

Bridging the Specialist and Problem-solving domestic abuse court models

Key considerations

**Centre
for
Justice
Innovation**

US Problem solving domestic model court model

- Originated in 1990s
- Aims to: improve victim-survivor long term safety and reduce reoffending

Key features

- Specialist professionals
- Safe and secure court spaces
- Wrap around support and advocacy for victim-survivors
- Case Managers to oversee information sharing
- Judicial continuity
- Post-sentence monitoring for those on probation
- Use of sanctions and rewards
- Advocate or support worker feeds in victim's perspective

Impacts and mechanisms for victim-survivors

Mechanisms

- Holistic support for victim-survivor reduces likelihood of attrition from proceedings
- Victim-survivor's perspective on risk included
- Victim-survivor is engaged and has a voice in proceedings

Impacts

- Victim-survivor safer and more supported
- Victim-survivors more satisfied with court experience

Impacts and mechanisms for system

Mechanisms

- Improved coordination
- Specialist training in domestic abuse applied to court decisions
- Authority of the judge bolsters accountability
- Judges perceives perpetrator behaviour and compliance over a long period

Impacts

- More early guilty pleas
- Less cracked cases
- May reduce reoffending through sanctions/rewards

England & Wales - Smarter approach to sentencing whitepaper

Problem solving courts an 'extension' of SDAC model

Core features across SDAC and PSC models

- Court coordinator
- Specialist IDVA support for victim-survivor
- Staff training in domestic abuse dynamics
- Clustered court
- multi-agency steering and operational groups

5

Pre-sentencing (SDAC model)

- Access to special measures

Post-sentencing PSC features

- Non-lawyer reviews
- Judicial continuity
- Pre-court meetings
- Sanctions/ incentives

Considerations for implementation

Based on the views of practitioners and literature on the US problem-solving court

- **Information sharing /Partnerships**

- Strong relationships and multi-agency meetings between Judges, probation, behaviour change programmes, IDVAs and MARACs

- **Involving the victim-survivor's perspective**

- Ensure can access long-term support to feedback victim-survivor's perspective on risk
- Cross-regional information sharing
- Exercise sensitivity when bringing victim-survivor's views into the courtroom

Considerations for implementation

Based on the views of practitioners and literature on the US problem-solving court

- **Judicial training and resourcing**

- Judicial buy in
- Judges, magistrates, or both?
- Post-sentence review court be staffed by different judges?
- Training for judges in non-lawyers reviews
 - Motivational interviewing

Considerations for implementation

Based on the views of practitioners and literature on the US problem-solving court

- **Complemented by effective behaviour change programmes**
 - Mixed evidence base around current DAPPs
 - Should have the option of a one to one programme
 - Interventions to address related issues (substance misuse, trauma)

Assessing compliance and behaviour change

- Go beyond attendance
- Rich information from intervention providers

Centre
for
Justice
Innovation

Hannah Jeffery
hjeffery@justiceinnovation.org