experience. She wants to see training for perpetrator engagement e.g. in family contact centres people have contact with perpetrators but don't know how to deal with them and that survivors are at the heart of everything in a positive way and statutory services are held accountable for victim blaming approaches. She is particularly interested in accountability and long-term outcomes so that perpetrator interventions are not just a tick box exercise.

8. Louisa Rolfe OBE (*Assistant Commissioner Met Operations. Domestic Abuse Lead, National Police Chiefs Council*)

Louisa talked about the work of the police in holding perpetrators to account. She offered to draw on networks of senior leaders in policing and key stakeholder groups. She talked about training, MAPPA, the various tools at police disposal (e.g., Domestic Violence Protection Orders now, Domestic Abuse Protection Orders in future). She talked about the high number of victim/ survivors who don't want to pursue a prosecution. In the context of the conviction of the perpetrator of the murder of Sarah Everard just days before, she recognised the need to ensure police perpetrators of domestic abuse are effectively held to account.

9. Ella Thomas (*Criminal Justice System Senior Policy Manager, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners*). Representing Susannah Hancock (*Chief Executive, The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners*)

Ella talked of PCCs need to have confidence in the quality and safety of what they are commissioning and for predictable funding rounds.

10. Kate Henderson (*Chief Executive, National Housing Federation*)

Kate talked about the significant reach of the NHF which through its membership affordable homes and support services to more than 6 million people in England including providing homelessness services. Kate is happy to feed findings from this group into the networks the NHF is linked into and vice versa.

11. Cllr Lois Samuels (*Domestic Abuse Champion, Local Government Association*)

Introduction and priorities:

Cllr Samuels would like to bring councils together and be one voice on tackling this issue. She said that there are lots of initiatives and good work going on at a local level and it is key to bring everything all together for joined up, collaborative working.

12. Katherine Perks (*Senior Principle – Policy, Equality and Human Rights Commission*)

Introduction and priorities:

Katherine hopes to bring insights into the group and can help embed a strong equality and human rights approach to this work. She is keen to address social norms that perpetuate domestic abuse. There needs to be a focus on victims with protected characteristics throughout.

13. Kate Davies CBE (*Director of Health and Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Assault Referrals Centres, NHS England*)

The NHS sees all the population and has a unique position to step up on DV, SV and victims needs and perpetrators in its public duty.

14. Kenny Gibson (*National Head of Safeguarding, NHS England*)

Kenny explained that NHS Safeguarding operates the commissioning statutory assurance process across the NHS. We function as a social movement which bears witness to the lived-experience of all forms of neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence. We have four clinically-led safeguarding networks: children, adults, maternity & GPs (primary care). They also influence the Royal Colleges to collaborate around the drafting of standards of care and practice competencies which make sense of statutory and technical guidance.

15. Sarah Clarke (*Magistrate and Deputy Chair of the Adult Courts Committee, Magistrate's Association*)

Sarah wants colleagues to be able to have confidence in sentencing options and interventions available. She hopes to use the group as an opportunity for us to increase awareness of the role of the courts when dealing with DA perpetrators with other agencies. She's keen to address any inconsistencies in our understanding about processes in place to protect victims and how these are working in reality. She also wants to raise concerns about the efficacy and appropriateness of using Out of Court Disposals for DA offences.