

**Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Strategic Reference Group on Perpetrators:  
summary note  
Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 1-3pm**

**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
- Sue Williams, on behalf of Louisa Rolfe for the National Police Chiefs' Council
- Shana, Drive and SafeLives Pioneer
- Kerry, Expert by Experience Network Women's Aid
- Micha Dawes, on behalf of Sophie Linden for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
- Kate Henderson, National Housing Federation
- Cllr Lois 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 speakers:**

- Dr Cerys Miles, former Perpetrator Policy lead for VAWDASV, Welsh Government
- Lara Jonah, National Specialist Lead for Domestic Abuse Interventions (BBR)

**Survivor Support and Administration:**

- Kyla Kirkpatrick, Drive Partnership
- Safia Sangster, Drive Partnership
- Annie Poland, Women's Aid
- Rachel Ozanne, Drive Partnership
- Andrea Campos-Vigouroux, Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office

**1. Welcome from Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs**

Nicole welcomed attendees and outlined the relevance of this forum to:

- discuss DA perpetrators on a strategic level,
- go back to our respective areas of influence, share thoughts and share with our own networks
- outline challenges in own areas,
- consider how we incentivise overcoming challenges and work collaboratively to form a greater voice together to give recommendations to government.

Nicole introduced the topic: quality assurance, equalities and commissioning. How we can plan responses to perpetrators that are safe, and impactful for victim-survivors. Nicole noted the shift in attitudes towards this work with commissioners needing to understand that investing in perpetrator work needs to be victim-focus for police and crime plans and recognising the effects of early intervention that can be achieved.

**2. Presentation from Jo Todd, CEO Respect**

Jo gave a presentation on:

- Understanding the DA perpetrator cohort
- A comprehensive response to perpetrators
- Quality assurance and Respect Standards
- The social and economic costs of domestic abuse
- The challenges and opportunities of joint commissioning responses to perpetrators.

**3. Survivor reflections and comments**

Both representatives outlined priorities and concerns they had gathered from survivor networks and their own reflections. Priorities for perpetrator programmes were accreditation, effective monitoring and evaluation, outreach support for perpetrators and survivor-centred impact measures. The concerns were minimisation of survivor experience by untrained professionals and safeguarding complacency.

Priorities for responses to perpetrators were a cross-sector, whole-society approach to holding perpetrators to account and increasing the accessibility of accreditation and standards to support specialist by and for organisations. Concerns were the dangers of rushing perpetrator work.

#### **4. Whole group discussion: Commissioning and equalities**

The Welsh context was referenced where they have increased investment in perpetrator responses but are still working on tailored approaches to address the cohort.

It was also highlighted that referrals into Children's Services have increased nationally with domestic abuse being a significant reason.

Joint commissioning was raised as a focus for integrated care partnerships, the importance of aligning commissioning models and holding public health bodies accountable.

It was also noted more could be done to rehouse perpetrators when it is safe and the victim's express wish, so victims can stay in their own home.

Accommodation, wraparound services, dependency, and recovery support are a step change within probation services, with lots of upwards change in the criminal justice system.

Attendees raised issues regarding commissioning and provision issues following new out of court disposals and issues with current postcode lottery of provision.

It was reiterated that tailored interventions need to go alongside survivor support.

The importance of information sharing between agencies and sentencers having a wider range of programmes to refer perpetrators to was highlighted. Sharing best practice and joined up working that is facilitated by long-term, sustainable investment was raised by the group as a priority.

#### **5. Presentation from Dr Cerys Miles (former Perpetrator Lead for VAWDASV, Welsh Government) on Welsh system of quality assurance and standards**

Cerys gave a presentation on:

- Welsh perpetrator service standards, covering the development and consultation process.
- The intended uses of the standards from commissioning to guidance for professionals.
- Examples of standards in action, providing a framework for a deep dive into regional delivery

#### **6. Presentation by Lara Jonah, National Specialist Lead for Domestic Abuse Interventions (BBR) on Building Better Relationships probation programme quality assurance plans**

Lara gave a presentation on:

- The accreditation process of the Building Better Relationships programme in probation
- The role of the Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel

- The quality assurance framework used to evaluate programme delivery

**7. Whole group discussion: what do we need to collectively say to government about standards? How are new initiatives and standards are operationalised?**

Priorities raised focused on the need for adequate and long-term funding with focus on long term outcomes and quality assurance.

Attendees stressed multi-agency working and an overarching framework to develop a diverse range of perpetrator responses and guide the identification and addressing gaps in commissioning.

Participants were keen to align standards across voluntary and statutory sectors, including inspectorates. The benefits of giving standards statutory footing was also noted.

The need for specialist provision and strong understanding amongst service delivery of dynamics and typologies of abuse including gendered causes and consequences of domestic abuse was reflected.

**8. Summary and actions**

Nicole Jacobs (DA Commissioner) suggested the following actions to be taken forward:

- Participants share this meeting's summary with networks
- Before next meeting mention topic as much as possible and encourage input into your office
- Summary of key messages to be sent to Home Office to inform DA Strategy and National Statement of Expectations.