Evaluation of work with domestic abusers in Ireland

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With Emilie Debbonaire and Kevin Walton
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Thangam Debbonaire, July 2004
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SECTION ONE: Introduction

“If there can be one life saved, one murder prevented, it’s worth doing. I want to find out if there can.”

[Comment from an individual involved in developing domestic abuse intervention programmes in Ireland, at the start of this evaluation.]

1.1 Why have intervention programmes working with violent men?

Research in Ireland has demonstrated that thousands of women live with domestic violence and that the abusers are usually not sanctioned by the criminal or civil justice systems (O’Connor and Kelleher, 1995 and 1999). There were 10,248 recorded incidents of domestic violence reported to the Gardaí in 2002. The offenders were overwhelmingly male (91%) and the victims overwhelming female (92%) (An Garda Síochána Annual Report 2002). Only a minority of reports to the Gardaí results in a charge or court conviction (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1999). Nearly half of all the women killed in Ireland since 1995 were killed by a partner or ex-partner (Women’s Aid Homicide Watch, 2004).

Ireland is not alone in this: domestic violence is one of the greatest causes of death and injury amongst women worldwide (Amnesty International, 2004). It is a fundamental breach of women’s human rights. Women’s organisations such as Women’s Aid, refuges, advice and support services and advocacy projects have developed across the world and in Ireland, providing these services for women (Hague and Malos, 1993) and their children (Hague et al. 1994). World wide, women’s organisations have helped millions of women and children to leave abuse and start safe new lives. These services have usually been at the forefront of campaigns to change laws, practices and policies in order to improve the safety of women and children (Hague and Malos, 1993).

“I just want him to stop doing it, for my sake and for the kids” [interview with woman experiencing domestic abuse, 2004]

Abused women have been saying for years that they want to find something that can teach their partner to stop abusing them. Activists and abused women have debated for many years what might be the most appropriate response (Adams, 2000; Pence and Shephard, 1999). Refuges and women’s organisations frequently provided an opportunity and a place for these discussions to take place. Sometimes male friends of women’s activists took part in or supported these discussions (Adams, 2000).

In 1977, the world’s first intervention programme working with violent men, Emerge, was started in Boston, Massachusetts, USA (Adams, 2000). Others followed (Mederos, 1999; Bennett and Williams, 2001). Debates emerged and developed about the nature, structure and purpose of these programmes (Adams, 2000; Bennett and Williams, 2001).

The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (Duluth DAIP) was the world’s first and probably still best known project to place intervention programmes as part of a
co-ordinated community response that aimed to hold men to account for their behaviour, enhance women’s safety, sanction abusers appropriately and teach men not to abuse (Mederos, 1999; Shepard and Pence, 1999).

Numerous evaluations of intervention programmes have been carried out since then. Some evaluation results appear to show that the programme(s) had limited or no effect on men’s behaviour or women’s safety (see Feder and Dugan, 2002, for further discussion about this). Others show that some programmes can have a positive effect on women’s safety and on reducing men’s abuse, particularly as part of a co-ordinated community response involving the criminal justice system and women’s support services (Dobash et al, 2002; O’Connor, 1998).

Some research has found that the individual elements of the response are impossible to separate out: that it is “the system that matters” (Gondolf, 2002). This finding supports the policy of the Duluth DAIP to place programmes within a coordinated structure. Overall, there has been a growing understanding that although there will probably always be some men who will not change, some can and will, and that carefully managed group work programmes can help. This is more likely to happen when the intervention is well designed, delivered and monitored. Researchers have therefore concluded that carefully managed group work programmes, particularly when delivered in conjunction with a criminal or civil justice response, are worth running (Gondolf, 2002; Dobash et al, 2000).

Other responses to domestic abuse, used to varying effect, include police pro-arrest policies (Hanmer et al. 1999; Sherman and Berk, 1984; Berk and Newton, 1985) and the use of civil orders (Barron, 1991).

There have been intervention programmes working with domestic abusers in Ireland for around fifteen years. Most, but not all, are part of the MOVE Ireland network. Some of these have been subject to evaluation (see, for example, O’Connor, 1998, for an evaluation of the work of the Cork Domestic Violence Project during 1994 - 1998). Ireland now has a network of women’s support services and men’s programmes, a civil and criminal justice framework, a specialist policy for the police and other elements of domestic abuse intervention. There has been public debate about effective ways of responding to and preventing domestic abuse (Task Force Report, 1997). The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) of the government of Ireland coordinates a Steering Committee on Violence against Women. Various sub-committees of the steering committee include one focused on work with perpetrators. This evaluation is intended to help to inform this debate, the work of the committees and that of the organisations running programmes.

1.2 Context, questions, limitations, aims and objectives

1.2.1 Context

In 1997 the Office of the Tanaiste published the findings and recommendations of the Task Force on violence against women. The Task Force involved individuals and agencies from many relevant disciplines, organisations and backgrounds. The resulting Task Force report contains recommendations for all aspects of responding to and preventing domestic
abuse. This includes a chapter relating to programmes working with violent men, with recommendations for their development. The programmes that existed in 1997 have since developed. New ones have begun and others are planned.

In June 2003 the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform commissioned an evaluation of the programmes working with domestic abusers in Ireland, to start in July 2003 and finish in July 2004. This is the report of that evaluation.

1.2.2 Questions

“But do they work?” [interview with woman working in specialist women’s service, 2004]

“We think what we are doing is good, but is it as good as it could be?” [comment during consultation with people involved in running programme for violent men in Ireland, 2003]

“I know what we are doing works and that there isn’t a better way to change men” [interview with facilitator of programme, 2003]

The most commonly asked questions about programmes working with domestic abusers are: “do the programmes work?”; “what does ‘work’ mean?” and “are they worth doing?”

This evaluation helps to answer all three questions, but for reasons outlined below it cannot do so fully. There is already a considerable body of relevant, rigorous research (see section 1.9 – 1.14) that can help to inform answers to these questions. This evaluation draws on the lessons learned.

The evaluation explores a second group of questions such as “what can and should programmes do to promote the safety of women and children?”; “how should programmes working with men link to organisations providing services for women?”; “what risks are involved in this work and how can they be minimised or eliminated?”; “which activities and ways of working are the most effective to help abusive men to change their behaviour and attitudes?”; “who is currently using programmes and why?”.

At the start of this evaluation the co-ordinators of each of the networks hosted consultation meetings for representatives of their member groups to meet with the evaluation director and representatives of the department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. At these meetings, participants identified what they felt were the most important questions to explore during the evaluation.

The questions raised by the Department of JELR, the representatives of the groups involved and by the evaluation team were summarised as follows:

1. What can we learn from existing research, evaluation and practice?
2. What is the existing nature of work with domestic abusers in Ireland?
3. How many men and women are contacting each of the organisations for help with dealing with domestic violence? How many men are participating in each programme, how many complete?
4. Where are these referrals coming from and how?
5. How is each referral assessed or responded to?
6. What does each organisation involved in the evaluation do a) to reduce men's violent and controlling behaviour to their partners and b) to increase the safety of these men's partners and ex-partners?
7. How far is the safety of partners and ex-partners of men on the programmes increased after the programme?
8. How far do the men on the programme reduce their violent and controlling behaviour towards their partners and ex-partners and how far do their attitudes and beliefs change?
9. How do other factors, such as separation, responses from specialist agencies or interventions from the justice system affect men's behaviour and women's safety?
10. What does each organisation do when men drop out or don't co-operate?
11. How far is each organisation currently able to meet the Task Force core principles and recommendations for good practice? [how far is each able to meet RESPECT guidelines?]
12. What lessons can we learn for good practice in perpetrator programmes in Ireland?
13. What could be the basis for a set of minimum standards for perpetrator programmes in Ireland?
14. What tools can we use to continue to monitor and evaluate the work of perpetrator programmes in Ireland and to use in risk assessment activities with perpetrators and survivors?

These are the questions this evaluation aimed to answer. This report documents what was found in response to each, highlights key findings, identifies challenges and risks, together with ways of dealing with these, describes current good practice and makes recommendations for future development.

The evaluation has explored these questions and identified the lessons which can be learnt for good practice in running programmes working with perpetrators, in order to increase the safety of women. Section two provides information about who is coming into contact with programmes and the background of abusive behaviour that led to this contact. Section three explores the work being done in group programmes for abusers and section four explores the work with women whose partners and ex-partners are attending programmes. Section five identifies important elements of bringing about change in abusive behaviour and section seven makes recommendations for the future.

Evaluation and research of programmes has started to identify the importance of structure, good management, efficient and secure record keeping and interagency co-operation for intervention work with domestic abusers. The US state standards for intervention programmes and the guidelines developed by RESPECT, the UK network of people working in perpetrator programmes, have provided examples of good practice guidelines that include relevant aspects of the management, administration and interagency working involved. This evaluation looked at these aspects of the work as well as the content of work with men and with women. Section six contains information about how each individual organisation is able to meet the recommendations laid down by the Task Force Report, as well as suggestions for how each could improve this and their
abilities to meet the RESPECT guidelines. This is relevant for those groups in Ireland that are considering applying for membership for RESPECT and in any case it forms a useful set of criteria for establishing good practice credentials. Section six describes the findings of this part of the evaluation.

In order to evaluate long-term changes in the behaviour of individual men and in the safety of their partners, ex-partners and children, an evaluation needs to have a follow up period to track individuals. Other evaluations have included follow up periods of up to four years (O’Connor, 1998; Gondolf, 2002). Some involved tracking hundreds of men and women throughout the follow up period (Gondolf, 2002).

1.2.3 Methodological limitations

This evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland had one year, starting in the summer, a time when most groups stop for about two months. Each separate programme was being run in a different way, including a mixture of curricula and programme length, plus a mixture of rolling and fixed-term programmes. Each separate organisation was likely to have no more than 12 men in their groups during the life of the evaluation, often fewer. They usually had no formal right to require men to participate in evaluation activities. It was therefore clear from the start that this evaluation could not provide statistically significant data about the ability of each specific programme to help change men’s abusive behaviour nor about their ability to contribute to long term improvements to the safety and well being of women and children. This does not necessarily mean that the programmes do not help: they may well, and the evaluation found instances where it seemed likely that they had. It simply means that there is not enough data to form firm conclusions about whether these changes can be attributed to the programme alone.

However, given the existence of relevant, rigorous and more long term evaluations of work with domestic abusers in other group work programmes and given the existence of good practice guidelines and recommendations provided by the Task Force report and other documents, there was plenty to evaluate, including examining the changes in the lives of some of the individual men and women who came into contact with programmes. It therefore seemed possible to use this evaluation to provide partial answers to the first group of questions and fuller answers to the second. Information gained from the evaluation activities also helped to identify risks, challenges and opportunities for the groups running programmes and for the individual women whose abusive partners came into contact with these programmes. The evaluation examined how some groups were dealing with these. This report suggests good practice guidelines for all groups to use, in order to minimise risks, deal with challenges and make the most of opportunities. These guidelines are based on the lessons from this evaluation and from other relevant research. Appendix B describes how the methodologies used in this evaluation were developed and how they draw on the lessons from other research and practice.

1.2.4 Evaluation objectives

Following discussion with the Department of JELR and with representatives of all the existing organisations who were running or planning to run programmes, the following objectives were established for this evaluation:
1. To review existing research on perpetrator programmes for domestic abusers, in order to identify relevant implications for monitoring and evaluation, effective working and good practice for such programmes.

2. To develop a set of monitoring and evaluation tools for use in perpetrator programmes in Ireland, based on what has been learnt from existing relevant research and wherever possible incorporating current practice in the groups involved in the evaluation.

3. To describe the following for each of the organisations involved:
   - Nature, structure, philosophy and policies
   - Finances and other resources available
   - Relationship to other key local agencies
   - Source, nature and methods of responding to referrals
   - Methods of assessing men’s behaviour and women’s safety
   - The nature of contact with the partners or ex-partners of men attending the programme and the methods used
   - Methods of working with men on the programme
   - Numbers of paid and unpaid staff
   - Methods of recruiting, training and supporting paid and unpaid staff
   - How men on the programme are dealt with if they stop attending, don’t abide by the groundrules or otherwise fail to co-operate with the programme.
   - Any other relevant aspect of each organisation

4. To document and analyse the use of the programme by individual men and women, over a period of 6 months.

5. To evaluate how far individual men attending the various programmes have reduced their violent and controlling behaviour over the course of 9 months, starting from when they joined the programme.

6. To evaluate the safety of women over the course of 9 months, starting from when their partners or ex-partners joined one of the programmes and including a period of at least three months after the men stopped attending or completed.

7. To gather and analyse additional data to provide further evidence of how effective the programmes are.

8. To evaluate how each organisation involved is meeting the guidelines for good practice as defined by the Task Force report and other agreed criteria for good practice, specifically the recommendations of RESPECT, the co-ordinating body for perpetrator programmes in the UK.

9. To identify what can be learnt about good practice in running perpetrator programmes in Ireland, including essential and desirable elements of a perpetrator programme, with the aim of producing a draft set of minimum standards for programmes in Ireland.

10. To make recommendations about:
    - how each organisation could increase its effectiveness;
    - future monitoring and evaluation;
    - inter-agency collaboration.
1.3 What was evaluated?

At the time of the start of the evaluation (July 2003) there were:

- **Twelve independently operating groups, linked as members of MOVE Ireland:** Athlone, Castlebar, Cork, 3 Dublin groups, Galway, Kildare, Limerick, North Tipperary, Wicklow, Wexford. Early on in the evaluation, one of the Dublin groups stopped running and the men from that group either left or joined one of the other two. Limerick MOVE runs groups alternately in Ennis and Limerick.

- **Four independently run groups linked as the South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes (SEDVIP),** supported by the Men’s Development Network: Clonmel, Carlow/Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford. One of these groups, Wexford, was already running a group work programme with men and a parallel service for women. This group is also a member of the MOVE network. The other three were in development.

- **National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency (NDVIA),** for whom running a perpetrator programme is one element in a wide ranging programme of work to pilot and develop ways of responding more effectively to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence through the criminal and civil justice systems, based on the model of the Duluth DAIP in Minnesota, USA. They were not running a programme at the start of the evaluation and subsequently decided that it was not possible to evaluate and monitor the work of the NDVIA in this evaluation.

The evaluation team was asked to gather data from all these separate organisations and groups, whether or not they were running programmes, and from people involved in running the networks. The evaluation process examined relevant aspects of the work each group did during the year as part of or related to running perpetrator programmes. This included the work with partners and ex-partners of programme participants as well as the work with the participants. The organisations were asked to co-operate with the evaluation and to provide data where possible.

**Organisations running intervention programmes with abusive men, June 2003 (including those on summer break)**
- Athlone MOVE, Castlebar MOVE, Cork MOVE, Dublin Monday MOVE, Dublin Tuesday MOVE, Dublin Thursday MOVE, Galway MOVE, Kildare MOVE, Limerick MOVE, North Tipperary MOVE, Wexford MOVE, Wicklow MOVE. Total 12, reduced to 11 when Dublin Tuesday group stopped, summer 2003.

**Organisations developing or considering running intervention programmes with abusive men, June 2003**
- Clonmel/South Tipperary (SEDVIP), Carlow/Kilkenny (SEDVIP), National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency (NDVIA), Waterford (SEDVIP). Total 4.

**Total number of groups/organisations taking part in the evaluation: 15.**
1.4 The nature, extent and impact of domestic violence

1.4.1 Nature and scale of domestic abuse

Numerous research and evaluation reports have documented the nature and effects of domestic abuse and also estimated the scale and incidence. Various definitions exist, but the most commonly used ones currently include an understanding that the abuse can include physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, financial and other forms of behaviour that hurt, frighten, injure, threaten or control the person abused, that the behaviour is usually used by men against their female partners or ex-partners, but that it can also be used by women against their male partners or ex-partners or in lesbian or gay relationships. Domestic violence is part of a continuum of different forms and expressions of violence against women, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape as a weapon of war, female genital mutilation, prostitution etc.

- The World Health Organisation’s recently released “World Report on Violence and Health” notes that whereas men “are much more likely to be attacked by a stranger or an acquaintance than by someone within their close circle of relationships ... one of the most common forms of violence against women is that performed by a husband or male partner.” (World Health Organisation, (WHO) 2001)

- The UN Conference on Violence Against Women reported that: “Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women’s full advancement”. (Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, paragraph 118)

- At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, according to a study based on 50 surveys from around the world. Usually, the abuser is a member of her own family or someone known to her. (Heise, L., Ellsberg, M. and Gottemoeller, M. 1999)

- More than 60 million women are “missing” from the world today as a result of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide, according to an estimate by Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel Laureate for Economics. (UN Population Fund, 1999)

- China’s last census in the year 2000 revealed that the ratio of new-born girls to boys was 100:119. The biological norm is 100:103. (UN Population Fund, 1999)

- The World Health Organisation has reported that up to 70 per cent of female murder victims are killed by their male partners. (World Health Organisation, 2002)

- An estimated 1 in 5 Irish women experience domestic abuse at some time in their lives. (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1995)
Violence against women is a breach of human rights. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) states that violence against women is a form of discrimination against women and a contributing factor to other forms of discrimination (CEDAW, 1992). All signatories to the convention are required to report to the CEDAW committee regularly on how they are meeting their obligations.

1.4.2 The impact of domestic abuse

The impact of domestic violence is far-reaching and complex:

- It causes injury and chronic health complaints (Mahoney, Williams and West, 2001)
- It is a major cause of death and disability for the women who are abused (Council of Europe, 2002; Amnesty International, 2004) accounting for more death and ill-health amongst women in Europe than cancer and road traffic accidents combined.
- Child homicide is often linked to domestic violence against the mother, where the male abuser is abusing the woman and the child(ren). (O’Hara, 1994)
- It causes trauma, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and other effects on the mental health of the women who experience it (Mahoney, Williams and West, 2001) and on their children. (Mullender and Morley, 1994a)
- It causes homelessness (Hague and Malos, 1993) and unemployment (Mahoney et al. 2001) for victims.
- It costs a great deal of public funds, for example, to pay for health care for the victims. (McLeer and Anwar, 1987)

1.4.3 Links between childhood experiences of abuse and abusive behaviour as an adult

Many practitioners and others often assume that living with domestic abuse as a child increases the chance that a boy will grow up to be an abuser and a girl a victim of domestic violence. However, the evidence is far more complex than that. These conclusions are often based on research that makes much more cautious conclusions about correlations rather than causal links and is sometimes methodologically very limited (Mullender and Morley, 1994a; Widom, 1989). Usually, the research will be reliant on retrospective data from known adult offenders. As the population of abusers is mostly not known and researchers have access usually only to an unrepresentative sample, researchers are generally cautious about making firm conclusions about childhood experiences of domestic or other abuse as a cause of adult abuse.

It does not follow, for example, that all or most domestic abusers lived with abuse as children, just because a proportion or even majority of known abusers in a particular research project said that they had. There has never been any research that systematically tracks a large sample through childhood and into adulthood, to track what happens to children who live with abuse when they grow up and have their own relationships. It is important to bear this in mind when developing practice and policy. Any domestic
violence prevention work should target all children and young people, not only focus on those who live with it. Children who are affected by domestic violence may need or want support for their own needs now, not because they may or may not become perpetrators in the future. It certainly should never be treated as an excuse or justification for abusing others as an adult.

1.4.4 Denial, minimisation and blame

Abusers tend to deny or minimise their abusive behaviour and to blame others for it. They frequently blame their victims. The excuses they create in this way are often very enlightening about the purpose of the abusive behaviour or the belief behind it. For example “she wouldn’t stop going on at me, I did it to shut her up”. This shows that there was intent behind the action (“I wanted to shut her up”) and that the abuser believes that they have a right to shut her up, even if they now regret what they did or the consequences. The excuses also often reflect very traditional models of male/female relationships and roles in marriage. These models used to be enshrined in law in most countries but are no longer legal in Ireland, UK, US etc. For example, until extremely recently men were legally entitled to sex on demand from their wives and could not be charged with raping their wives, even if their wives did not consent to sex. This is no longer legal, but the perceptions and belief systems behind this are frequently evident in the things both perpetrators and victims of sexual violence in relationships say about it.

1.5 Domestic abuse and policy context in Ireland

As in most other countries, exact information about the scale and incidence of domestic abuse in Ireland is not available. The hidden nature of the behaviour, the lack of consistent data collection systems in courts and police records and the current lack of a large scale national prevalence study with a representative sample means that such information does not yet exist. However, there are various sources of evidence that provide some idea of the scale of the problem.

1.5.1 Information about the Criminal and Civil Justice systems

The legal protection for victims of domestic violence in Ireland includes elements from both the criminal and civil systems. The Family Home Protection Act 1976 first introduced civil orders to provide protection for victims. This was further developed under the provisions of the Family Law (Protection of Spouses and Children) Act 1981. The Domestic Violence Act 1996 widened the scope of this legislation, enabling parents and cohabitees to apply for orders as well as spouses, with certain property and residency restrictions. It also enacted provisions of the Family Law Act 1981, making breach of a domestic violence order an arrestable offence and allowing a Garda to arrest an offender for suspected actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm without witnessing the violence. The Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997 addresses criminal aspects of domestic violence, making most forms of physical violence used by domestic abusers a crime.
Victims of domestic violence in Ireland can apply for three types of civil orders: protection (an interim order, which the court can make whilst a full hearing is pending for one of the other orders), safety (which prohibits violence or threats of violence) and barring (which requires the violent person to leave the family home). Safety orders can last for up to 5 years and barring orders for up to 3 years (Department of Equality and Law Reform, 1996).

In 1997, the scope of the Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Investigation Unit (DVSAIU), previously operating in the Dublin Metropolitan area only, was increased to cover the entire country and was placed under the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Further details of the responsibilities of the DVSAIU are contained on the An Garda Síochána website (http://www.garda.ie/angarda/nbci.html).

Since 1994, the Gardaí have had a national policy on domestic violence. This was amended in 1997. Included in this policy are the following duties:

- Reports of domestic violence will be dealt with promptly as life and property may be at risk;
- Parties should be separated out of sight and hearing of each other, so that they can each relate their own story without interruption or non-verbal intimidation;
- Investigating officers should be aware of the emotional and physical pain the victim may be suffering;
- Records should be kept of each incident;
- Where a power of arrest exists, the arresting member should utilise that power of arrest and charge the offender;
- A Barring order is not void where the respondent has been allowed back, even for an extended period, by the applicant, into the premises from which he has been barred;
- Where the injured party has reason to fear harassment or retaliation, the court should be so informed in order that this fact can be taken into account in any bail application.

\textit{Garda Síochána policy on Domestic Violence Intervention, 1997}

These extracts illustrate that the scope of Garda powers and the duties they have towards victims of domestic abuse is wide and, if enforced, can assist greatly in the protection of victims and the enforcement of the law.

1.5.2 Figures for reported and unreported incidents of domestic abuse

Annual figures for arrests, charges and convictions are available from An Garda Síochána annual reports.

There were 10,248 domestic violence incidents recorded in 2002 (An Garda Síochána Annual Report 2002). Offenders were mostly male (91%) and complainants were mostly female (92%). It is not possible to tell from these figures exactly how many individual offenders were involved. Some of them may be responsible for more than one offence, some for only one.
Other relevant research can help to estimate numbers. Research on repeat victimisation in the UK (Farrell and Pease, 1993; Hanmer, Griffiths and Jerwood, 1999) indicates that some reported incidents of domestic violence involve the same victim and perpetrator on several occasions. It therefore seems likely that the 10,248 incidents were committed by fewer than 10,248 individual abusers. However, the repeat victimisation research found that only 3% of the perpetrators were reported more than 5 times and that most were not reported more than once. Therefore, even though the number of abusers involved in the reported offences in Ireland in 2002 is clearly fewer than 10,000 men, it may not be much less.

It would be useful to have a rigorous national prevalence study to draw on to provide a better estimate of the possible numbers of perpetrators of domestic abuse. Because of the nature of crime in general and domestic abuse in particular, it may never be possible to have a fully accurate figure, but a well-supported estimate would be helpful. Other research (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1995) suggests that only 20% of survivors tell a member of the Gardaí about the abuse. This suggests that there are many thousands of domestic abuse perpetrators in Ireland. At present, even if each of the fifteen groups were running programmes and each able to work with 30 men per year (something that is not possible at the moment), this would still mean programmes would be working with a very small percentage of the total number of abusers. This highlights the continuing need for consistent and safety-focused responses from the justice systems.

Of the 10,248 reported incidents in 2002, arrests were made in 1,638 cases (15.98% of total incidents), charges were brought against offenders in 1,370 cases (13.68 of total incidents) and 651 people were convicted (6.35%) (An Garda Síochána, 2002). These low numbers of arrests, charges and convictions may well explain why the research found that Irish women do not often report domestic abuse more than once, as they may feel that nothing useful will happen. However, the numbers of reported incidents demonstrate that many thousands of Irish women do want the criminal justice system to help to protect them.

1.5.3 Information from Women’s organisations in Ireland

Women’s Aid supports around 9,000 abused women in Ireland each year (Women’s Aid, 2000). Given that there are many other women’s organisations in Ireland supporting abused women and that many, perhaps most, do not seek any form of help, this figure is far from the total number of abused women. Research carried out for Women’s Aid and published in 1995 (Making the Links); found that 1 in 5 Irish women experience domestic abuse at some time in their lives (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1995).

The Women’s Aid Female Homicide Watch figures, last updated April 2004, states that 90 women have been killed in Ireland since 1995. In 15 cases there have been no charges to date, in 10 cases there is a court hearing pending. Of the 65 cases that have been resolved to date, 28 were murders by a partner or ex-partner (43.1% of total female homicides). 60 of the murdered women were killed in their own homes (66.7% of the total killed). Only 13 of the women in the 65 resolved cases were killed by someone other than a
partner, ex-partner, relative or friend (20% of the resolved cases). These statistics mirror those for UK, US, Canada, Australia and other countries with similar legal systems and the findings of the WHO detailed above: women are more at risk from a partner or ex-partner than from any other category of assailant.

1.5.4 Task Force on Violence against Women

In April 1997, the Office of the Tanaiste published a report from the Task Force on Violence against Women. This contained an overview of available relevant research for each element of responses to violence against women, including the criminal justice system, civil courts, health and social services, women's services, programmes for abusers, etc. The report also made recommendations for each area. Chapter 10 of this report focused on work with abusers. This included setting out core principles for running perpetrator programmes, as follows:

**Recommended core principles for running perpetrator programmes:**
1. “Protocols regarding referrals should be developed;
2. Assessment procedures should be established;
3. Intervention programmes should be linked to the judicial process where possible;
4. There should be contact with the partner to verify the safety and well-being of the abused women and children;
5. There should be limited confidentiality to allow for the sharing of any information that can advance the safety and protection of women with the appropriate persons/agencies;
6. Work with men should not be done in isolation, but in full collaboration with the statutory services and women’s organisations.”

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Task Force Report
The Task Force also made various priority recommendations for the development of intervention programmes (page 100). These are quoted in the box below.

**Priority recommendations for the development of perpetrator programmes:**

1. “The protection, safety and security of women and children should be the paramount consideration in developing programmes;
2. Intervention programmes for offenders should be adequately resourced and should be available in areas where support services for women and children (such as refuges) are already in place; and
3. Funding intervention programmes should be based on local need and priorities; and adherence to the core principles set out above; funding for programmes should be provided by the Department of Justice from their Probation and Welfare service votes;
4. Contact with the judicial system should be used as a gateway to intervention programmes. Judges should have options to recommend that offenders be assessed for participation in intervention programmes, but never as an alternative to criminal sanctions currently available nor should they have implications for the granting or duration of a barring/safety order;
5. Judges in civil cases should be made aware of what programmes are available and should be able to refer men for assessment for suitability to participate in such a programme as a mandatory part of the court order;
6. Existing intervention programmes with men should be subject to ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review so that their effectiveness as a response to domestic violence can be gauged;
7. There should be a co-ordinated approach between treatment programmes, the courts, the Gardaí and agencies providing support for women. The issue should be addressed by the National Steering Committee;
8. Specialist training should be introduced for people to run intervention programmes. Funding for the specialist training should be a priority for year 1 spending.”

Task Force report, page 100.

The concluding chapter of the whole report brings together conclusions and priorities for action across all areas of responding to violence against women. The recommendations for funding priorities include the provision of operating costs for refuges, a National Helpline for victims, community based support, regional planning committees on violence against women, local networks in each health board, and:

“The development and evaluation of intervention programmes for men with a particular focus on funding the introduction of specialist programmes” (Task Force report, page 118, point 13.7).

Since the publication of this report, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has provided funds to support the development of intervention programmes, including funding towards organisation costs, staff salaries and specialist training. It has also commissioned and funded this evaluation to support this work.
1.6 Intervention programmes working with abusive men

Organisations across the world have explored ways of working with abusers. Research, evaluation and practice experience provides useful lessons about what makes a programme effective. This section highlights some of the most relevant information.

At the time of writing, programmes working directly with domestic abusers in different parts of the world are run by, with or for various types of organisations, including:

- Victim advocacy services;
- Mental health services;
- Probation or other criminal justice agencies;
- Social workers, other child protection services or family centres;
- Men’s self help groups;
- Community groups;
- Addiction services;
- Religious organisations or networks.

(Rothman, Butchart and Cerda, 2003)

According to a review by the World Health Organisation (Rothman et al. 2003) the most common parent organisation is a victim advocacy service, followed by a counselling or other mental health agency.

Some are linked directly to the criminal and civil justice system, in one or more of the following ways:

- Programmes are one element of a co-ordinated community response, linking all relevant statutory and voluntary agencies, monitoring and tracking abusers and their behaviour and holding them to account in appropriate ways, usually including the criminal justice system (Shephard and Pence, 1999);
- Abusers mandated to programmes as part of sentences or probation orders as a result of criminal prosecutions, with sanctions attached if abusers do not attend or do not make progress (Dobash et al, 2000; Gondolf, 2002);
- Abusers mandated to attend programmes or information sessions about programmes as part of assessment for child custody or access hearings (Programme manual, 2000, and other information about Domestic Violence Intervention Project, UK, 2004);
- Abusers mandated to programmes as part of court responses to a breach of civil order (Burton et al, 1997);
- Abusers referred, but not mandated, to programmes by justice system (Rothman, Butchart and Cerda, 2003);
- Incidents of abuse reported by programmes to the Criminal Justice system (Dobash et al, 2000);
- Assessments carried out by programme staff on behalf of criminal or civil justice system, for example, for child protection or child custody/access hearings or for pre-sentence reporting for criminal cases (Laing, 2004).
The project set up in the 1980s in Duluth Minnesota, US, has been the source of inspiration for many programmes world wide, including work in the UK and in Ireland (see below). Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project has in some quarters wrongly become associated only with perpetrator programmes, whereas in fact the work with domestic abusers has always been one element in a multi faceted, co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse. This coordinated approach includes support and advocacy for women, shared record keeping and case tracking between agencies, work with children, co-ordinated approaches in the criminal justice system and other elements and the staff and researchers working with them have always emphasised the importance of this co-ordinated approach (see, for example, relevant chapters in Shepard and Pence, eds., 1999, for a fuller discussion of this programme). This programme has strongly influenced the work of the National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency in Ireland (NDVIA) (NDVIA information leaflet, no date). The South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes have also been in contact with and helped by the Duluth programme (personal communication with the SEDVIP Co-ordinators, 2004).

The CHANGE programme in Scotland and the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) in London, UK, are both influenced by the Duluth intervention programme, though they do not replicate it in curriculum or structure. Both have been independently evaluated (Dobash, Dobash, Kavanagh and Lewis, 2000; Burton, Regan and Kelly, 1998). The CHANGE programme manual is now in use, in part or in whole, in some perpetrator programmes in Ireland.

1.7 Domestic abuse intervention programmes working with domestic abusers in Ireland

1.7.1 Introduction

There are eleven organisations running and four organisations preparing to run programmes for domestic abusers in Ireland (June 2004).

They are all independent, though most are linked into at least one regional or national network. Eleven are members of MOVE Ireland. Four are members of the South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes (SEVIP), including one group that is also a member of MOVE Ireland. One further organisation, the National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency (NDVIA) is not a member of either network.

1.7.2 MOVE Ireland

MOVE (Men Overcoming Violence) Ireland began in 1989, when individual practitioners who had been in contact with the MOVE Bolton group, run by Jim Wilson in Bolton, UK, decided to set up similar groups in Ireland. The structure and materials of the MOVE Ireland programmes reflect the self-help manual developed by Bolton MOVE (Waring and Wilson, 1990). However, some MOVE groups no longer use this programme and most have completely moved away from the self help tradition. Some do still involve ex-members of the group (men who originally came to the groups because they were abusing their partners) in running or facilitating the groups, most do not.
MOVE Ireland is a national organisation with individual and group membership. Individuals attending MOVE groups or involved in running them become members of MOVE. The groups are also MOVE members. The network has a national Board of Directors, elected by the members. This Board is responsible for co-ordinating the network, overseeing developments, collecting and distributing funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, representing MOVE Ireland at relevant events, and so on.

There are 11 groups in MOVE Ireland as of June 2004. They are: Athlone, Castlebar, Cork, Dublin Monday group, Dublin Thursday group, Galway, Kildare, Limerick (operating alternating groups in Ennis and in Limerick), North Tipperary, Wexford and Wicklow. Wexford MOVE is also a member of the SEDVIP (see below).

Most MOVE groups have active boards of management or steering groups with wide membership, typically including representatives of guards, probation, women's organisations and health.

MOVE Ireland and MOVE groups have traditionally and until a couple of years ago entirely accurately been associated with the delivery of the MOVE programme in the group work with men. An overview of the curriculum of the MOVE programme was available on the MOVE Ireland website (www.moveireland.ie) at the start of the evaluation, though at the time of writing the website is now under reconstruction. It is a 13 step programme, originally designed to run as a rolling programme, so that men could join at any point, with discretion from the facilitator about an appropriate time for new members to join. 8 of the groups are currently using the MOVE programme, though some have adapted it or added materials and some do not run it as a rolling programme.

During the last few years, MOVE Ireland had a Programme Development Group. Amongst other activities, they examined other programmes. As well as making other recommendations for programme use, this group decided to pilot the CHANGE manual, developed in Scotland for use with men mandated to attend by the criminal justice system. The programme lasts 26 weeks and is designed to run as a fixed term programme, with no new members after the first few weeks. Currently, 3 of the MOVE groups are using the CHANGE programme in some way and more are considering using it.

Many MOVE groups are involved in regional planning committees or local area networks tackling domestic abuse in Ireland. Since Spring 2004, MOVE Ireland has been represented on the sub committee dealing with work with perpetrators, of the National Steering Committee on Violence Against women.

MOVE Ireland had a paid co-ordinator in post until December 2003. Since then, there has been a part time administrator, working from the MOVE Ireland office in Dublin. MOVE Ireland has recently recruited a full time paid co-ordinator. There are also plans to employ a Programme Director to examine and put in place a supervisory structure, develop accreditation for groups and facilitators, assess training requirements and ensure that good practice standards are being met.

MOVE Ireland has good practice guidelines for the member groups to follow.

MOVE Ireland has sub groups to work on specific topics when required. For example, the
Programme Development Group met regularly for many months, with representatives of different MOVE groups, to consider different programmes. The Partner Contact Sub Group has recently reconvened, to help support the development of partner contact and to share good practice.

Two groups in the MOVE Ireland network have developed and organised induction training for facilitators and people doing partner contact. This is now being offered to all groups in the network, with a planned two day course in July 04 or October 04.

Some MOVE groups have or are developing a holding programme for men. One currently runs and another is developing a group work programme for women. One is planning a group work programme for children.

1.7.3 South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes

The South East Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes (SEDVIP) comprises four independent groups, each formed in 2000 from a larger multi-agency group and now constituted separately. They link together with support and co-ordination from paid staff from the Men’s Development Network, as the SEDVIP. The groups in this network are: Wexford (also a member of MOVE Ireland), Carlow/Kilkenny, Waterford and Clonmel/South Tipperary. Wexford is currently running a group and the other three aim to be running groups by the end of 2004. The coordination and administration work done by the Men’s Development Network is supported by the Support and Advisory Group made up of representatives from each of these four Steering Groups in the region intent on running domestic violence intervention programmes. The S.E.D.V.I.P. has been established in response to the Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women 1997 which called for a multi-agency approach supported by coordination at all levels. Each of the four Steering Groups is made up of representatives from each of the agencies involved in addressing domestic violence in their locality.

SEDVIP/MDN: there is one half-time coordinator and one half-time administrator (both paid), based at the Men’s Development Network. Their role is to support the development of all four SEDVIP groups. These members of staff from the Men’s Development Network (MDN) are co-ordinating the establishment and continuation of the four programmes in the SEDVIP including funding applications and information sharing on behalf of the groups in SEDVIP. They have also organised a series of training events for representatives of each of the four groups.

SEDVIP groups are all running or intending to run parallel group work programmes for women.

The Co-ordinators have also co-ordinated the sub group work on good practice guidelines for groups in this network. They have made use of existing guidelines, such as those set out by MOVE Ireland and by RESPECT.

SEDVIP have an ongoing consultation process with women’s organisations in the region and women using those services. They have circulated a series of questions to women’s organisations including refuges, rape crisis centres and women’s aid groups, to ask women
using and working in these services about what they want from programmes, what the programmes need to bear in mind and other aspects of programme delivery. They have asked groups to treat this as an ongoing, open invitation, in order to keep the views and experiences of survivors central to the development of work with perpetrators.

As part of this coordination work the Men’s Development Network is represented on steering groups and Local Area Networks in the region. Members of the Steering Groups and the Support and Advisory group are on the Regional Planning Committee and all of these agencies and groups are engaged with the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform at some level.

1.7.4 National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency (NDVIA)

The NDVIA has provided the following description of their work and role: “The NDVIA aims to respond to domestic violence crime by focusing on both the victim and the perpetrator, within the context of the civil and criminal justice systems. The NDVIA is working with the key agencies – An Garda Síochána, the Courts, the Probation and Welfare Service, the Health Board – to coordinate the individual responses of each agency to domestic violence crime, and to integrate and inform their work with the crucial work of support services for victims. The NDVIA is running a pilot project in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, and Bray, Co. Wicklow. The NDVIA aims to ensure that victim safety and perpetrator accountability is maximised by institutionalising policies and practices in the civil and criminal justice systems and other key agencies.”

It was not possible to evaluate and monitor the work of the NDVIA in this evaluation.

1.8 Theories on causes of domestic abuse used in perpetrator programmes

Healey et al. (1998 – see further details below) carried out a review and evaluation of the work with perpetrators in the US. In their report, they summarise three prevailing sets of theories in recent work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. These are broadly summarised as:

1. Society and Culture – this approach works from the understanding that the domestic abuse is caused by social structures, cultural norms and other factors that endorse or do not challenge the use of control and abuse by men against their female partners. This model of intervention seeks to re-educate men, by teaching them about the impact of these structures and of their own abusive behaviour and by helping them to see the importance of equality and non-violence in marital and similar relationships.

2. The Family – this line of thinking starts from the basis that the structure of individual families and interpersonal interactions within the family are the cause of domestic violence. The Family Systems model of intervention is based on this understanding. It focuses on healthy communications within the family and usually involves couples counselling or similar methods. Some group work also uses this model.
3. **The Individual** – these approaches are based on psychological theories which place the blame on personality disorders, difficult upbringing, biological disposition (such as addiction to the abusive behaviour) or attachment disorders caused in early childhood. Interventions are either psychotherapeutic (targeting individual problems and internal conflicts) or cognitive behavioural (increasing cognitive awareness of past behaviour and teaching new skills for behaving differently).

Programmes based largely on the **first approach** tend to use instruction and education techniques to teach abusers new ways of thinking about relationships so that they do not expect certain demands to be met by their partners, simply because they are their partners. They also aim to change their assumptions about roles and rights in relationships, including a consideration of gender roles. This approach (often called feminist or pro-feminist) is sometimes criticised for this gender perspective as some feel it does not take into account domestic abuse in other relationships or from women to men. Other activists feel that without the gender perspective, one of the most crucial aspects of the work, possibly the most important, is being missed (Healey et al., 1999).

The **second approach**, usually using Family Systems, has had some doubts cast on it, as it appears to put responsibility and/or blame on the victim. It is therefore banned in many states in the US because of its failure to place total responsibility for the abuse on the abuser (Healey et al., 1999).

Work developed from the **third approach** usually includes cognitive behavioural techniques to learn new ways of behaving. This may include teaching abusers to recognise warning signs in their behaviour or feelings so that they can choose to behave differently, without using abuse. These techniques are sometimes called anger management and are sometimes combined with the first approach. Anger management has been the subject of much debate about how far it helps reduce domestic abuse and again, is banned in many US states if it is used without any other responses. This is partly because it can appear to allow men to blame anger, rather than take responsibility, or blame their partner for causing the anger, without exploring whether or not the abuser had the right to be angry in the first place, and partly because some abusers do not get angry when they abuse and can therefore not change using these techniques alone. Further exploration of the use of these techniques is discussed in sections 3.9 and 5.4.

Most group work programmes that have been subjected to critical evaluation and review are based on a combination of the first and third approaches. Healey et al. note that instruction and re-education seem to work best when combined with the skills learnt in the cognitive-behavioural elements of a programme. They also point out that the first approach is most in line with the criminal justice response, as it places clear and unquestioning responsibility for the abuse on the abuser and requires abusers to consider the effects of their behaviour on others.

Being brought up in a family where there is abuse and violence has often been identified as a risk factor for using domestic abuse as an adult. The research on this link is far from conclusive (Walby and Myhill, 2001; Widom, 1989). Psychological literature has often, but not always, found a correlation, but not a causal link. Violence surveys and other widespread research projects have also sometimes found correlations (although again, not always) but usually identify some other mediating factors that appear to have a stronger
influence on whether or not a child will grow up to be an abusive partner. The research usually does not explore why gender makes such a difference to the use of domestic abuse, given that roughly equal numbers of boys and girls witness domestic abuse (Mullender and Morley, 1994a).

Mullender and Morley's review of the available literature on possible links between childhood violence and adult use of domestic abuse found that the links were by no means clear and that in fact some research seems to show that any evidence for a link is that it is a correlation only, not a causal one, that the majority of adults who lived with violence as children do not abuse their partners, that some evidence seems to show that children who lived with abuse are much less likely than others to use abuse as adults and that the research in any case is limited by the fact that it tends to be retrospective (Mullender and Morley, 1994a).

1.9 Types of relevant research and evaluation

There are various types of research that have been used in evaluation of perpetrator programmes. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each.

**Experimental research** looks at the effect of a particular intervention compared to a control group with no intervention and attempts to eliminate or control for any other differences between the two groups. In research and evaluation of programmes for domestic abusers, this is nearly always impossible to do, for ethical as well as methodological reasons. Few judges are willing to allocate responses to domestic abuse criminal cases on a randomised basis and most women's organisations would be critical of them if they did. Researchers too are unwilling to compare, for example, no response, with a programme response, on the grounds that the partners of those in the first group would be likely to be at greater risk than those of the latter. Pure experimental research on what makes a successful perpetrator programme is therefore difficult to construct.

**Non-experimental** evaluations do not compare the effects of intervention with no intervention and therefore cannot make definite conclusions about whether any change is caused purely by the intervention. However, they can evaluate how far a programme is meeting a given set of standards, illustrate some of the complexities of practice, and measure change of behaviour even if they cannot ascribe the source of that change.

**Quasi-experimental** research on domestic abuse programmes tries to create a substitute for a pure control group, for example, by comparing men who drop out of a programme with those who do not, or men who are subject to court processes that do not include a programme with men who are subject to both.

In order to draw reasonable and significant conclusions about the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes, evaluations need to have large enough samples of programme participants following the same programme curricula and a long enough time frame to allow for a useful follow up period after the end of the programmes.

**Naturalistic evaluation** documents the nature, context and operations of programmes.
1.10 Research and evaluation of intervention programmes

There are several large-scale and long term evaluations or reviews of relevant programmes working with domestic abusers.

Mullender and Burton, in “What works in reducing domestic violence?” (ed. Taylor Browne, 2001) provide a useful overview of current work and developments in work with domestic abusers around the developed world. Bennett and Williams, (2001) provide something similar.

Healey et al. (1998), in their lengthy evaluation and report for the US Justice Department provide a comprehensive overview of all forms of work in the US to respond to domestic abusers and provide more detailed examination of a representative sample of 15 organisations involved.

Dobash, Dobash, Kavanagh and Lewis (2000) conducted a piece of quasi experimental research, evaluating the work of the court linked CHANGE programme in West Lothian, Scotland. The evaluation took place over the period of the 26 week programme and for 12 months afterwards. It compared changes in behaviour of men who had been subject to a criminal justice response which included the programme with those who were subject to a criminal justice response alone. This included tracking and interviewing partners and ex-partners of men in both groups. The evaluation used detailed questionnaires covering all aspects of abuse and its consequences.

Gondolf (2002): this team conducted another, much larger and longer term piece of quasi experimental research. The team evaluated the nature and work of four well-established perpetrator programmes in the US over seven years. This involved tracking over 800 men and their partners throughout all or most of a four year follow up period, including those who dropped out of the programmes. It also involved a naturalistic evaluation of the nature and structure of the programmes as they were and as they developed, as well as using detailed questionnaires covering all aspects of abuse and its consequences, with men and women. All programmes in this evaluation were well-established and complied with state standards for perpetrator programmes.

Mullender, Thiara and Harrison (2001) examined the potential for running a programme in Coventry, UK, for men who had used domestic abuse but were not mandated by the courts to attend.

Burton, Kelly and Regan, (1996) evaluated the work of the Domestic Violence Intervention Project in West London, UK. This included interviews and questionnaires with programme participants, partners and ex-partners of participants, data from the programme staff and other information, over the course of a complete programme and beyond, to track change in particular individuals. It also included elements of naturalistic evaluation of the work of the organisation.

Pence, Shephard, Paymar and colleagues (various, in various combinations: see for example, Shephard et al., 2000; Pence and Paymar, 1993) have conducted many short and long term evaluations on the work in Duluth DAIP, providing a great deal of useful
information about the work and its value. These evaluations include data gathered from participants, partners and ex-partners and from other agencies particularly the police.

**Edleson and various colleagues** have conducted reviews and research on perpetrator programmes (see bibliography).

**The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse** has published relevant reviews and research on the effectiveness and operation of programmes, amongst other interventions (see http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/)

**Canada** has an alliance of five university based research centres that carry out research on effective interventions to deal with domestic violence. See links from www.crvawc.ca

There is less rigorous evaluation of **counselling or therapy based work with individuals or couples** (Healey et al., 1998). Published research reports of couples or similar therapy based work often claim to show dramatic results (see, for example, Schaller, 1999). However, the published research tends to make little or no attempt to gather data from the partners separately or to take into account the risk that the abusive partner will continue to use emotional or physical abuse as a way of controlling what the survivor says in the couple counselling. Additionally, the practices have been criticised for failing to place clear and unequivocal responsibility for the abuse on the person who is abusing (Rothman, Butchart and Cerda, 2003). Many US state standards forbid couples work as a response to domestic abuse.

**The Task Force** (1997) recommends that “Existing intervention programmes with men should be subject to on-going monitoring, evaluation and review so that their effectiveness as a response to domestic violence can be gauged;”. This evaluation is one element of meeting this recommendation and a starting point for future on-going monitoring, evaluation, review and research. It has been structured using the criteria established in the Task Force report and elsewhere and uses the lessons learnt in existing relevant research, evaluations and practice.

This evaluation has drawn heavily on the lessons learned in the Gondolf, Dobash and Burton et al studies. The Gondolf study is relevant because of the size and scope of the work, the examination of change over a long period and the exploration of what might predict who will and who will not change. The Dobash study is relevant partly because the programme used is the CHANGE programme, one that several organisations in Ireland are using and others are considering. It is also useful because of the existence of a quasi control group of abusers not attending a programme and because of the long term follow up. The Burton study is helpful because it evaluates the connections between the work with men and the work with women, because it tracks the participants and partners for over a year, because many of the participants were not court mandated to attend, unlike the Gondolf and Dobash studies, where most men were mandated. All three are extremely helpful for the methodological lessons they have learned and the tools and techniques they provide as starting points for similar evaluations such as this.
1.11 Criteria for evaluating perpetrator programmes

As discussed above, it is important to describe what criteria are being used when evaluating perpetrator programmes. In much of the evaluation evidence that existed until the late 1990s, the main or only criteria for success was the reduction or complete ending of physical violence. This ignored the wide-spread use of controlling behaviour, sexual and other forms of abuse that continue to terrorise women even if physical abuse stops. Survivors and survivor support groups have commented that any changes must be permanent to be a marker of success – short term changes are not enough and that reductions in physical violence alone were also not enough (Bennett and Williams 2001). Some recent evaluations have therefore looked at a much wider set of criteria for success, such as reductions in or ending of the use of controlling behaviour, reductions in or ending sexual abuse, improvements in survivors’ quality of life. There are other possible ways that perpetrator programmes can provide a useful and possibly unique service as part of an overall system of responding to domestic abuse. The following is a list of criteria used in evaluations and research, including Dobash et al; Gondolf; Burton et al; Edleson; Pence and Paymar; etc:

1. Cessation of physical abuse;
2. Cessation of sexual abuse;
3. Cessation of emotional abuse and controlling behaviour;
4. Survivors feel able to make own decisions safely and without fear;
5. Perpetrators learn violence-avoidance techniques and use them correctly;
6. Perpetrators’ attitudes change so that they no longer need violence-avoidance techniques;
7. Improvements in women’s quality of life;
8. Increased numbers of women receive thorough, comprehensive and relevant information that focuses on her safety and that of her children and emphasises her right to safety, particularly those who would not otherwise have contact with advice/support agencies;
9. Survivors given realistic information about the likelihood that their partner will not change, enabling them to make informed decisions about leaving or not;
10. Survivors able to leave abusers safely;
11. New partners of ex-abusers not abused;
12. Courts and other agencies have more comprehensive information about the nature and history of the abusive behaviour, about how much change an abuser has or hasn’t made or has the ability to make, in order to inform their decisions about child custody, access or child protection as well as criminal and civil proceedings to deal with the domestic abuse;
13. Perpetrators held to account for abusive behaviour and given the clear message that it isn’t acceptable or legal and that they are responsible;
14. Perpetrators understand and accept that they are responsible for their own abusive behaviour and that it isn’t legal or acceptable;
15. Data thoroughly and carefully gathered, safely stored and effectively used in order to improve the safety of the women and children.

Some of these criteria are not easy to measure or require long term evaluation that may not be possible. Others can be simply measured and evaluated for their usefulness. This
evaluation began with a series of group discussions with staff, steering committee or board of management members and volunteers working in or helping to set up or run the programmes involved. During these discussions criteria for evaluation were identified, by the participants present. These criteria reflected almost completely those identified in the list above.

1.12 Benefits of evaluation and research of programmes

Evaluations of domestic abuse intervention programmes working with abusers can be useful in the following ways:

- To describe what a programme does and how it does it;
- To show if a programme is adhering to a set of standards;
- To learn more about the effectiveness of specific programmes or approaches, building on what has already been learnt in other research and evaluation;
- To provide programmes with feedback from participants, partners/ex-partners and others;
- To hold programmes to account and ensure public money is spent appropriately;
- To provide courts, women’s organisations and others with independent verification of what the programme is doing and how;
- To find out more about what helps to reduce risks to victims from their partners’ participation in programmes;
- To develop risk assessment tools;
- To find out more about the effects of specific interventions on participants and their partners;
- To contribute to holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour;
- To ensure an independent verification of the methods used to assess participants and any change in behaviour.

Many of these benefits are benefits that help the perpetrator programmes directly. Some are benefits that specifically benefit the survivors. Some help survivors indirectly in that they help to ensure that all practices help to enhance women’s safety or at least do not increase risk.

1.13 What does evidence from research and evaluation tell us about perpetrator programmes worldwide?

1.13.1 Evidence of change in abusive behaviour

The most rigorous evaluations and research with perpetrator programmes have found that of the population of abusers who attend programmes:

1. Some will change their abusive behaviour, including controlling behaviour and associated attitudes;
2. Some will stop being physically violent but continue to use other methods of control;
3. Some will change for a time and then return to abusive behaviour;  
4. Some will not change. (Dobash et. al, 2000)

Recent evaluations have attempted to identify how many participants fall into each category or similar categories and what influences them to make any changes.

1.13.1.1 Dobash et al. evaluation of two programmes in Scotland, UK:

- 30% of the partners/ex-partners of men on the programme (as part of a court mandated element of a criminal justice response) reported physical violence during the 12 month follow-up period, compared to 62% of the partners/ex-partners of men in the comparison group (subject to a criminal justice response only, no programme);

- Programme attendance was mandated and part of a criminal justice sanction by the courts. None of these men were attending voluntarily and all were under the threat of at least one legal sanction if they failed to attend. The evaluation therefore DID NOT show that programme attendance alone was more effective than a criminal justice response alone. It DID show that programme attendance, when coupled with a criminal justice response, was more effective than a criminal justice response with no programme;

- Men in the programme group used less controlling behaviour that men in the other (criminal justice response only) group, during the follow up period;

- Men who continued to use controlling behaviour were more likely than others to continue to use physical violence;

- The evaluation also looked at evidence of a change in attitude by the abuser, for example looking at whether or not the man restricts his partner’s movements or choices, whether he is aware of her feelings, sees her point of view, respects her, etc. They found that partners of men who were both subjected a criminal justice response and attended the programme were more likely to experience improvements in all of these than those of men subjected to a criminal justice response alone;

- This evidence points towards the existence of a programme effect, that is, that attending a programme is linked with significant reductions in violence and controlling behaviour in significant numbers of men. It is important to note that programme attendance was mandated and always part of a criminal justice sanction by the courts. None of these men were voluntary attending men and all were under the threat of at least one sanction if they failed to attend.
1.13.2 The Gondolf multi site evaluation over 48 months:

- Over the four year evaluation period the majority of men eventually did stop their violence, apparently for long periods of time;

- At four years follow-up, 80% had not used physical violence in the previous year, according to evidence from partners/ex-partners and police;

- Early behaviour whilst on the programme was a good indicator of future behaviour: the men who reassaulted within the first 3 months of the programme (whilst they were attending the programme) were the ones most likely to repeatedly reassault their partners and were highly likely to cause physical injury;

- There is a high risk group of men who assault their partners whilst on the programme and are more likely than other men to continue to do so after the programme;

- The men who had been court mandated onto the programmes were much more likely to make sustained changes in their abusive behaviour than those who were voluntary participants;

- It was difficult to isolate which aspect of the system of responses to domestic violence had caused the changes – men who had changed the most were often those who had also been subject to consistent criminal justice responses, those who had not changed were possibly in areas where the criminal justice response, including arrest, was not consistent or rigorous. Gondolf’s team therefore concluded that “the system was what mattered” (emphasis in original). The programmes alone were not sufficient to produce long-lasting change, just as a criminal justice response alone in the Dobash evaluation was often not enough.

1.13.1.3 Other evaluations:

Other evaluations have found modest but sometimes statistically significant effects in reducing repeat offending (see Healey et al., 1998). Edleson and Tolman reviewed the available research in 1992 on intervention and treatment programmes for batterers in the US and found “success” between 53% and 85%. However, as Edleson has commented elsewhere (see Edleson 1995), criteria for success varies enormously, as do data collection methods, which calls into question the validity of these findings. His report with Syers (Edleson and Syers, 1991), for example, found that whilst two-thirds of the course completers were reported non-violent at 18 month follow up, most persisted with controlling or threatening behaviour.

1.13.2 Evidence of what helps abusers to change

Gondolf found that the system overall was what helped abusers to change, of which perpetrator programmes are a part. The Dobash team also found the link between the criminal justice system and the perpetrator programmes was important (see elsewhere in this report for further information on the importance of the system overall). The evaluation of DVIP found that the combination of court mandated and ‘voluntarily
referred’ men was productive and facilitated enhanced motivation in some court-mandated men.

Looking at strategies programme participants appeared to learn on programmes for how to stop being violent or controlling, the Gondolf evaluation identified five main categories of violence avoidance that perpetrators seemed to learn or use:

1. Do nothing;
2. Interruption (stop arguments, take a ‘time out’, leave the room, use ‘self talk’, think before acting);
3. Discussion (use problem solving, talk about feelings, call a friend or counsellor);
4. Respect (appreciate women, respect women’s points of view, empathise with women);
5. Other (stop living with women, less drinking or drug abuse).

There are various elements involved in successfully stopping men’s violence through work in intervention programmes:

- Links to the criminal justice system and a strong criminal justice response (Gondolf, 2002; Dobash et al, 2000);
- Activities which try to change beliefs and attitudes about relationships between men and women and about women’s roles generally (Dobash et al, 2000);
- Re-enactments of incidents of abuse, enabling the men to see the events from their partners’ points of view and to understand the impact on them and on their children (Edleson, 1984; Ptacek, 1988; Burton et al, 1998);
- Making men aware of the full range of abusive behaviours they use and placing clear responsibility on them for this behaviour (Adams, 2000);
- Effective enforcement of any criminal or civil orders mandating the men to attend (Gondolf, 1998);
- Teaching men new ways of behaving in relationships and moving from interruption techniques to changes of attitude and beliefs (Gondolf, 2002);
- Effective and ongoing risk assessment and risk management, usually involving work with the victim (Dutton and Kropp, 2000).

Most evaluations (Healey et al., 1998; Dobash et. al. 2000) found that group discussions were helpful for moving participants beyond interruption techniques and into strategies involving more thought and changes of beliefs. The most effective tool used by the Violence Prevention Programme in DVIP was re-enactments, where men have to act out an incident and go through it again in slow motion. The point of the exercise - to reveal that decisions are made at various points - was communicated to most group members (Burton et. al. 1998).

**Interruption techniques**

Many evaluations have found that violence avoidance strategies such as ‘time out’ contribute greatly to reductions in physical violence though they are often reluctant to conclude that these strategies alone reduce sexual or emotional abuse or other controlling behaviour (Dobash et al, 2000). These behaviour modification or interruption strategies are sometimes referred to as anger management (Mullender and Burton, 2001).
Anger management can also contain other elements, such as learning to recognise physical symptoms of anger, learning relaxation techniques, identifying what situations make the individual feel angry and personal strategies for avoiding these.

Healey et al. point out that anger management techniques (e.g. interruption, such as Time Out), whilst useful as part of a wider programme, do not in themselves challenge the abusers’ beliefs that they have a right to be angry about their partner’s behaviour or choices. Additionally, these techniques can and sometimes are used by abusers as new control strategies. Anger management, as a response to domestic abuse, is banned by many US states, except as part of a wider programme (Healey et al., 1998).

Mullender and Burton, in their review of perpetrator programmes worldwide, comment that:

“It is hard to argue that domestic abusers are simply unable to manage their anger. They choose their targets and the circumstances of their attacks (Wood and Middleman, 1990) and, in Hearn’s research (1998) perpetrators spoke of clear intentions to cause specific amounts of hurt and damage. The concept of anger management can feed into perpetrators’ denial and minimisation of their behaviour; ‘a problem with my anger’ does not sound criminal, unacceptable or commensurate with the physical and emotional damage inflicted. Nor does it require a re-examination of attitudes; hence it may be less effective in ending violence”.

Mullender and Burton, 2001, p 61

Gondolf found that whilst avoidance or interruption strategies such as time out or self talk were helpful to the majority of men whose partners reported reductions in abuse, significant or complete reduction in abusive behaviour was strongly associated with changes in attitude, not simply using interruption techniques (Gondolf, 2002). Moving beyond these techniques towards the other violence avoidance strategies such as discussion or respect helped make men safer to live with in the long term. He found that attitudinal change seemed to take longer to learn, which suggested that longer programmes, including discussion elements, were needed to bring about such changes (Gondolf, 2002).

Many men do not move beyond interruption techniques. The partners of such men, whilst often physically safer, often continue to live in fear or feel that their partners simply learn new ways of controlling them that were beyond the scope of the legal system. Some were still abused physically despite their partners’ use of time out. Dobash et al found that violence avoidance strategies contributed to reductions in physical violence, something which is of course essential for any violence prevention programme with perpetrators. However, they did not find any evidence that such strategies reduced emotional or sexual abuse. Dobash et al. concluded that “In practice, this left many women, worse or no better off than before the programme.” (Dobash et al., 2000).

This evaluation gathered information about how far the use of these techniques in programmes in Ireland helped change men’s behaviour and increase women’s safety and feelings of safety. The findings from this are in section 3.9 and 5.4, with further information about some of the materials used by some programmes in Appendix D.
1.13.3 Contact with partners/ex-partners and monitoring of their safety

1.13.3.1 Why is this necessary?
There are various reasons why proactive contact with partners, and, if possible, the most recent ex-partners of abusers, is essential for the safe and useful operation of programmes:

- There is a strong connection between early re-assault (during first few months on the programme) and lack of long-term change (Gondolf, 2000).

- Some women stay with their partners purely because they have agreed to go on a programme and may be at increased risk or open to manipulation without access to clear information about the programme and access to safety planning.

- Many programme participants lie to their partners about the programme and what they are being taught, in ways that can affect their safety and welfare and that of their children (Burton et al., 1998).

- Some women leave their partners around the time their partners are on programmes and are at increased risk of homicide as a result (Burton et al., 1998).

- Therapists and others working with domestic abuse have a “duty to warn possible victims of the violence the therapists believe will be perpetrated by their clients” (Hart, 1988). Without a safe means of contacting partners, practitioners will not be able to do this.

- Perpetrator programmes need to monitor violence and abuse experienced during the life of the programme as well as afterwards, otherwise they will be missing evidence from a high risk period (Gondolf, 2000).

- Women’s predictions of their safety are the single best indicators of whether or not they were likely to be re-assaulted after the programme (Gondolf, 2002).

The contact has to be proactive on the part of the programme or partner organisations, as survivors of domestic abuse are often exhausted, have low self confidence or self esteem or are very isolated (Burton et al, 1998). They may then choose not to avail of the support and information the programme or partner organisation can provide. However, the programme is not in a position to know if the woman does or does not want the contact without at least one contact with her. There is further discussion about the relevant findings from this evaluation on this topic in section 4.

1.13.3.2 Who should carry out partner contact?
There are various possibilities: a programme facilitator, a specific partner contact worker employed by the programme, someone from an associated women’s service that has formal links to the programme, someone sub-contracted to provide the service. There are concerns about having the same person contacting the victim and working with the perpetrator (Bennett and Williams, 2001). These include:
• This practice may make the woman feel that she is being held responsible for the violence or any changes;

• Women may be (perhaps inadvertently) given the impression that they should stay with the programme participant, as he is “making an effort to change”;

• Women may feel disloyal, or uncomfortable about telling the facilitator about any continued abuse or they may fear that the facilitator will inadvertently let slip to the abuser that they know about this;

• Women may be given the impression that they should leave the programme participant without knowing how;

• Women may be given little or no or inaccurate information about the legal, practical and support services available;

Skilled facilitators may feel that they are able to transcend these obstacles and that their contact with women helps them (facilitators) to avoid unwitting collusion with the men, by hearing directly from the women about their experiences. Bennett and Williams suggest that this connection can be maintained more safely by employing different staff to work with partners and ex-partners and having methods of sharing information between the two sets of staff. Employing a separate person creates a ‘firewall’ between the victim and the staff working with the perpetrator, someone who can maintain links with both (ibid.).

The Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) provides separate, sustained services for women whose partners are in contact with their men’s programme. These services can and do continue if the man leaves the programme, after he finishes it or if the woman leaves him, if she wants this support. This service is linked to the perpetrator programme, but with very careful consideration of how to do this safely and in the interests of women’s safety. This allows, for example, women’s experiences of continued abuse to be reported to the perpetrator programme leaders, and threats made during programme sessions to be reported safely to their partners. Women can be given ongoing and practical help to leave without alerting the perpetrator to their intention. They can also have access to a specific support group. This means that many abused women who would not otherwise have any advice, information or support to have access to these services (Burton et al, 1998). The programmes in the Gondolf evaluation had a similar arrangement.

One key finding of all the most rigorous of the evaluations of perpetrator programmes is that without contact with the partners and ex-partners of programme participants there can be no real or adequate assessment or estimation of change in the participant. Participants’ reports alone are not adequate, neither are records from criminal justice agencies (see above). Women tend to be the most accurate source of information about whether or not an individual man will re-assault his partner (Gondolf, 2002). Therefore, in addition to all the reasons for contact that benefit the women, such contact is also essential for the programmes to ensure effective work with men.
All of this evidence supports the conclusion that contact with partners and ex-partners is an essential, not optional, part of the work with abusers and that it must ideally be proactive, early (if possible before the man starts the programme) and sustained throughout the programme and beyond. This is consistent with the stated aims and principles of all three networks and individual organisations involved in this evaluation, to promote the safety of women and children. The RESPECT guidelines for perpetrator programmes and the Task Force report both state that contact with partners is an essential feature of perpetrator programmes and that the purpose of the programmes is to promote victim safety.

The relevant findings from this evaluation about this topic are in section 4.

1.13.4 Links between men’s programmes and women's organisations

Gondolf, Dobashes et al., Regan et al., Pence and Paymar, all confirm that a relationship with or the provision of specific services for women experiencing domestic violence is essential for providing safety planning, legal advice, somewhere safe to stay and independent advocacy for current and past victims of domestic violence who may be at risk from the programme participants. Where this relationship does not exist, where programmes don’t have the information necessary to make referrals, or where there is no relevant women’s service, there is a risk that the victim will be in increased danger, particularly as she may have high, possibly unrealistic, expectations of the programme.

This relationship is also often the basis for providing partner/ex-partner contact services: the women’s organisation may run the service, may direct or manage it, may help to design or review it or be otherwise linked to it. The relationship also helps to ensure that the programme keeps focused on safety for women and children as the primary goal. The relationship may sometimes be challenging and can place great strain on limited resources in both organisations, but it is clearly helpful and arguably essential for work with perpetrators. See sections 4 and 6 for the relevant findings from this evaluation.

Paymar, in his manual for people running perpetrator programmes, notes that programme practitioners are often isolated from survivors of domestic violence and their advocates. He suggests that practitioners should take every advantage of opportunities to listen to a group of abused women tell their stories (at training courses or women’s groups or other settings). He makes the comment that: “Talking to battered women is a reality check for me” and gives an example of a man on his group who had been saying that things were going great in his relationship with his wife and how the tools he had learnt on the programme had helped him to communicate in a non-controlling manner. Later in the same week he was sitting in on a women’s support group when a woman who was clearly this man’s current partner “began telling a story very similar to what Darrell had told [us] earlier in the week. The good communication Darrell was so proud of turned out to be some very serious threats to take the children and leave the state unless Carole gave up the idea of going back to school [college]” (Paymar, 1999).
1.13.5 Evidence of programme effect

Many evaluations of perpetrator programmes that at first appear to show that the programme significantly reduced abusive behaviour are of limited use because of small samples, high attrition rates, lack of control or comparison groups, unreliable or inadequate data collection (Healey et al., 1998). In more rigorously conducted evaluations there have been small but sometimes significant differences between men attending programmes and those not attending, though it is not always possible to attribute these differences solely to programme attendance.

The Dobash evaluation, which was quasi-experimental, found that the programme group re-assaulted at a significantly lower level than the other criminal justice group. Other quasi experimental evaluations (Dutton, 1986; Chen et al., 1989) also found differences between men on programmes and men not attending programmes. However, these differences are not always as expected: in Harrell’s quasi-experimental evaluation of programmes in Baltimore, USA participants in all three of the programmes examined re-assaulted their partners at a higher rate than those in the control group.

The Gondolf evaluation, when comparing programmes of different lengths, different methods and carried out at different points in the criminal justice system and in varying contexts found no significant differences in effectiveness between programmes. However, he pointed out that all the programmes involved subscribed to the mandatory state standards for programmes in the state concerned and that these standards were very similar. This meant that the programmes were similar in significant ways, such as aims and philosophy, partner contact and links to other agencies, even if the methods, professional background of the facilitators, additional services and length of programme were different.

1.13.6 Drop-out/Attrition

The DVIP violence prevention programme, when evaluated by Burton et al., had a marked drop-out rate, especially between assessment and initial attendance. Staff rejected 12% of the 351 men who attended assessments, as unsuitable for the programme; of the remaining men, 57% failed to complete. This meant that over two thirds of the total number of men who were given initial assessments did not complete the programme. However, the majority of the programme participants were voluntary rather than court mandated clients, which means there was no element of legal compulsion to attend. It also indicates that despite the lack of court or other formal sanction, nearly half the clients attended the full programme.

The DVIP evaluation also found a significant loss in the early weeks of the first stage group. Most of these were ‘voluntarily referred’ men whose primary motivation in attending the programme may have been to prevent their partner leaving. If they are successful, or if the woman leaves anyway, they may see no further reason to continue.

The evaluation concluded that:

*High drop-out rates are a reported feature of men’s programmes in the UK and USA, with an average loss of at least 50%. Finding ways to decrease this is a major challenge for all programmes working with violent men.*

Burton et al., (1998)
The USA multi site evaluation (Gondolf, 2002) found that 61% of voluntary participants and 33% of mandated participants dropped out of the programme before the end. This is similar to a finding of the DVIP evaluation: voluntary participants are more likely than mandatory participants to drop out of the programme. Gondolf also found that those men who continued to abuse included a significant number of the men who dropped out.

### 1.13.7 Voluntary and court-mandated participants

Some programmes in the US and UK take only participants who are mandated to attend by courts or probation services. In Ireland, the NDVIA has a policy of working only with men who are court-mandated. Other programmes, including some in Ireland, take only participants who appear to volunteer to attend. Many, possibly most, take a mixture of the two. This includes the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, the EMERGE programme in Boston, Mass. and other well-known programmes in the US (personal communication between the evaluation team and the Duluth project, 2004; Healey et al., 1998). At the start of this evaluation, all groups running programmes in Ireland required men to refer themselves to the programme, as voluntary participants.

Some practitioners argue that programme participants who attend voluntarily are likely to be the most committed and therefore the most likely to change. Gondolf’s study compared voluntary participants with court mandated participants and found that in contrast to these expectations:

1. Voluntary participants were twice as likely to drop out of the programme as men who were mandated to attend.
2. Voluntary participants re-assaulted partners at significantly higher rate than mandatory participants during 15 month follow up (44% vs. 29%)

As described above, voluntary participants in perpetrator programmes seem more likely than mandated ones to drop out of the programme and at an early stage, when they are unlikely to have learnt much. However, the Gondolf and Burton studies both found that there were voluntary participants who did change and who did stop abusing their partners (Gondolf 2002, Burton et al., 1998).

There are other benefits of doing work with men who are not court mandated. The evaluation of DVIP identified that voluntary participants are often, in reality, community or socially mandated to attend, either by a partner as an ultimatum, or by child protection or civil proceedings for child custody and access. These mandates may lack the sanctions available to the criminal justice agencies, but in reality for many men, the sanctions they do hold are just or nearly as strong. They point out that allowing these men onto the programme meant that women who would not otherwise have been able to access specialist services were able to do so, as well as sometimes being helped by the changes in their partners’ behaviour (Burton et al., 1998).

Court mandated men on the DVIP programme during the evaluation were very rarely sanctioned by probation officers or courts if they stopped attending, which reduces the leverage of this sanction (Burton et al., 1998). This is a limitation which needs addressing in all countries with such systems: evidence from an evaluation of the impact of mandatory
court review, requiring all men mandated onto programmes to go back to court at a set date to review their attendance on, compliance with and lessons learned from the programme seems to improve attendance rates, reduce drop-out and decrease the likelihood of men re-assaulting their partners. It nearly eliminated “no-shows” (at programme sessions) in the Pittsburgh Domestic Violence Court where it was piloted (Gondolf, 1998). Gondolf concludes: “the findings of this study……demonstrate the utility of a quick and certain response to non-compliance, regardless of the court”.

Participants may volunteer as a way of avoiding criminal proceedings or sanctions, or as a way of appearing willing to change when they appear in court and so gaining a response that is more favorable to them than they might otherwise have received. Courts or victims may view participation in a programme as a reason not to continue with criminal or civil proceedings. This can then have the effect of making programmes an alternative to legal proceedings which can then be seen by abusers and others as a way avoiding the legal consequences of their actions. This may also be the effect if programmes receive information from participants about criminal behaviour they are currently or have recently used and this is not reported to criminal justice agencies as they would be, for instance, if such threats or admissions were made in relation to a child. DVIP responds to this risk by waiting until criminal proceedings are over before admitting a man to a programme (personal communication with DVIP facilitator).

Other participants may attend as a way of persuading a partner who was considering leaving not to do so. This could perhaps be seen as a community mandate, rather than truly voluntary participation.

Harrison et al. (2001), in an unpublished report of an investigation into the feasibility of starting a group programme for non-convicted domestic abusers, point out that

“group facilitators working with non-convicted men have to be able to tackle all these issues without the criminal justice service formally supporting them in challenging each man to comply with the rules of the group.”

Harrison et. al, 2001, p 8

In summary, both voluntary and mandated participants can and do sometimes change their behaviour. There may be differences in cost, resources and techniques required to keep different participants attending and persuading or teaching them to change. It is also possible that practitioners and others see all programme participants as falling into either one or the other of these two apparently distinct groups of men. In reality the routes men have to programmes is more complex. This evaluation explored this division further and the results of this investigation can be found in section 2.8.

1.13.8 Other categorisation of abusers

It is difficult or perhaps impossible to find a set of characteristics that mark out all abusers (Healey et al., 1999).

Some projects develop different approaches for specific categories of abusers, such as black or other ethnic minorities, gay people, etc, in order to find the most effective
intervention or to avoid having to deal with racism or homophobia during groups (Bennett and Williams, 2001). Others, such as the Ruth Project in the U.S. (see Healey et al., 1998) prefer not to differentiate between different groups.

The RESPECT guidelines ask programmes to consider how they respond to abusers from specific groups in ways that are culturally sensitive, without allowing abusers to use race, culture or religion etc. as excuses or justifications for their abusive behaviour (RESPECT, 2004). Failure to treat domestic violence seriously in ethnic minority communities in effect leaves victims from those communities at greater risk, which is therefore a discriminatory practice and contrary to basic human rights.

Gondolf found that it was essential to identify which abusers continued to misuse alcohol or drugs. Treatment for drug or alcohol addiction was, he concluded, essential and usually had to take place either before the programme or in parallel but separately, to ensure that drunkenness or drug addiction were not used as excuses or did not cause problems for the man's attendance.

1.13.9 Risk assessment and monitoring

Work with domestic violence inevitably means working with risk and dangerous behaviour, including the risk of homicide to the woman (Wilson and Daly, 1994 and 1996) and to the children (O’Hara, 1994). Domestic violence is a crime which tends to be repeated, against the same victim, known as ‘repeat victimisation’ (Farrell and Pease, 1993; Lloyd et al, 1994; Mirrlees-Black, 1999). It also tends to get more frequent and more severe if there is no successful intervention (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Service providers involved therefore have to assess and manage risk (Laing, 2004). This does not mean that the programme facilitators inevitably have to be the practitioners who carry out the risk assessment: this could be done by probation officers or others as appropriate, in liaison with the programme leaders and women’s support workers.

Even if there is no formal procedure to guide this assessment, facilitators, partner support workers and survivors of domestic abuse themselves already make regular assessments of risk and take decisions about how to handle it. Most women’s advocates already carry out some form of safety planning with survivors. The development of a formal policy and use of specific tools to guide these processes do not imply that such methods result in 100% accuracy in risk prediction, but they do help to ensure that the assessments are thorough and consistently used. Risk assessment is useful to help practitioners to manage situations and to communicate risk to other professionals. This is particularly useful if there is a women’s organisation carrying out advocacy on behalf of the women.

Formal risk assessment in domestic violence intervention has several elements and can be defined in several ways:

“……the formal application of instruments to assess the likelihood that intimate partner violence will be repeated and escalated. The term is
synonymous with dangerousness assessment and encompasses lethality assessment, the use of instruments specifically developed to identify potentially lethal situations” (Roehl and Guertin, 2000)

Risk assessment about an abusive man may be carried out by any one or more than one of various agencies, including probation, courts, child protection, perpetrator programmes, women’s advocacy services and will usually involve several individuals, including the woman and possibly children, a refuge worker, a programme facilitator etc.

Laing, in a review of the available literature on risk assessment and management for the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, (Laing, 2004) identified a range of benefits from carrying out risk assessment:

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“The following benefits of utilising risk assessment have been identified:

- To assist women and domestic violence workers to develop more realistic safety plans (Campbell 1986; Abrams, Belknap and Melton 2000; Roehl and Guertin 2000; Websdale 2000a; Weisz, Tolman and Saunders 2000).
- To assist perpetrator treatment programmes to select the amount and types of treatment (Weisz, Tolman and Saunders 2000). For example, abuse of alcohol appears in many risk assessment lists. Screening for alcohol problems may identify the need to provide treatment for alcohol abuse, in addition to perpetrator treatment (e.g. Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Interdisciplinary Task Force 2000).
- To help the criminal justice system to identify which offenders need closer supervision (Weisz, Tolman and Saunders 2000), particularly given the rise in number of domestic violence perpetrators now before the courts in jurisdictions with strong arrest and prosecution policies (Goodman, Dutton and Bennett 2000).
- They may be a tool for educating service providers about domestic violence (Websdale 2000a).
- They potentially provide a shared language about risk for service providers from a range of different agencies (Abrams, Belknap and Melton 2000; Websdale 2000a).”
```


There are two main approaches to formal risk assessment: the identification of risk factors or risk markers (Gondolf, 2002; Dutton and Kropp, 2000) and the use of risk instruments or scales (Gondolf, 2002; Roehl and Guertin, 2000).
1.13.9.1 Risk factors or risk markers:

The Gondolf evaluation included retrospective analysis of data in order to find out what, if anything, could have predicted whether or not a man would continue to be abusive. He found that women's predictions of their own safety were the best predictors of risk, followed by man's continued and untreated drunkenness (Gondolf, 2002). A review of work in the US with domestic abusers also found evidence to support high levels of alcohol and drug abuse amongst the population of known abusers, which they say points to the need for parallel or initial treatment of the alcohol or drug problem (Healey et al., 1999). **Women's perceptions of risk and levels of untreated alcoholism are therefore significant risk factors or markers.**

Other risk markers:

- **Previous assault** – if it has happened before, it is likely to happen again (Walby and Myhill, 2001).
- **Separation** – a particularly risky time for the violence to continue (Kelly et al 1999) to get worse (Statistics Canada, 1993:26) or to result in the woman being killed (Wilson and Daly 1994).
- **Gender inequality** - the man holding patriarchal attitudes is linked to increase likelihood of domestic violence (Dobash et al, 2000; Yllo and Straus, 1990), as is marital inequality (Coleman and Straus 1986; Kalmuss and Straus 1982).

Hilton, Harris and Rice's review of risk factors identified factors that commonly appeared in checklists in professional use in domestic violence intervention but also noted that many have not been empirically tested. However, Gondolf points out that although there are **common risk markers**, such as excessive alcohol use, severe psychological problems, several prior arrests and being abused or neglected as a child, **none of these was a strong predictor** of future abuse.

“The predictive power of these factors, even when they are combined, is very weak. That is, the risk markers incorrectly identify a lot of men. Many men who do not reassault are identified as reassaulters or high risk (false positives) and many men who do reassault are identified as nonreassaulters or low risk (false negatives)” (Gondolf 2002, p 168).

Campbell et al carried out a retrospective analysis of 220 murdered women drawn from 11 US cities, involving people who were knowledgeable about the woman's relationship with the perpetrator, using logistic regression to estimate the independent associations between each of the possible risk factors to find out how significant each one was and how well it could predict the homicide. They also used a control group of abused women who had not been killed. They found that previous arrest decreased the risk of homicide and that separation strongly increased the risk, particularly when the abuser was highly controlling. They concluded that “it is also clear that extremely controlling abusers are particularly dangerous under conditions of estrangement”. Separation and extreme forms of controlling behaviour are therefore also significant risk factors, particularly for homicide.
All of this information carries serious and important lessons for people involved in assessing men for participation in perpetrator programmes and for monitoring these men once they are on the programme, as well as obvious lessons for anyone involved in work with abused women. Risk assessment can be extremely useful, when used with caution. Risk assessment methods should be regularly reviewed and revised in the light of new information from research and from work with individual men and women.

1.13.9.2 Risk assessment tools

Gondolf found that the **single best risk assessment tool was the woman herself**:

> “Women’s perceptions of safety and the likelihood of reassault [emerged as the] most consistent and strongest risk marker. In fact, the women’s predictions were as useful as all the batterer characteristics combined.” (Gondolf, 2002).

This confirms the need to involve women in every stage of intervention work with abusive men, in order to maximise their safety as well as assess levels of change in the men.

Other tools have been in use in perpetrator programmes for some time, although, as mentioned above, they have not all been tested empirically but tend to reflect the risk markers described above. The instruments for which there is research based evidence available include:

The Danger Assessment Scale (Campbell 1986) designed to help abused women to assess their own danger of homicide. It identifies 15 separate features that have been found in research to increase the risk of homicide, such as escalation of severity and frequency of violence, availability of weapons, substance abuse, suicide threats, jealousy, assaults during pregnancy and violence towards others.

The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) tool, developed at the British Columbia Institute on Family Violence (Kropp et al 1995) contains 20 items. These are based on findings from research on domestic violence, grouped into five categories: criminal history, psychological adjustment, spouse abuse history, current offence characteristics and others (such as stalking). Use of SARA involves interviews with the perpetrator and victim, standardised measures of physical and emotional abuse and of substance misuse and a review of any other available records such as police reports or criminal records (Dutton and Kropp 2000). Practitioners have to have specific training to use the tool and for copyright reasons the tool cannot be included here.

Risk assessment tools are still in early stages of development and should not be used as the sole basis of any safety planning with women but should be combined with other information and interventions (Websdale 2000a). There is more work to be done on evaluating the effectiveness of such tools and the quality of the conclusions depends crucially on the quality and thoroughness of the assessment. It should never be a substitute for listening to what women are saying about their own feelings of safety and risk, which Gondolf identifies as the best risk assessment tool.
It is important to balance time and resources and to consider what use the risk assessment can be put to. If it can be used to help hold the abuser to account and/or to increase victim safety, it is usually worth doing in some way. If there is a danger that it will overwhelm the work with women or take away vital resources that could help to improve accountability and safety in other ways, it may need to be limited or carried out less formally.

Finally, it is vital to note that the purpose of risk assessment should not be confined to assessment for suitability for programme entrance, nor for simply compiling a list of behaviour for information’s sake only. The purpose should always be clear and should be primarily for enhancing the victim’s safety and bringing about accountability and sanctions for perpetrators (Abrams, Belknap and Melton 2000).

1.13.10 Links to the Criminal Justice System

Andrew Klein, chief Probation Officer of the District Court Model Domestic Abuse Programme in Quincy Massachusetts, quoted in Healey et al. (1998), comments “you can’t separate batterer treatment from its [criminal justice system] context. You can’t study the effectiveness of treatment without studying the quality of force which supports it”. This is echoed by Gondolf’s overall conclusion that “the system matters”. When looking at possible causes for differences between programmes, they also found some evidence to show that a weak criminal justice response may be the cause of reduced effectiveness of some programmes.

1.14 Standards for programmes working with domestic abusers

It is now common for states in the US (Healey et al.1998), Canada (Dankwort and Austin,1997) and other countries to have standards for programmes working with domestic abusers (batterers, in US terminology). These standards are usually mandatory and backed by legislation. Healey et al. provide a comprehensive summary of the US state standards (see Healey et al., 1998). Most are available via the internet. The website of the Batterer Intervention Services Coalition Michigan has links to online copies of state standards for those US states that have them. (See )

In the UK, RESPECT, the national organisation of perpetrators programmes, has a set of minimum standards for running group work programmes with abusive men and associated women’s services. These are a clear and rigorous. They draw on lessons learnt by practice and evaluations and from consultation with members and others, such as women’s organisations. Members of RESPECT are required to adhere to these standards. RESPECT is currently researching accreditation for perpetrator programmes: the report of this investigation is due for publication in early Autumn 2004 (personal communication between evaluation director and RESPECT director; June 2004).
MOVE Ireland is a member of RESPECT and some individual MOVE groups are in the process of applying for membership in their own right. Many MOVE facilitators and others in the MOVE network attend meetings of the National Practitioners’ Network (NPN) in the UK. The NPN is not a part of RESPECT, but is informally linked to it, as RESPECT was formed out of the work of the NPN. SEDVIP groups have used RESPECT guidelines to develop good practice. NDVIA is not associated with RESPECT nor does it send representatives to the NPN. The most recent minimum standards are contained in a 31 page document. The evaluation team did intend to include this as an appendix to this document and have permission to do this but at the time of writing do not have a final version of the most recent guidelines, as these were updated during the last month of the evaluation.

Ireland does not currently have an explicit, legally mandated set of standards for programmes. However, in effect, the Task Force report set the foundations for state standards, by providing the core principles described earlier and making the recommendation that any future state funding for such programmes will be dependent on adherence to the core principles. These principles and recommendations are being used as part of the criteria for this evaluation.

1.15 Summary of interventions other than perpetrator programmes

The following interventions and responses to domestic abuse all play a part in reducing or stopping domestic abuse:

- Arrest, charging and prosecution of abusers (see section 1.5);
- Support services, protection and advocacy for victims of domestic violence, including Rape Crisis Centres, Refuges and Women’s Aid;
- Housing for victims and their children, so that they can leave the abuser;
- Civil protection orders such as barring and safety orders (see section 1.5);
- Financial help or assistance into employment and training, particularly for those who are financially dependent on the abuser;
- Public awareness campaigns;
- Prevention and education work with children and young people.

Research carried out on the effectiveness of civil and criminal responses to domestic abuse in Ireland demonstrated that there is inconsistent and often inadequate sanctioning of domestic abusers (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1999). This potentially has the following consequences:

1. Courts and probation services may not treat domestic abuse consistently as criminal behaviour with consequences;
2. Perpetrators may then continue to see their own behaviour as beyond the law or without consequences;
3. Victims may not feel confident in using the law or are put at increased risk when they do (Hague and Malos, 1993);
4. The public, including relatives, friends and colleagues of abusers and survivors, may not see or treat the behaviour as illegal or unacceptable.
If victims do not feel confident in using the law this means that they are less protected than other categories of victims, which in turn may have the effect of making victims feel that they have no choice but to put up with it or that no-one will help or protect them. If perpetrators do not see the law as relating to them and their behaviour, the work done in programmes may be weakened as abusers feel that there will be no sanctions applied to them if they continue to abuse. Many women in Ireland do use both the criminal and the civil law to help to protect them, as described in section 1.5.

Attitudes about gender, women’s private and public roles, relationships and families that make women in particular feel that they should keep the family together at any cost, no matter how dangerous this is to them or to their children, often prevent victims of domestic abuse from taking the decision to leave or even considering it as a possibility (Hanmer, 2000). Without civil protection, and, crucially, adequate enforcement of civil protection, victims who do not feel able to or cannot use the criminal law for whatever reason are left without any legal protection at all (O’Connor and Kelleher, 1999). Their abusers are given the impression that they will face no consequences if they continue to abuse their partners and children. They may use the lack of legal response to reinforce their position of control.

Even if they do get as far as deciding to leave, without adequate housing and finance, victims do not have the practical means to do so. Without adequate specialist support services for survivors of domestic abuse, victims may not identify what is happening to them as wrong, may blame themselves for the abuse or continue to be isolated. They may have little or no accurate information to make informed choices about their safety. If the support service they contact does not provide accurate and relevant information, does not offer the possibility of leaving the abuser or does not make the victim feel she deserves better than to be abused, she may still continue to be at risk even if she does have contact with a specialist service (Hague and Malos, 1993).

Victims of domestic violence sometimes become involved in child protection investigations that can often make them feel that they are to blame for the violence. Women often end up very fearful that their children may be removed from them if they do not leave their partner, but have little knowledge on which to base any decisions. Child protection policies sometimes do not take into account the risks that many women and children face if they do leave a violent man (Mullender and Morley, 1994a; Debbonaire, 2002).

Investing time, energy and resources in domestic violence prevention work with children and young people in schools will have a wide reaching effect on the next generation. As well as educating the next generation of potential perpetrators not to do it and the next generation of survivors to know what their rights are if they experience it, prevention work can also help to educate a whole community about the warning signs that a relationship might become abusive and about what to do to help friends, family and others. Prevention work educates the next generation of police officers, social workers, judges, politicians and health workers, as well as the next generation of women’s advocates and facilitators of perpetrator programmes (Debbonaire, 2002). There is some research and practice experience available from programmes in Canada, Australia, UK and elsewhere to guide
the development of this work (Mullender and Morley, 1994b; Debbonaire, 2002; Mulroney, 2003).

The Task Force Report on Violence Against Women makes recommendations for all these elements of responding to domestic abuse. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women are working on these Task Force recommendations and this evaluation is part of this process.
SECTION TWO Men in contact with programmes, July 03 – June 04

Notes to all statistical information and tables

‘Valid’ refers to the numbers of men who answered. ‘Missing System’ refers to those who did not. ‘Frequency’ means the number who gave that specific answer (e.g., answered “yes” to the question “did you see, hear or witness violence in your family when you were a child?”). ‘Percent’ is a percentage of the total sample, ‘valid percent’ is a percentage of the valid responses.

Percentages are shown rounded up to one decimal place, which means that percentage totals may sometimes add up to slightly more than 100%.

2.1 Numbers of men and women coming into contact with programmes

Notes to tables in this section

1. Totals in column 2 are only entered where every organisation running programmes in this period provided data.

2. Totals in column 3 are estimates of totals, based on incomplete data. These totals can be taken as minimums. These are based on the information that was provided by those groups who were able to answer, supplemented by information such as questionnaires, copies of attendance sheets, weekly monitoring forms.

3. In some cases, the group was not able to give an accurate, verifiable figure for the numbers concerned and the person providing the information was explicit about this. In some other cases it seemed likely, from the manner in which the information was provided, that the numbers were sometimes estimates, although the person concerned was not explicit about this.

4. At the time of the snapshot count of men attending programmes during the week of 1st March 2004, two of the organisations had completed a fixed length programme at that point and so were not running a group.
### 2.1.2 Men in contact with programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of men</th>
<th>Total, based on data from all programmes running</th>
<th>Estimated minimum total based on available data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On a waiting list on 1.6.03</td>
<td>No total available</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted a group</td>
<td>No total available</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed applications</td>
<td>No total available</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed/assessed for suitability</td>
<td>No total available</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave permission to contact their partner/ex-partner</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were allowed on the programme</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were referred by the courts <strong>AND/ OR</strong> Were referred as part of probation order</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were assessed as not suitable for the programme</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended at least one session</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended 13 sessions or more</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended 26 sessions or more</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of men attending programmes during snapshot week beginning 1st March 04</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed evaluation questionnaire</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.1.2 Contact with partners and ex-partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>Estimated total, based on varying levels of information from all programmes running during the period July 1st 03 – June 31st 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successfully contacted by the programme or someone connected to the programme, such as a partner support service, as part of normal work, NOT just for the purpose of this evaluation?</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted before the man started the programme</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted after the man started but within one month of his starting</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted after the man had been on the programme for one month or more</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.3 **Length of time on programme of those men who returned questionnaires:**

72 men completed questionnaires as part of this evaluation during the year July 03 - 04. Men from all 12 of the groups that were operating at some point during this period completed these questionnaires. In most of these groups, all men attending completed a questionnaire. From the data provided by the groups, a total of 74 men attended at least one session of a programme somewhere in Ireland during this year. This means that the questionnaires provide comprehensive data about almost all of the men attending programmes during this time.

These were detailed questionnaires, based on those used in comparable evaluations. They included questions on: demographic data; involvement with civil or criminal law; involvement with programme; inventories of emotional, physical and sexual abuse; questions about injuries and other effects of the first, the most recent and the worst. As expected, some men did not answer all the questions.

Of the 72 questionnaires completed, the evaluation team was able to establish the exact length of time spent on programmes when they completed their questionnaires for 68 men.

3. 20 men completed a questionnaire during or before their first session in the group work programme.
4. 23 men completed a questionnaire between one and four sessions on programme.
5. 25 men completed a questionnaire after more than three and less than twelve months on programmes.
6. 14 men completed a questionnaire after 1 year or more on a programme.
7. The longest time spent on programmes before completing a questionnaire was 6 years (1 man).

2.2 **Who are the men?**

2.2.1 **Ethnicity**

Of the 71 men who answered this question, 63 (90.1% of men responding to this question) described themselves as “white Irish”, 5 (7%) described themselves as “white other”, 1 as Asian and 1 as African. The men identifying as “white other” were either from the UK (4) or Australia (1).
2.2.2 Religion

All 72 men answered this question. 62 (86.1%) said that they were Catholic, 4 (5.6%) said they were “other Christian”, 5 (6.9%) said they had no religion and 1 (1.4%) said they followed another religion. This man’s religion was Islam.

2.2.3 Age

The age range was from 21 to 61. The mean age was 37.78 and the standard deviation from this age was 9.360.

The men were also asked about the age of their partner/ex-partner. From the answers they gave, the age of the partners/ex-partners ranged from 19 to 60, with a mean age of 36.68 and standard deviation from this age 9.358.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age gap between men and partners/ex-partners</th>
<th>Men younger than partners by 5 years or more</th>
<th>Men younger than partners by up to 4 years</th>
<th>Men same age or up to 4 years older than partner/ex</th>
<th>Men 5 – 9 years older than partner/ex</th>
<th>Men 10 years or more older than partner/ex</th>
<th>Total valid answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This means that of the 68 men who answered both questions about age and partners/ex-partners age, 48 (70.58% of men answering both questions, 66.66% of total sample) were within 4 years of their partners’ age, either way.
2.2.4 Marital status and cohabitation

Marital status at time of questionnaire

69 men answered this question. Of these, 42 (60.9% of the men answering this question, 58.3% of the total sample) were married to the person they had abused at the time they completed the questionnaire and 27 (39.1% of the men answering question, 37.5% of total sample) were not. Of the 42 men who said they were married to their partner, 29 were still living with them at the time they completed the questionnaire, 12 said they were not and 1 man did not answer. Of the 27 men who were not married to their partner, 12 said that they were still living with her at the time they completed the questionnaire and 15 said that they were not.

Cohabitation at time of questionnaire

41 men (58.3% of total sample) said that they were still living with their partner at the time they completed the questionnaire and 27 (40.3%) said that they were not. 1 man did not answer the question. Of the 41 men who were still living with their partner, 29 were married to the woman they were living with and 12 were not (1 man did not answer the question about marital status).

Of the 27 men who were no longer living with their partner 20 said that they still had contact with them, 6 said that they did not and 1 man did not answer.
CONCLUSIONS:

The men who answered the questions were mostly married to their partner and mostly still living with them. Men who were married were slightly more likely to be still living with their partner than men who were not. Differences were marginal.

2.2.5 Children

The men were asked if they had children with the current or most recent partner they had been abusing. All 72 men answered this question. 54 (75% of total sample) had at least one child with the woman they had abused.

They were then asked how many children they had with this partner. 48 men (66.7% of the total) answered this question. 36 men had three children or fewer. This means that 88.88% of those men who had children (75% of those who answered, 50% of the total number of men) had 3 children or fewer.

2.2.6 Relationship between cohabitation status and children

Cohabitation status was strongly associated with the presence of children. Men who had children with their current or most recent partner were more than twice as likely to be still living with their partner than not. Men who didn’t have children were more than twice as likely NOT to be living with their partner than living with them.

Crosstabulation: currently living together * children together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>currently living together</th>
<th>children together</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a large group of children whose safety and/or welfare may well still be affected by living with abuse in their home, if the abuse continues whilst the man is on the programme. Children may well be a significant factor in the choices made by abused women about whether or not to leave their partner. They may also be the motivating factor for some abusive men deciding to change. There was some evidence of such a motivation in this evaluation, according to information from both men and women. In one case, it seemed as though the child protection agency who had referred the man to the programme appeared to accept his programme attendance as sufficient to protect the children and the woman from his violence, when in fact he continued to be violent to the
woman and to the children. There may well have been more to this case than this evaluation could uncover. However, it is vital that child protection agencies and perpetrator programmes are alert to the possibility that men who continue to live with their children whilst on the programme may well be continuing to abuse or frighten their children as well as their partners.

2.2.7 Employment

71 men answered the questions about employment. 55 (77.5% of the total sample) were in employment of some form. 13 men (18%) were unemployed, 2 were unable to work because of a disability and 1 was retired. 15 men (21.1%) were self employed.

Men’s jobs ranged from accounts manager to yard man. The alphabetical list in between includes: an advertising manager, an artist, a barber, various builders and similar, a cartographer, a computer engineer, a council warden, several factory workers, a head chef, several office workers, a prison officer, 2 salesmen, a soldier, 2 taxi drivers, a teacher, 3 truck drivers and a website designer.

For some men, their employment status had a direct impact on their participation in the programmes. One woman commented that her truck driver husband found it difficult to attend all the sessions. A man was heard commenting during a group session which the evaluator observed that his recent unemployment was making it difficult for him to afford the cost of petrol to drive to the sessions. 10 men said that they were worried about other people finding out that they were participating in the programme.

It would be interesting to analyse, in future monitoring and evaluation, whether or not the men attending programmes reflect the employment statistics of the general population.
2.2.7 Use of drugs and alcohol

All 72 men answered the question “do you have or have you ever had what you would call a problem with alcohol or drugs or both?”. A small majority (52.8%) said that they did not have a problem with either drugs or alcohol. Drug problems were always accompanied by alcohol problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have or have you ever had what you would call a problem with alcohol, drugs or both?</th>
<th>Frequency (number of men)</th>
<th>Percent of total sample (N = 72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes alcohol</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes both alcohol and drugs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 30 men who said that they had ever had or currently had a problem with alcohol or drugs, a total of 26 described what they had done to give up permanently. Some had used more than one method, which is why the frequency total for the table below is more than 26. 4 men still had a problem with alcohol or drugs at the time they completed the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current or recent help with drugs/alcohol</th>
<th>Frequency (number of men)</th>
<th>Percent of total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol counselling/treatment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs rehab/treatment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving up alone</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Untreated drunkenness has been shown to be one of the strongest indicators of continuing physical and sexual abuse, during and beyond programmes (Gondolf, 2002). Men who have not dealt with their drugs or alcohol problems before starting a domestic abuse intervention programme should be monitored carefully and referred where possible to a suitable programme for their drugs or alcohol problem. It is also important to ask women about men’s drugs or alcohol use, as they often have more information.

One facilitator, several men and two women commented that they felt that the domestic abuse programme had helped with the man’s drug(s) or alcohol problems. This may reflect the lack of suitable services in the areas where these men lived, or that they were not comfortable with the approach of AA in particular (the most commonly used service
for dealing with alcohol addiction). However, as dealing with alcohol or drug addictions is not the primary focus of the work and untreated drunkenness in particular is strongly associated with continuing abuse (Gondolf 2000), it would seem to be risky to rely on the programme to treat the addictions as well as respond to the abuse. It may also allow men to see the alcohol or drug addiction as the problem, not their abusive behaviour, and to view the addiction as an excuse or justification for the abuse (Hague and Malos, 1993), when research indicates that although it may be a contributing factor, it is not the cause of the violence (Gelles, 1993).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Untreated drunkenness or drug abuse should be clearly assessed and monitored.
2. Organisations should consider whether it is safe or appropriate to work with men whose addictions to drink or drugs have not been treated, and if so, how to safeguard against the dangers involved.

2.3 Childhood experiences of violence

Men were asked a series of questions about childhood experiences of violence.

2.3.1 Witnessing violence

Men were asked if they had seen, heard or witnessed violence in their family when they were children. 69 men answered the question. The answers to the questions are provided in the tables below.

did you see or hear or witness violence in your family when you were a child?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following tables analyse the information provided by the men who said that they had witnessed violence when they were children. As men may have witnessed more than one person being violent or in more than one situation, the information is presented in separate tables below. For example, the first table headed ‘if yes who was being violent to whom father to mother’ provides data about how many men, having said that they did witness violence, said that it was from father to mother.
Men were then asked: “If you saw, heard or witnessed violence as a child in your family, who was being violent to whom?”

36 of the 43 men who answered yes to above question identified the source of the violence. 7 did not identify the source of the violence. Their answers are summarised in the table below. 3 men gave more than one answer.

If you saw, heard or witnessed violence as a child in your family, who was being violent to whom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who was being violent to whom?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample</th>
<th>Percentage of those witnessing violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father to mother</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother to father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents to each other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents to child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father to child</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four ‘Others’ are ‘don’t know’, ‘mother’s boyfriend’, ‘siblings’ and ‘uncle’.

2.3.2 Direct experience of violence as children

Men were then asked if they had been subject to violence in their childhood in their family of origin and if so, from whom. 68 men answered this question. 30 men in total (41.66% of the total sample) said that they had been on the receiving end of violence in their family of origin. 9 men gave more than one answer, which is why the frequency results in the second column in the table below add up to more than 30.

Were you on the receiving end of violence in your childhood in your family? If yes, who was hurting you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who was hurting you?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample</th>
<th>Percentage of those subject to violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-father/ mother’s partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.3 Witnessing and experiencing violence

The answers from the question about witnessing violence and from the question about experiencing it were cross tabulated to examine the overlap and to find out the proportion of men who did not witness or experience violence. The results of this analysis are presented on the table below. The data is analysed only for those 67 men who provided an answer to both questions, as it is not possible to make assumptions about the missing answers. This means that these results exclude data from 2 men who witnessed violence as a child and 1 man who experienced it.

Crosstabulation: did you see or hear or witness violence in your family when you were a child * were you on the receiving end of violence in your childhood in your family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>did you see or hear or witness violence in your family when you were a child</th>
<th>were you on the receiving end of violence in your childhood in your family</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 men (34.72% of the total sample) said that they did not either witness or experience violence directly as a child in their family of origin. 29 (40.27% of the total sample) both witnessed and experienced violence.

CONCLUSIONS
As stated in section 1.8, the research on any links between childhood experiences of violence and adult use of abuse is not conclusive. It can sometimes be seen as a risk indicator, though never an excuse and not a simple explanation. The findings from this evaluation reflect this. Just over a third of men on programmes said they had neither witnessed nor experienced violence as a child. Just over half of the men said they had witnessed violence. A little under a half of the men experienced it and almost all of these, not surprisingly, said that they had also witnessed it.

There is no way of knowing if this is representative of the whole population of abusers in Ireland or whether these proportions are specific to the men on programmes. Even if a national prevalence study of abusers were to be carried out, the results would be limited by the fact that this would be retrospective and would almost certainly lack any way of checking the veracity of the men's statements. It is also important to remember that even if there is an association between childhood experiences of violence and attending a programme for abusive behaviour as an adult, this does not mean that the childhood experiences caused the adult behaviour or that the majority of men who abuse their partners experience violence as a child. This sample is neither large nor representative enough to draw either conclusion.
An evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland working with abusive men and their partners and ex-partners

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Facilitators need to be aware not only of the men’s tendency to use childhood experiences of violence, amongst many other excuses, as a way of evading responsibility for what they have done, and respond to these experiences without colluding with the excuse.

2. Facilitators need to bear in mind the implications of the available research evidence: that childhood violence does not CAUSE or excuse adult abuse, even if it seems to be associated with it.

3. Facilitators should be able to refer men to other relevant services, such as counselling, if appropriate, so that they can sympathetically but firmly keep men focused on what they are doing and help men to understand that this is an excuse like any other.

2.4 The abuse

2.4.1 Emotional abuse and controlling behaviour

Information from the men

Men were asked to complete two checklists of non-physical behaviour; one about attitudes towards their partner and one focusing on controlling behaviour and emotional abuse. 29 possible forms of abusive behaviour were considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information FROM MEN about their use of different of emotional abuse or controlling behaviour against current/most recent partner:</th>
<th>Number of men (N=72)</th>
<th>Percentage total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one form at any time in past</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms at any time in past</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 10 forms at any time in past</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 15 forms at any time in past</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information from the women:

Women were given the same checklists in their interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information FROM WOMEN about their experience of different forms of emotional abuse or controlling behaviour from current/most recent partner:</th>
<th>Number of women (N=24)</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one form at any time in past</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms at any time in past</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 10 forms at any time in past</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 15 forms at any time in past</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, two thirds of the women interviewed had experienced multiple forms of emotional abuse or controlling behaviour. Most women said that this usually continued after the man started programmes.

### 2.4.2 Physical abuse

**Information from the men:**

Most of the men admitted to using several forms of physical abuse against their current or most recent partner at some point in the relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information FROM MEN about their use of different forms of actual physical violence against current/most recent partner:</th>
<th>Number of men (N=72)</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one form (of physical violence) at any time</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 forms at any time</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms at any time</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 7 forms at any time</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 1 form in last 3 months</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 forms in last 3 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms in last 3 months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overwhelming majority of men admitted to using one or more forms of physical violence at some time against their partner or ex-partner. 16 men who had used physical violence in the last 3 months had completed their questionnaires within four weeks of starting the programme. 2 men who had used physical violence in the last three months had completed their questionnaires between 4 and 12 weeks after starting the programme. 2 more men who had used physical violence in the last 3 months had attended programmes for between 26 and 52 weeks. The last two men who had recently used physical violence had been attending for more than 52 weeks.

Although the numbers of men who had recently used physical violence does decline the longer they had spent on programmes, it is of great concern that there are men still attending programmes after more than a year who are still using physical violence. It is of particular concern that the facilitator of the programme attended by one of these two men had asserted that none of the men who had stayed on the programme long term used physical violence any more.
**Information from the women:**

The women were given the same checklists as the men. 22 women gave answers to these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information from women about their experience of different forms of physical violence from current/most recent partner:</th>
<th>Number of women (N=22)</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample (24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one form (of physical violence) at any time</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 forms at any time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms at any time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some women experienced multiple forms of physical abuse, often causing injuries or resulting in court proceedings. The case study below is an example of this.

**Case study: Siobhan**

Abuse suffered

Siobhan suffered years of severe physical, sexual and emotional abuse from her husband, with whom she had four children, all grown up by the time her husband started on the programme.

Her husband was in the building trade and made use of building equipment and materials in his abusive behaviour. Siobhan had been beaten up until she was unrecognisable, made to walk on broken glass barefoot and had had to have hospital treatment several times for broken limbs and other injuries. She had been effectively tortured by her husband on many occasions. She had called the Gardaí several times and had tried to get him taken to court for his violence towards her. He had never been found guilty – on one occasion the court sent both Siobhan and her husband for psychiatric assessment. He had once been an alcoholic but had been sober for over 25 years. This had had no effect on Siobhan’s safety: “He gave up the drink but he didn’t give up the rest.” They were separated at the time her husband applied to the programme. She returned to her husband on condition he attend the programme.

This woman’s story should remind everyone involved in intervention programmes, should they need reminding, that women’s experiences of violence are complex, have long term effects and are often unchecked even when the women try to get help, as in Siobhan’s case.

**2.4.3 First, worst and most recent incidents of physical abuse**

Men and women were asked specific questions about the first, worst and most recent incidents of physical abuse. Men and women frequently provide more information in answer to these questions than when using checklists. The comparison between men’s and women’s accounts of these three incidents revealed levels of denial, minimisation and blame used by the men. Some men, (usually, but not always, those who claim to have used physical abuse only once or not at all), wrote on their forms that they objected to being asked about these incidents. It is not clear why they objected.
64 men answered the question about the first incident, 61 answered the question about the worst and 57 answered the question about the most recent. 2 men gave answers that were inherently contradictory, as the dates for the worst or most recent were before the dates they gave for the first. 10 men said that all three of these incidents were the same incident and implied or stated that there had only been one incident of physical violence.

Of the ten men who stated that there had only ever been one incident of physical violence, data was obtained from two of the partners. Both of these women provided information which indicated that the men had been minimising or denying the extent of the abuse, detailing more than one incident and more forms of abuse used than the man admitted to.

Early on in one interview, when asked about whether she had ever used orders, a woman whose partner was currently attending a programme said that she hadn’t felt the need so far, but “if it was violence, I’d use it”. However, when she was asked about the most recent incidents of physical violence she said that he’d used violence 4/5 weeks before the interview, whilst on the programme, as follows:

What happened [during the most recent incident of physical abuse]:

“He pushed me off the bed, threw the bed on top of me and kicked. He could have hurt me a lot worse, he was making a statement. My head was sore and I had a bruised hip”.

She also revealed that the first incident had also been physically violent:

“He completely lost it, he was banging my head against the stairs, I was very afraid”.

Another incident she voluntarily described:

“He just lost it, picked up a stick and kept hitting, kicking, hard enough to knock me out. I’m glad it did, because that shocked him – I don’t know what would have happened otherwise. He was very frightened and wanted to take me to hospital, I stopped him because of my profession, I didn’t want anyone there to find out and I could give myself medical treatment.” [telephone interview with woman]

This woman seemed, at the time of interview, to be at high risk of further abuse and being physically injured: he was continuing to abuse her physically during the first few weeks of the programme, even though he knew she was in touch with the programme women’s support workers. He had not been reported to any criminal justice agency. He therefore comes into the category identified by Gondolf as high risk. During the interview, the woman said that she would tell the support worker of any further abuse and that she was prepared to leave her husband if necessary. She had also begun to consider reporting him to the Gardai.
Case Study: Aoife

Effects of the violence

Aoife said that the first incident of physical abuse was when she was expecting their second child. He beat her and shouted obscenities at her. She took an overdose as a result and feels that her child’s health has suffered permanently as a result of this and of the beating. She still blamed herself for these effects on her child years later; she said of this in the interview that: “I have never forgiven myself”. In his description of the same incident (on his questionnaire) he says “nothing happened” as a result. She has attempted suicide on another occasion as well.

Aoife’s husband did not mention this incident in his questionnaire.

Aoife said: “I’d been very strong and independent when I married him. Slowly he took that away from me, but now I’ve got it back”.

Aoife’s story, as well as illustrating more of the horrific effects of domestic violence, provides an example of how much women blame themselves for violence committed against them by their partner. The ways she responded to the various questions in the interview confirm the value of asking supplementary questions about first, worst and most recent incidents of abuse as well as using inventories of types of abuse.

This story and others included in this report may raise concerns about the effects of the interview process on the women. It is therefore worth providing information about this particular interview, as a way of demonstrating the approach taken by the interviewer. Aoife, like all the women interviewed, was reassured from the start that she did not have to answer any questions she did not feel comfortable answering. At the end of the interview, when asked how she had found the experience, she said that she was fine and that because her partner had now left, even though things between them were still difficult for her, she felt OK about answering the questions. She asked the interviewer’s advice about some matters relating to her separation, which the interviewer was able to respond to with relevant information and support. Aoife found this useful. A few days later the interviewer contacted the women’s support worker who was supporting Aoife and asked her to let the evaluation team know how she was after she next saw her. The women’s support worker confirmed that Aoife was still facing challenges and pressures from her husband but that she had appreciated the chance to talk about these.
2.4.4 Sexual abuse

Information from the men:

Of 12 types of sexually abusive behaviours listed on the checklists, men gave information as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information FROM MEN about their use of different forms of sexual abuse against current/most recent partner:</th>
<th>Number of men (N=72)</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one form (of sexual abuse) at any time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 forms at any time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms at any time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a total proportion of the 72 men who completed questionnaires, this shows a low level of admissions of sexual abuse. Most men did not answer any questions in this section, even though they were given the opportunity to answer the questions with “no”. Several seemed, from their comments on this section, to object to being asked. It is possible that these low numbers indicate a high level of denial about sexual abuse, particularly as so much research with women indicates a very high level of sexual abuse as part of domestic violence.

Information from the women:

The women were much more likely to say that they had experienced at least one form of sexual abuse than the men were to admit to using it.

Of the 12 types of sexually abusive behaviours listed on the checklists, the 19 women who answered these questions gave information as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information FROM WOMEN about their experience of different forms of sexual abuse from current/most recent partner:</th>
<th>Number of women (N=19)</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample (24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one form (of sexual violence) at any time</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 forms at any time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 forms at any time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 women said that they had been forced to have sex against their will or made to carry on when they didn’t want to or been woken up by their partner having sex with them. This means that possibly half of all the women interviewed had been raped by their partner or ex-partner.
Although the numbers involved are small, they seem to show that women living with domestic abuse are frequently sexually abused in some form by their partner or ex-partner. They may also mean that men are less likely to admit to sexual abuse but may well have used some form of sexual abuse nevertheless. On a few occasions, the women were not asked about sexual abuse. These tended to be the interviews which were curtailed when it became clear that the woman’s need for information and support outweighed the evaluation’s need for data.

Women’s support workers and others raised concerns during the consultation meetings that women would be distressed when asked about sexual abuse. Some wanted to make sure that sexual abuse was included, saying that it was usually left out of evaluation, research and discussions about domestic abuse and that it was a form of abuse that needed acknowledgement and exploration.

The experience in this evaluation was that women wanted to talk about this form of abuse and often commented that they were pleased to see it was there, that they didn’t want this form of abuse to be ignored by the evaluation. Overall, the experience of the interviewer was similar to that described by Liz Kelly in her research about sexual violence (Kelly, 1986). It was always important to be flexible about all elements of the interview, to exercise judgement about when it was and was not appropriate to ask particular questions and to keep checking with the women that they were willing and able to continue. From the start and at several other stages of each interview, the interviewer made strong statements to the women that every question was optional and that they could ask for the interview to stop at any time. No woman asked for the interview to stop, but when the interviewer chose to stop or limit the interview, the woman concerned seemed to agree with this decision.

This is valuable information for facilitators to bear in mind when planning the content of programmes with men. Sexual abuse is a taboo for many men and women but is a reality for many abused women. Rape and other forms of sexual abuse are crimes and they often have very serious consequences for the women involved. Failure to address this form of abuse in group work means failure to address a significant and probably vital element of holding men to account for the full range of their abusive behaviour. It can also seem to reinforce the silence about sexual abuse in intimate relationships. Women can feel further isolated if they feel that the sexual abuse they have experienced is not relevant for this work.

This discussion may also highlight that divisions and categorisations of different forms of violence against women can often be unhelpful and do not reflect the reality of many women’s lives. Many women who live with violence from their partner have also experienced other forms of abuse, such as sexual harassment at work or coercion into sex with a former partner, or may have their lives affected by the fear of possible violence, or make changes to their behaviour and decisions because they anticipate possible abuse. Responses to violence against women may sometimes be unhelpful if this division doesn’t reflect women’s own experiences. All forms of interpersonal gender based violence against women are on the same continuum of abuse.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assessment and support work with women and assessments with men should include asking about sexual abuse and making it clear that all forms of coercion and pressure into sexual activity are abusive and usually illegal.

- Group work with abusive men should include examination of sexual abuse and the effects on women, followed by work promoting equality and mutual respect in sexual behaviour.

2.5 The abuse and the law

2.5.1 How many men have committed crimes against their partners?

The data provided by the men about their use of physical and sexual forms of abuse was analysed to assess how many men had, by their own admission, committed a crime against their partner. This does not mean that these men necessarily identified their behaviour as criminal. This was done by analysing their answers to the two relevant checklists and their answers to the questions about first, worst and most recent incidents, and identifying how many admitted to a form of behaviour that is clearly criminal i.e. physical behaviour including and worse than ‘push, shove, grab’ or sexual behaviour including and worse than ‘woke her up by having sex’. The use of first, worst and most recent incident was crucial – many men gave more information about the range of abusive behaviour they had used in their answers to these questions than they had provided when answering questions on the checklists.

Analysing the information provided by the men in their questionnaires shows that 65 out of 72 men, the vast majority of men on the programmes, had committed at least one criminal act against their partner.

Most of these men had not been arrested for any of these offences and very few had ever been charged (see below). Only 11 men had been found guilty in court of committing a crime against their current or former partner.

2.5.2 Involvement with the criminal justice system

Men were asked if they had ever been found guilty in court of committing a crime. They were then asked a series of questions about these offences.

Of the 69 men who answered the question, 31 (43.1 % of the total sample, 44.9 % of those answering the question) said that they had at some time been found guilty in court of committing a crime. Of these, 8 had been convicted of a violent or sexual crime against their current or most recent partner and 3 had been convicted of a violent or sexual crime against a previous partner. 12 said they had been convicted of a violent crime against someone else, including 3 against a member of the Gardai and one against “ex-partner’s boyfriend”.

69
All 72 men answered the question on whether they had ever been arrested for assaulting their partner/ex-partner. 15 (20.8% of the total sample) had been arrested for assaulting their partner or ex-partner and 13 (18.1%) had been charged. 11 (15.27%) had been convicted of a violent crime against their current or former partner.

2.5.3 Civil orders

Information from the women

22 women answered the relevant questions during interviews. A total of 12 women out of a possible 22 had either applied for or considered applying for orders of some sort at some time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data from women about barring and safety orders:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 6 women had applied for a barring order at some time, 2 women in the 6 months before interview;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Of these applications, 2 orders were granted and 1 of these in the 6 months before interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 women had applied for safety orders at some time, 1 of these in the 6 months before interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Of these applications, 2 orders were granted, 1 of these in the 6 months before interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 5 other women had considered applying for orders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women sometimes use the threat of orders as a way of persuading their partners to attend intervention programmes. They may then drop the application if their partner agrees. The following case study illustrates this tendency.

Case Study: Aoife Continued

Use of orders

Aoife said: “I told him I was going to apply for an order, after seeing an advert in the Garda station where I got an application form for a barring order. I’d made a lot of threats in the past, but this time – the fact that I’d involved someone else meant he knew there was no way out, he knew he’d be out on the street. I’d had a load of promises, I believed every one of them and it happened again and again and again till the day I reported him to the guards. A Woman from Accord (Marriage guidance) also suggested I get an order.

He got a very big fright when he saw the application for the barring order. He made the call [to the programme] that night. He has great pride. If I took him to court in a small rural village, respected family, he’s lived there all his life. His mother, sisters, they’d all find out. By time I was ready to take it out he’d found out about the programme, so I dropped it.”

Aoife was abused by her husband during the time he attended the programme.
This case study illustrates the use some women make of the law – as a threat. However, as a result, her husband’s motivation for starting the programme seems to be to evade legal proceedings, stop his wife from leaving him and avoid public exposure, rather than the supposed self motivation required by programmes on application. Evidence that her husband abused her whilst he was attending the programme suggests that perhaps she should have continued with her application for an order. Though this does not guarantee that he would not abuse her, it would provide her with the threat of further action that seemed to have helped her previously. Section 2.8 of this report shows how programme participants could be usefully categorised according to the routes by which they came to be attending programmes and how these can relate to other legal action or other pressure.

Given Gondolf’s identification of a high risk group who re-assault their partners whilst they are on the early stages of the programme and then continue to do so after the programme finishes, it is important that programme leaders and women’s support workers make these risks clear to women and help them not to have unrealistic expectations of their partners’ attendance. It is also important for facilitators and/or women’s support workers to encourage women to continue to pursue civil or criminal proceedings. Some facilitators and support workers do encourage women to do just this.

**Information from the men**

A total of 21 men said that their partners had applied for a barring or safety order against them at some time. Some said that their partner had applied for both.

**Data from men about barring and safety orders:**

- 16 men said that their partner had applied for a barring order at some time, 8 of these in the 6 months immediately before they completed their questionnaire;
- Of these, 13 were granted and 6 of these in the 6 months immediately before they completed their questionnaire.
- 17 men said that their partners had applied for a safety order at some time, 7 in the 6 months before they completed their questionnaire;
- Of these, 14 were granted, 4 in the 6 months before they completed their questionnaire.
- 5 further men said that their partners had considered applying for orders.

The data on arrests, charges and prosecutions for alleged or confirmed offences against the current or most recent partner and about civil orders was combined to identify how many of the 72 men had ever had contact with some element of the criminal and/or civil justice system specifically because of their use of domestic violence. This contact could include: Gardaí called, man arrested, man charged, man prosecuted, woman applying for order in civil court (whether or not it was granted). The data was checked to ensure that men were counted once only, even if they had been in contact with the justice system more than once.
38 men, a small majority of the total sample (52.8% of the total sample) had had some contact with the civil or criminal justice system as a result of something they had done to their partner or ex-partner. Yet very few have been successfully prosecuted.

The overwhelming majority of men, 65 out of 72 (90.3%), from their own answers to questions in the questionnaire on physical abuse and sexual abuse, had committed crimes of violence against their partner or ex-partner. This means that only a small minority of men who had committed such crimes actually came to the attention of the system and an even smaller minority were then sanctioned. This reflects the low rate of reporting to the Gardaí found in other research (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1995) and the low rate of conviction (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1999).

This raises two important questions which should be of concern both to the programme leaders and to staff working in the justice system:

- Are abusive men using programmes to evade civil or criminal proceedings or sanctions?
- Are abusive men using programmes to persuade their partner not to take out civil orders or pursue criminal proceedings?

If the answer to either question is “yes”, even if only for a few men, this would be in contravention of the Task Force recommendation that programmes should never be treated as an alternative to legal proceedings.

2.5.4 Information about involvement in criminal or civil proceedings, by group attended

Data about involvement with the justice systems was analysed by the group the men were attending, to see if there were any significant regional differences.

It may well be that the higher numbers for North Tipperary, Kildare and Cork are simply coincidence. However, it could also signify either: that the Gardaí in those areas are making more arrests than in other areas, or that the groups had stronger links with the criminal justice systems. The numbers involved are very small, but worthy of further investigation in future research or evaluation.
This table shows interesting variations between the groups. The numbers are too low to draw firm conclusions. However, of particular interest and worthy of future monitoring is the total number of men for all the Dublin groups who had been subject to some involvement with the civil or criminal justice systems. This total is 6 men between the three groups operating in Dublin at some time during the year. Given the population density of the Dublin metropolitan area and the fact that Dublin has had the specialist services of the Domestic Violence Sexual Assault and Investigation Unit and given the higher numbers of arrests made by the Gardaí in the Dublin area, it would seem likely that the Dublin perpetrator programmes would have higher numbers of men who had been in some way involved in the criminal or civil justice systems because of the domestic abuse.

It could be that this is just a coincidence and not indicative of any trend. However, given that the Dublin groups have no formal links with the criminal justice systems it may suggest either that the justice agencies in the Dublin area do not have information about these programmes, or that the information they do have leads them to believe that the programmes are not suitable for the abusive men they are in contact with. Further research and evaluation could explore this topic.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The Task Force report recommends that mandates to programmes could come about as a result of a civil order: “judges in civil cases should be made aware of what programmes are available and should have the option to refer men for assessment for suitability to participate in such a programme as a mandatory part of the court order”. According to available information on the legislation and communications with individuals working in the civil justice system, there is no scope for judges to mandate men to attend programmes as part of barring or safety orders in Ireland at the moment. Many women do not want their partner to have a criminal record and are therefore unlikely to pursue criminal proceedings, which seems at present to be the only way a man could potentially be mandated to attend programmes. If abusers were prosecuted for breach of order or could be mandated to attend programmes as part of an order or because of breach of order, this would widen the range of possible participants in programmes and would help to provide a way for courts to mandate abusers to attend programmes without criminal proceedings.
The Task Force report clearly recommends that programmes should never be seen or treated as an alternative to legal responses. This is an important aspect of the work with perpetrators. Whilst programme participation may be an appropriate part of or supplement to a criminal or civil justice response, if it is seen or treated as an alternative, it risks undermining victim safety and the strength of the law. There will always be some who should be incarcerated, not because this will necessarily change their behaviour, but because they are so dangerous or the crimes they have committed require this, in order to protect current and future victims and to uphold the law.

Almost all the men attending programmes had committed at least one crime against their partner or ex-partner and yet very few had ever been sanctioned by the legal system. This is not simply because the legal system is not sanctioning men, it is also affected by the numbers of survivors who do not report the abuse to the guards or do not apply for any civil protection. Nearly half of the women interviewed had considered applying for orders and some withdrew their applications because their partner started a programme.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Programme facilitators and others should remain alert to the fact that most men on programmes have committed at least one criminal act against their partner or ex-partner. They may not be convicted, but they are using criminal behaviour.

2. Programme facilitators and partner contact/support workers need to make clear that the behaviour is criminal and men may face criminal sanctions if they continue to abuse.

3. Women should be given clear information about programmes and encouraged to have realistic expectations of changes in their partners’ behaviour.

4. Women should be encouraged, if appropriate, to continue to pursue legal proceedings, even if their partner starts a programme.

5. Programmes and other agencies, particularly criminal justice agencies, should monitor the criminal behaviour of the men and do everything possible to ensure that programme attendance is not being used as a way of evading legal sanction in the civil or criminal courts.

6. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should consider issuing guidance to courts to reinforce the message that programme attendance should not be used as a way of evading legal sanction.

7. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform could further consider the possibility of allowing courts to mandate men to attend programmes as part of an order or as a result of breach of order.
2.6 Men's justifications and explanations for the abuse

Men were asked a variety of questions to elicit information about their justifications for abuse. They were asked if they had used abuse with other partners and if not, what they thought was different with the partner they did abuse.

Q: Why do you think you didn’t abuse your previous partners but did abuse your most recent partner?

“Annie [partner he abused] brought more out of me. Certain traits I displayed which Annie identified with her dad – he was very violent. She’s a hot tempered lady, Karla [previous partner] was placid, Annie has more of a temper, she’s a redhead”.

[telephone interview with man after 6 months on a programme]

This man shows that even after six months on a programme to address his violent behaviour and to hold him to account for it, he still blamed several things rather than take responsibility for it himself. He was far from the only one, as the comments and data below show.

Men were asked if they thought that using abuse against a partner or ex-partner was ever acceptable. All 72 answered that they thought it was never acceptable. They were then asked the following question:

If you don’t think abuse is ever justified, why do you think you abused your partner?

65 men answered this question. Their answers were compiled and divided into categories as follows:

- Blame self
- Blame partner
- Blame temper/anger
- Blame alcohol/drugs
- Don’t know/not sure
- Missing data (no answer given)

The responses men gave were then further grouped according to the time they had already spent on programmes when they completed their questionnaires. There were 4 men out of the total sample for whom we could not establish how long they had been on programmes. Data about their justifications is therefore provided separately.

Given that most of the organisations ask men to take responsibility for their behaviour as a condition of acceptance onto the programme it could be expected that men would blame themselves for the violence (or at least not their partner) from the start. This is probably not realistic and the figures reflect this. However, given that one of the primary purposes of group work with abusive men is to hold men to account for their abusive behaviour and to get them to take responsibility, it seemed reasonable to expect that men who completed their questionnaires after some months or years on programmes would be more likely to blame themselves than their partners or other factors. In fact, the pie charts below demonstrate that men seemed to be almost as likely to blame other factors
rather than themselves after more than a year on a programme as men who had just started.

Only ten men in the entire sample said that they were to blame. A further 20 said that they blamed their anger or temper. Even combining the two totals, fewer than half of the total sample in some way took responsibility for the abuse they had used. This is interesting, as all the programmes operating during the evaluation require men to take responsibility for the abuse and for changing their own behaviour as a condition of acceptance onto the programme. Perhaps this is an unrealistic condition, given that many men seem to take some time to reach this stage?

1. Questionnaires completed before or during first session on programme (total of 16 men of whom 2 gave no data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>blame self</th>
<th>blame partner</th>
<th>blame temper/anger</th>
<th>blame alcohol/drugs</th>
<th>don't know/not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

why have you abused your partner

6 men out of the total of 16 men who completed questionnaires before or during their first session either blamed themselves or their temper/anger. 3 men (18.75% of those who completed questionnaires at this stage) blamed their partner. 1 blamed alcohol or drugs and the rest weren’t sure.

2. Questionnaires completed between 2 and 4 sessions (22 men, of whom 2 gave no data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>blame self</th>
<th>blame partner</th>
<th>blame temper/anger</th>
<th>blame alcohol/drugs</th>
<th>don't know/not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

why have you abused your partner
The proportion of men who blame their partners at this stage has decreased (only 1 out of 22, 4.5% of the total who completed questionnaires at this stage). More now blame their anger or temper. There are still very few who take responsibility for the abuse themselves, although blaming their anger or temper may be a step in the right direction. It may also reflect the language used during the programme sessions. There is also a new category – blaming childhood history (3 men, 13.6%). This justification doesn’t appear on any of the questionnaires completed before or around the start of programmes, which could suggest that this is a justification men learn – from each other or from the programme – after they start a programme.

3. Questionnaires completed between 5 and 52 sessions (15 men)

This may seem like a long period to analyse. This is because of the low numbers of men who completed questionnaires during this period of their involvement with programmes.

An interview with one man after he had attended three months of a programme showed that it need only take this long for some abusive men to learn that they are responsible for their abusive behaviour.

Are there any more questions we should have asked?
“*What have partners done that has caused or led to people being violent*”
[answer given on questionnaire completed at start of programme]

Can you explain why you were violent or abusive?
“I blamed everything and everybody, **but at the end of the day I’m responsible for my own behaviour. I’ve learned that on the programme, the other things are just factors. I’ve stopped blaming [name of partner], it’s my fault, nobody else made me. I feel more empowered and in control of myself now I understand I’m responsible for what I do. I lacked control before and so tried to control [name of partner].”* [telephone interview with man after three months on programme]

Of course, it could be that this man had simply learnt what to say, learnt “programme talk”, and that he hadn’t really taken responsibility or changed. There is further discussion about this in section 6.8.
4. Questionnaires completed after 52 sessions (15 men, of whom 3 gave no data)

After 52 weeks or more attending programmes, it could be reasonably expected that a higher proportion of men would take responsibility for the abuse and that a smaller proportion of men would blame their partner or childhood. In fact the results are disappointing. Although 4 men now blame themselves and 2 blame their anger/temper, 3 blame their partner and 2 blame childhood history. This means that the total number of men who blame themselves in some way is only very slightly higher than the number who blame someone else for their own use of abuse.

The four men for whom we could not establish how long they had been on the programme when they completed their questionnaires had the following justifications: 1 blame self; 1 blame temper; 1 don’t know; 1 no data.

**MEN’S JUSTIFICATIONS FOR ABUSE: CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, the results do not show the desired progression away from blaming partners or childhood and towards taking personal responsibility for the abuse. The very small numbers of men who provided follow up data during this evaluation mean that it is not possible to show individual men’s path towards taking personal responsibility. Future evaluations should explore this in more detail.

Breaking down the information by group attended did not reveal any statistically significant conclusions, mostly because of the vast differences between the times the men completed the questionnaires. Future evaluations should aim to ensure that all men complete a questionnaire when they start the programme, when they finish and, if possible, some time after they finish, in order to assess change.

The organisations running group work during the time of the evaluation all require men to take responsibility for the abuse and for changing their behaviour as a condition of acceptance onto the programmes. This apparent discrepancy perhaps undermines the idea that most men on programmes are self-referred and voluntarily motivated: if they do not accept that they are responsible for the violence, it is likely that they are not
completely genuine about their reasons for applying to join a programme. There is further exploration the range of reasons men apply to programmes, in section 2.8 of this report.

It is interesting to note that in the group where questionnaires were only completed by men who had attended 52 weeks or more of the programme, only 1 of these 4 men took full responsibility for the abuse. 1 other man blamed his temper and the other two declined to answer the question. It could be argued that this implies men take a very long time to accept responsibility for their abusive behaviour. However, it could equally be argued, given the acceptance criteria for and the purpose of programmes with abusive men that these men may well be unlikely ever to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour under the intervention programme they were attending and that the structure and content of this intervention programme should be reviewed. It seems reasonable to expect that men who have attended programmes for more than a year would at least know what to say, even if this did not reflect their true beliefs.

If men cannot take responsibility for their abusive behaviour they are much less likely to be able to change (Gondolf, 2002). If they are still attending programmes after a year and have still not learned to take responsibility, perhaps the facilitators could consider taking a more directive approach, or using/revising relevant activities that help men to take responsibility. Such activities include: exercises about taking responsibility, exercises about accountability, exercises about denial, minimisation and blame. For further information about possible exercises to use, see curriculum review and analysis in the appendices.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

• Facilitators and others involved in running programmes should review the materials they use to get men to take responsibility for the abuse and the frequency with which they use these materials. They should consider repeating relevant activities or carrying out different activities with the same aims of getting the men to take responsibility for the abuse they have used. This is vital work: one of the key aims of work with perpetrators is to get them to take responsibility and for most of the organisations currently running programmes is a pre-requisite for starting to attend a programme.

• Facilitators should consider the information they can obtain from partners and ex-partners, about the reality behind any stated changes in the men’s acceptance of responsibility, so that they are better informed and can assess the need for revision of any specific activities designed to help men to take responsibility for the abuse and the effects on others.
2.7 The benefits and use of risk assessment: case study

Case Study: Kathleen

Part one: multiple forms of abuse; risk factors and risk assessment

Kathleen was interviewed 18 months after her partner first started attending a programme. He attended a rolling programme using the MOVE curriculum, for 6 months, after child protection workers and a doctor in a psychiatric hospital told him he needed to. In her own words, she had been “a wreck” when she first came into contact with the woman’s support service attached to the programme her partner was referred to. By the time of the interview, she was a confident, happy, secure and wonderfully entertaining young woman, looking forward to the rest of her life, which she attributed mostly to the support she received from the women’s support service.

During the interview for this evaluation, Kathleen answered “yes” to most of the 16 forms of emotional abuse and “yes” to all of the 16 forms of physical abuse on the checklists. She also added the following: hit me with golf club, used a knife, caused me to miscarry. The worst incident for her was when he caused her to miscarry, several months into a pregnancy.

“He’d made me pregnant through rape anyway…… he grabbed me by the hair, threw me, kicked me in the stomach…… His comment, on the miscarriage: ‘pity she didn’t die too’.

Oh, and his mother was present during this.”

Sexual abuse

Kathleen asked early on in the interview “when are we going to get to sexual abuse?” Once that part of the interview was reached, she said yes to every form, and said that this, and the physical abuse, had continued whilst she was attending the programme, that it never got better. When she was asked what other forms of sexual abuse she had experienced other than the 10 on the checklist, she said “rape”. This was an interesting comment: the checklist does contain rape, but it is described as “forced you to have sex when you didn’t want to” and “used violence to force you to have sex”, rather than “rape”, because experience in other research and work with abused women has shown that they often do not identify those two things as rape and therefore do not answer yes, even though they have. Kathleen was the only woman interviewed who named it and actively wanted to make sure it got said.

During the most recent incident, which took place four months after he had stopped attending the programme, he used many forms of abuse. Someone called the guards so he was caught in the act of threatening her with a knife. Kathleen said “the police officer really pushed for prosecution and was very supportive, so he ended up in court, but was released.” He threatened to take the children away. She tried to leave her partner, he stalked and harassed her. Eventually she also took action herself,
Implications of Kathleen’s story for risk assessment and intervention

Kathleen’s story illustrates the value of having contact with partners, in order to monitor their drug and alcohol use as well as their use of abuse. She later said that he had not changed at all as a result of the programme. As stated above, this is not necessarily because the programme is not an effective programme, rather that this information, coupled with other information about his behaviour before the programme and the levels of danger Kathleen was living in, mean that this man was and possibly still is in the category “unlikely to change” as a result of the programme and in need of other criminal justice sanctions.

Kathleen’s history and the involvement with the programme also illustrates, somewhat starkly, the need for risk assessment and ongoing risk management. Using any of the tools identified elsewhere in this report, Kathleen can be identified as at very high risk and her partner may well have been assessed as too dangerous for participation in the programme. The clear risk factors were as follows:

- Multiple forms of abuse, severe, escalating and causing injury
- Violence towards child
- Perpetrator’s untreated substance misuse
- Abuse during pregnancy
- Availability and use of weapons
- Other criminal activity
- Severely controlling behaviour and attitudes

If these risk factors had not picked him up as unsuitable for programme participation, ongoing monitoring could have more clearly identified the following:

- Escalating violence during programme participation
- Separation
- Stalking
- Perpetrator’s continued misuse of substances
There were several sources of data available: the child protection social workers, the psychiatric hospital, the police, the woman, her child. Several statutory agencies were in a position to compile this data and to conclude that this woman and child needed protection of the civil and criminal justice agencies. In fact, one agency did provide Kathleen with support, advice, information and encouragement to take action: the women’s support service she was offered because her partner was on a programme. This is a clear indication of the benefit of programmes for women whose partners are referred there, even if the men do not change: this woman would almost certainly not have sought out or otherwise have received this support if her partner had not been so referred. As a result, she was able to instigate legal action herself, due at least in part to increased confidence she had gained from the support and advice of the women’s support service. This probably helped to save her life and that of her children (see elsewhere in this report for further details).

RECOMMENDATION:

Assessment criteria and procedures and ongoing monitoring with women need to be strengthened so that all those involved in work with perpetrators and victims are better able to identify who is and who is not suitable for programmes and when to report a programme participant to another agency, particularly the criminal justice system.
### 2.8 Mandate, compliance and referral categories

#### 2.8.1 Who asked or told the men to attend programmes?

#### 2.8.1.1 Information from the men:

In the questionnaire completed by 72 programme participants, men were asked if they had been asked to attend a programme by anyone. All men answered this question. 51 men (70.8% of the total sample) said at least one person or agency had asked or told them to attend. 21 men said no-one had asked or told them to attend. Men were then asked an open question about who had asked or told them to attend. When reading the following tables, it is important to remember that this data is solely from the men's accounts – it is entirely possible that more individuals or agencies told or asked men to attend programmes but that the men have either forgotten this or not included it in their answer. The 51 men who said someone had asked or told them to attend various people had asked them to attend, gave various answers, as follows:

**Who asked or told you to attend the programme?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual or agency</th>
<th>Number of men (N = 51)</th>
<th>Percentage of 51 men who were asked or told</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample (72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife/partner/ex-partner</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge or courts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation officer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor, including marriage guidance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** some men, as shown in the table on the next page, said that more than one individual or agency asked or told them to attend. This is why the total number of men in the second column adds up to more than 51.

The partner/wife/ex-partner category is clearly much the biggest.
### Who asked or told you to go on the programme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many people or agencies told or asked you to attend</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Number (N = 51)</th>
<th>% age of total total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person/agency only</td>
<td>Wife/partner/ex-partner</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judge or courts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probation officer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solicitor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counsellor, including marriage guidance counsellor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SUB TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 people or agencies</td>
<td>Wife + probation officer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife + family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife + priest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family + social worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SUB TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+ people or agencies</td>
<td>Wife + family + counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife + probation officer + social worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife + social worker + family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife + social worker + counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judge/courts + gardai + social worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife + family + priest + solicitor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SUB TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyone asked/told</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>70.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.8.1.2 Information from women:

The interviews with women provided further insights into how the men had come to be in contact with the programmes.

The following table summarises who the women interviewed said had told or asked their partner to attend a domestic abuse programme. In many cases, the request was made as part of an ultimatum by them: “go on a programme or I leave or don’t return”.
Again, reflecting the information from the men, women were the largest category of people or agencies to ask or tell their partner to attend a programme. Women were also frequently the person who found out about the programme. They obtained this information from a variety of sources, sometimes more than one: Women’s organisation such as a refuge, Rape Crisis Centre, Women’s Aid; Gardaí; Solicitor; Marriage guidance counsellor (ACCORD); social worker; own counsellor.

**Men who said no-one had told or asked them to attend: information from men and from women**

Of the 21 men who answered ‘no’ to the referral question, 2 said in answer to the question ‘what do you think will be the consequences of not attending the programme?’ as (i) ‘wife will leave’ (ii) ‘I will have to go back to court’. Of the remaining 19, we have information from the partners of 5. Four of these women provide explanations that contradict the accounts of their partner/ex-partner, as these three examples illustrate:

Who asked you to go on a programme?
“I’ve done this myself” [men’s T1 questionnaire]

Who asked him to go on a programme?
“I told him many times and his counsellor. I called guards” [telephone interview with woman partner of man quoted immediately above]

Who asked you to go on a programme?
“Myself” [men’s T1 questionnaire]

Who asked him to go on a programme?
“I told him after seeing ad in Guarda station and got application for barring order. I’d made a lot of threats in the past, but this time – the fact
that I'd involved someone else meant he knew there was no way out, he knew he'd be out on the street. I got a load of promises, I believed every one of them and it happened again and again and again till the day I reported him to the guards” [interview with woman, partner of man quoted immediately above]

Who asked you to go on a programme?
“I chose to go voluntarily” [men’s T1 questionnaire]

Who asked him to go on a programme?
I told him and marriage guidance told him [telephone interview with woman, partner of man quoted immediately above]

A fourth woman gave a similar description. The fifth woman confirms, clearly and with some detail, her partner’s description of his self referral:

“He decided to go on MOVE, I never asked. He got violent one night, and went the next day to my clinic [where she was receiving support for Post Natal Depression] to ask the woman there if there was anything he could do. He rang [co-ordinator],[co-ordinator] interviewed him, [women’s support worker] called me.” [face to face interview with woman]

The information provided by these five women and men for whom we have relevant information (just under a quarter of all those men who said no-one had asked or told them to attend) demonstrates that a man’s statement of self-referral may be showing only part of the picture.

**Information from groups running programmes**

Groups running programmes said that a variety of agencies know about their services and that, from their information, men receive information about the programmes from several different sources, reflecting those listed above.

Facilitators and co-ordinators of groups running programmes often mentioned their fear of having too many men apply if they couldn’t meet the demand for programmes. Groups frequently had waiting lists, if they run fixed length programmes. Groups running rolling programmes also sometimes have waiting lists or men waiting to have assessments, partly because of the maximum size of the group and partly because of lack of resources to ensure men are quickly assessed after they apply.

Some facilitators described some men as being inappropriately referred and some men were not given places on programmes. However, there was little evidence that the organisations were using systematic methods of assessing appropriateness for programme participation.
2.8.2 Men’s perceptions of the consequences of not attending programme

39 out of the 54 men who answered the relevant question felt that there would be a consequence if they didn’t attend the programme. They were given a list of possible responses or asked to add any other that applied to them. All the men who answered this question gave only one possible consequence. The combined results of their answers are provided.

**Men’s perception of consequences if they don’t attend programmes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think will happen if you don’t go or stop going to the programme?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner will leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner won’t return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will have to go back to court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll be barred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lose child/case conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t see child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will lose out/be unable to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep arguing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 men felt there would be no consequence and 2 weren’t sure. The existence of at least 10 men who think they will have to go back to court means that there is some form of court mandating taking place, even if it is not supported by a court or probation order but is based on the man’s perceptions.

2.8.3 Discussion about referral, mandate and compliance

**Referrals and mandates from the legal system**

There is a disparity between the data provided by the men and that provided by the groups themselves about referral from the criminal and civil justice systems. According to interviews with facilitators and co-ordinators, several men were referred to programmes from criminal or civil justice systems during the year. In addition, at least one was referred by child protection social workers, although it is not clear in this case whether there was a clear sanction associated with not attending. Several programmes do not monitor the sources of referral so there is no full and accurate figure available.

Most facilitators and co-ordinators stated that they had no men mandated to attend, though some were not at all clear about what the difference was and so could not provide an accurate answer. However, from the information available, it would seem that at least two organisations had at least one man who was required to attend a programme as part of a probation order or whilst awaiting sentence for a criminal case. This means that men can be and are being mandated to attend programmes, although in very small verifiable numbers and with little clear information about the sanctions. In the 2, possibly more, cases in the last year where the man was attending as the result of a requirement by courts, probation or social services, the men were still asked to apply on their own behalf.
It may be, as indicated in interviews with programme facilitators and with staff working in
the criminal justice system, that **some of these men think that they will have to go back to court**, when in fact the court has no power to make them do so. It is also clear from interviews with facilitators that there is a great deal of confusion about the nature and force of referrals from the justice systems. “We don’t have that in Ireland, there is no such thing” was a comment made by one facilitator in answer to the question “how many men were attending the programme because of a mandate from the courts or probation service?”

Probation officers interviewed confirmed that domestic abusers can be and sometimes are required to attend programmes, either as part of sentencing (where the judge will order the participation) or as part of a probation order (where the probation officer will order it). However, the strength of these requirements is affected by how far the courts can or are prepared to enforce them and whether or not the programme feels that the man is suitable. If he presents himself as very unwilling or unmotivated, he may be assessed as unsuitable.

A judge who works in several of the areas served by groups currently operating explained that many judges do not understand the nature of these programmes, nor when and how to refer men. Facilitators say that they are only rarely asked to provide information to probation officers or courts about men on the programme. Most say that they will provide information about a man’s attendance on the programme, but that they cannot provide further information such as an assessment of how far he has changed.

The NDVIA’s position is that men should be allowed to attend a perpetrator programme only if there is a court or probation mandate requiring him to attend. Their policy view is that only with clear and formal links between programmes and the justice systems can men be held to account for their abusive behaviour and that clear monitoring, tracking, risk assessment and sanctions for non-compliance or continued abuse are essential for men to be so held to account. The policy and practice developments NDVIA is developing and piloting in the Bray and Dun Laoghaire areas could be of great benefit for all programmes.

**Women mandating?**

Women effectively mandate their partners onto programmes in 40% of all the cases for which we have details (22 out of 54), according to the statements the men made about the consequences of not attending programmes. Interviews with women and with staff working in specialist women’s organisations illustrate the opportunities and risks of this mandate in more detail. Women often use the programme as a way of saying to the man “there is something there; you can choose to stop. Either go to the programme or I will leave/won’t come back”. This is motivating to many men, who do not want their wives to leave. However, this can then sometimes mean that the woman will drop legal or other action that might have helped to reinforce the message or protect her. Women talked about feeling that if their partners were willing to go to the programme, they were willing to drop or not consider legal action. Others mentioned feeling under pressure to stay because he was attending the programme, when in fact they were considering leaving.
**Other forms of compliance or mandate**

A few men said that the consequences of not attending programmes would be losing their children or losing access to them. This again means that there is a form of sanction operating with these men, even if this is not a formal one.

### SUMMARY: MANDATE, COMPLIANCE, REFERRAL

1. **Criminal or civil justice system mandate**: the man is required to attend the programme, as part of a sentence or probation order. Sanctions for non-attendance or non-compliance could include being taken back to court for breach of probation or alternative sentencing as part of a criminal proceedings.

2. **Agency compliance**: child protection social work or other health agency requires the man to attend the programme as part of a child protection plan or other intervention. Sanctions for non-attendance or non-compliance include having children removed from the family home, restrictions on contact with children, referral to criminal justice system if criminal behaviour continues.

3. **Partner compliance**: the partner or ex-partner states that if the abusive man does not attend the programme or stops attending, the sanction is that she will either leave him or ask him to leave (if she is still living with him) or not return (if she has separated).

4. **Profile enhancement**: a solicitor or other agency or individual, including the abusive man himself, identifies overtly or covertly that attending the programme will help the man to look good in court in a hearing for a civil or criminal or child protection proceedings, or to impress the partner or her friends and relatives or children. There is not necessarily a sanction connected to not attending. The man believes that there will be a reward associated with attending.

5. **Agency suggestion**: a marriage guidance counsellor, priest, family friend, counsellor, guard or other individual or agency suggests to the man that attending the programme might help him to change his abusive behaviour. This can take place in situations where the man has stated, for whatever reason, that he does want to change. There is no overt sanction associated with not attending in these situations, although there may be an element of profile enhancement.

6. **Genuine self referral**: the man has no partner/ex-partner to impress or persuade, is not involved in any court or child protection proceedings, has not had the suggestion made by any individual and has found out about and approached the programme completely by himself and as a result solely of his own motivation to change his abusive behaviour, not to change the actions of any other individual or agency. There is no sanction associated with this situation. The reward to the individual man may be that he learns new, non-abusive ways of behaving in relationships, but this may not be imminently available to him.

*Model devised by Thangam Debbonaire and Emilie Debbonaire from Domestic Violence Responses evaluation team and Linda Regan and Jo Lovett of Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, University of North London.*
There is clearly some confusion about the routes men take onto programmes. This confusion sometimes applies to the men themselves and to facilitators and other service providers. The important factor here is the men’s perceptions: they could see that there was something to gain from attending and a sanction that could be applied if they did not.

A detailed analysis of the multiple routes identified six different categories of mandate, compliance and referral (see previous page). This analysis suggests a false division between ‘mandated’ and ‘voluntary’ programme participants. The picture is more complex. Men from three of these routes at least have ‘something to lose’ from non-compliance with the programme, a sanction that can be applied to them. This may be access to children and/or a civil or criminal justice sanction, in the latter, a breach of a probation order or other criminal proceeding. Men in the ‘Agency suggestion’ category are probably also currently under some form of agency supervision. Better, more formal links between programmes and these agencies can provide similar forms of information and liaison that should currently exist between criminal justice agencies and programmes for criminal or civil justice system mandated men.

It is impossible for this evaluation to say exactly what makes some men change and not others, just as other evaluations found. Gondolf could not pinpoint exactly what it is that made the mandated men more likely to change than the voluntary participants. It is possible that mandated men change simply because they are required to attend and are therefore simply present more than voluntary participants, who may miss important sessions without any sanction. It may be that the existence of pressure and consequences changes the ways that facilitators approach group members. It may be that open understanding and acknowledgement of the consequences of not attending or participating fully brings about more honest and open challenges and discussions amongst group members. Whatever the reasons, extending the current scope of ‘mandate’ and making more active use of the different forms of compliance seems likely to improve attendance, encourage participation and assist with bringing about change, if only because the programmes can keep more men attending more sessions.

This will often require several agencies and individuals in the system of responses to domestic abuse to work together. This fits in with Task Force recommendations and other good practice guidelines. This evaluation was not asked to investigate other aspects of the system, such as child protection, courts, police etc, so cannot comment on their ability to take part in such inter-agency working. Programmes can’t make use of the different forms of compliance if the others don’t carry out their parts of the process. Many groups are already working within extensive inter-agency networks such as the local networks and regional planning committees on violence against women. The national representatives are involved with the work of the national steering committees. Some groups are already making or developing formal or informal methods of compliance. All the organisations involved would benefit from a more open discussion of the different methods and how they could use these most effectively.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Each individual programme and the national or regional networks should consider how best they could extend the scope of mandates or compliance so that more abusive men could be kept on programmes longer and encouraged to participate more.

2. In particular, those programmes who at present only accept men from one specific category, such as only court mandated or only self-referral, should consider whether they could usefully extend their provision to include other men and to strengthen the sanctions that can be applied to men who miss sessions and others who do not comply with programme rules etc.

How many men in each category?

Analysis of the data in section 2.8.1.1 and 2.8.3 above provides the following estimates of numbers of men on programmes in Ireland who fall into each category during this evaluation:

**Criminal/Civil justice mandate**: between 2 and 10, based on number of men the organisations said were mandated to attend programmes and the number of men who said they would have to go back to court if they didn’t attend programme.

**Agency compliance**: at least 2, based on number of men who said that they would lose or not be able to see their child if they did not attend programme.

**Partner compliance**: between 21 and 32, possibly more, based on number of men who said partner would leave if they don’t go to programme and number who said partner had asked or told them to attend.

**Profile enhancement**: at least 3, based on number whose solicitor suggested programme attendance.

**Agency suggestion**: at least 7, based on number of men who said priest, counsellor or guard has asked them to attend (none of these individuals could have had the authority to compel men to attend).

**Genuine self referral**: impossible to say from available data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Sanction</th>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Consequence management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil or criminal mandate</td>
<td>Criminal or civil order or sentence requiring man to attend programme</td>
<td>Court appearance for breach of order or probation. Prison or other sentence.</td>
<td>Courts/probation not aware enough of the risks and does not impose sanction. Once the threatened sanction has been used, there is no sanction left – man may lose fear of consequences, unless imprisoned. Financial effects on woman if man loses his job, if she is dependent on him.</td>
<td>Sanction must be enforced, otherwise it has no strength. Man must understand terms of mandate. Woman and woman's support worker must understand mandate and what to do if orders breached. Liaison between programme and courts/probation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency compliance</td>
<td>Man required by child protection social workers to attend programme</td>
<td>Child protection proceedings; children may be removed.</td>
<td>Sanction not enforced or man does not believe it will be. Agency takes programme attendance as sufficient action (this would make it effectively profile enhancement, rather than compliance).</td>
<td>Man must understand consequences. Agency must stick to commitment and involve woman safely in any decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner compliance</td>
<td>Partner says she will leave or not return if man doesn’t attend programme.</td>
<td>Partner will leave or not return, probably with children.</td>
<td>Risk of homicide and other violence increases when/if man realises she will not return or is leaving.</td>
<td>Safety planning and risk monitoring with woman, particularly around time he is likely to discover she is not returning. Safety planning could include alarms, refuge, liaison with police re emergency action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile enhancement</td>
<td>Man using programme attendance to influence legal decisions such as separation, child access. Woman says that courts or police or other agency failed to take action they would otherwise have considered, once they heard he was on a programme.</td>
<td>Asking man to leave programme.</td>
<td>There is no sanction other than programme exclusion. Man can and does use programme attendance to influence guards, police, partner, courts, or court proceedings dropped. This reduces women's protection and safety.</td>
<td>Programme liaison with relevant agencies, with woman's permission or co-operation, to make sure that they don't accept programme attendance as a reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency or partner suggestion</td>
<td>Man says agency or partner suggested he attend; agency/partner confirms this and confirms there are no formal proceedings.</td>
<td>Asking man to leave programme.</td>
<td>There is no sanction other than programme exclusion. Man can use programme attendance to influence criminal justice system, etc. reducing women's protection and safety.</td>
<td>Programme liaison with relevant agencies, with woman's permission or co-operation, to make sure that they don't accept programme attendance as a reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-referral</td>
<td>Man has no partner and no proceedings to impress. Man does not blame anyone or anything else for violence. Agencies not involved.</td>
<td>Asking man to leave programme.</td>
<td>There is no sanction other than programme exclusion. No method of monitoring change in behaviour if no partner to work with.</td>
<td>Requiring man to inform programme if he starts new relationship and to provide contact details of new partner if possible, so that programme can provide her with information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study: Anne and Paul

At the time of the interview Paul, Anne's ex-partner, had been on a programme for just over one month. She had recently taken out a barring order against him and they were not living together. Anne was still afraid of Paul and still thought of him as abusive. The most recent time Paul used physical force or threats against her was the week previous to the interview. He also puts continuous pressure on her to take him back.

Paul said in his questionnaire, completed a few weeks before Anne was interviewed, that his hopes for programme are “to be able to go back home to my family”. In a phone interview with Paul he reiterated this: “My aim is to prove to myself that I can change my attitude and my goal is to see if I can get back with my wife and family”.

Anne said, in response to the question “what do you think has made him stay on the programme so far? “

“when faced with court he said ‘me going to [programme] will look good’. He’s well able to butter you up”

She also suggested that he was continuing to attend the programme in an effort to try to get her to take him back.

When asked “why have you abused your partner?” Paul said:

“I think it is something I brought from my past. Probably because I knew no other way to express myself”

Indicators that Paul is in the ‘profile enhancement’ category:

- There are no legal proceedings against Paul at the moment;
- Anne is separated from Paul;
- Paul wants Anne to return to him;
- Anne has no intention of returning;
- Anne has said she is being harassed and abused by Paul whilst he is on the programme;
- Anne has said that Paul said he would attend the programme to make him look good in court.

His own evidence confirms that he is not simply motivated to change. His recent use of physical abuse suggests that he may not be able to take responsibility for changing.

In this case, for example, consideration of the categories of compliance would have helped the facilitator and partner support worker to come to the following conclusions about safeguarding Anne’s safety and working effectively with Paul:

1. Paul is in the profile enhancement category.
2. Anne is at greater risk when Paul discovers that she has no intention of
returning to him.

3. Anne is at increased risk if she tries to call guards, as they may be swayed by Paul’s attendance on the programme and not take action that they otherwise might have taken.

4. The programme leaders could help reduce this risk by approaching the guards themselves, proactively but with Anne’s consent and knowledge, to let them know that Paul’s attendance on a programme should not be taken as evidence that he has changed nor as an excuse not to arrest or charge him if appropriate. They could also inform the guards again that programme attendance should not be accepted as an excuse to fail to arrest him if Paul breaks the order. This is not a judgement of Paul or his ability to change, but a way of providing information to guards so that they can safeguard Anne’s protection and legal rights to that protection.

5. Anne should be supported and encouraged to pursue enforcement of her civil order or to pursue criminal proceedings if Paul abuses her again.

6. The facilitators could consider repeating or adding to work done on letting go of a relationship that is over and accepting that they (the men on the programme) have no right to force or threaten the women into resuming the relationship.

A full understanding of the reasons a man is attending a programme is greatly beneficial to the process of helping/making him change his attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

If facilitators and others have clear, full and accurate information about the routes by which a man comes into contact with the programme and the reasons for his application, they will be better equipped to assess his suitability for the programme, monitor his behaviour effectively and make effective use of any available sanctions if he does not comply or attend.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Each group, as part of their assessment procedures, should verify the background to each participant’s referral with information from partners and relevant agencies.

2. Organisations should consider improving their systems for assessing the level, type and significance of any application to the programme, so that they can establish which of the categories of mandate, compliance and referral each man comes under.

3. Facilitators and others should make more effective use of the various forms of mandate and compliance and be in a better position to assess the potential risks of each form.
SECTION THREE: Content and delivery of group work with men

3.1 Programme materials in use:

There are three main categories of programmes in use at the time of writing:

- **MOVE programme.** This is a 13 step programme, inspired and drawing on the work done by MOVE Bolton, UK. The programme comprises a written handout for each of the 13 steps. Most of the steps include a short activity relating to that topic, for the men to complete. These activities are suggested as homework for the men to complete between sessions, but can also be used during the group meetings. The programme is intended to be used as a rolling programme, so that men can join the group at any point, with facilitator discretion. A summary of this programme is included in the appendices, drawn from the full programme details contained on the MOVE Ireland website during the evaluation.

- **MOVE programme with additions and changes.** Some organisations have reviewed the MOVE programme and revised, re-written or added to it. This is referred to elsewhere in this document as MOVE+.

- **CHANGE programme** – as written in the manual written by David Curran and Monica Wilson (Curran and Wilson, 1997). David Curran and Monica Wilson are both experienced members of staff at the CHANGE programme in Scotland. The programme was originally developed for use as part of a sanction from the criminal justice system.

An analysis of the MOVE and CHANGE programmes, examined against each of the relevant criteria from the RESPECT guidelines is provided as a table in this section below. This table also includes the same analysis of the programme published and used by DVIP (Domestic Violence Intervention Project, London UK), provided for comparison.

Extracts from each programme’s materials about the use of the ‘time out’ technique are included in appendix D. There is discussion about this technique, its use and effects, in sections 3.9 and 5.4.
3.2 Aims of groups

3.2.1 What do the Task Force and the Respect guidelines recommend?

Task Force does not make any specific recommendations about the aims of the work with men, but states that:

“the protection, safety and security of women and children should be the paramount consideration in developing programmes”

[Task Force report on violence against women, 1997]

This principle can be reflected in the way that the programme is run, the administration of the programme, the nature and the purpose of the work with women and the nature and purpose of work with men.

The RESPECT guidelines make this aim more explicit:

“The primary aim in working with perpetrators of domestic violence is to increase the safety of women and children. Every intervention and decision made in this work must be chosen with this in mind.

Secondary aims are to:

- Hold men accountable for their violence towards women;
- Promote respectful, egalitarian relationships;
- Work with others to improve the community’s response to domestic violence.”

3.2.2 What do the stated objectives of the programmes say?

3.2.2.1 MOVE

The following extracts are taken from the publicly available information about the MOVE programme.

“MOVE Ireland works in the area of domestic violence. It aims to safeguard partners and children by working with men who are or have been violent or abusive towards their partners. MOVE does this by facilitating men in a group process that involves them taking responsibility for their violence and changing their attitudes and behaviour.”

The first of the stated values of MOVE is that “the safety of women and children is paramount.

In order to fulfil its purpose, MOVE will do the following:

a) Facilitate groups by using the MOVE programme.

b) Seek contact with and feedback from partners and provide them with information about MOVE and other relevant organisations.
c) Seek to collaborate with organisations concerned with domestic violence.

d) Liaise with agencies in the criminal and civil justice system.

e) Address domestic violence publicly through PR and lobbying.

f) Contribute to research into domestic violence and evaluate the effectiveness of the MOVE programme.

(g) Liaise with appropriate elements of the criminal and civil justice system.”

MOVE Ireland website; www.moveireland.com

3.2.2.2 CHANGE

The CHANGE manual recommends the following as suggested aims:

- To place the safety of women and children at the forefront of any work undertaken with men.
- To provide a programme for male domestic violence perpetrators which
  1. Confronts and challenges their attitudes and behaviour.
  2. Develops their capacity to accept responsibility for their own actions.
  3. Equips them with new skills to enable them to relate non-violently towards their partners.
- To offer information and support to the women partners of men on the programme so that they have a realistic expectations about the likelihood of men changing.
- To work with other agencies to ensure that women have access to services that meet their needs.
- To develop and manage the men’s programmes as a structured, credible community-based service which is accountable to, for example, courts, probation/social workers and victims/survivors.

CHANGE Manual, Curran and Wilson, 1997

Section 6 of this report provides more detailed information about how each group meets the specific recommendations of the Task Force report, including those relating specifically to programme aims and organisation.

3.2.3 What do facilitators think are the aims of the programmes?

In interviews, programme facilitators were mostly very clear that the primary aim of the work should be to promote and enhance the safety of the women. A few had to be prompted several times before they stated this as a primary aim. This may be because they held this to be self-evident. Two facilitators said that this was not their primary aim but that changing men was the primary aim. This may be a question of wording, although one of these two facilitators was very clear about the difference. However, the Task Force recommendations, the programme aims and the RESPECT guidelines all state
unequivocally that the primary aim should be to promote the safety of women (and children). This means that all facilitators should consider their position in relation to these recommendations, as at present, a small minority could be said not to be working along these lines.

### 3.2.4 What are men expecting from the programmes?

Men were asked what they hoped would happen as a result of them attending the programme. 62 men gave answers in their own words. These were analysed and grouped into categories. 4 men gave answers that came into more than one category. The results of this analysis are presented in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you hope will happen as a result of you attending the programme?</th>
<th>Number of men (N = 62)</th>
<th>Percentage of total sample (72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence will stop</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children won’t witness violence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control temper/anger</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better relationship</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal change</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** 10 men did not answer. 4 men gave answers that came into two categories, which is why the total in column 2 does not add up to 62.

15 men who answered this question on their questionnaire gave answers that related directly to stopping violence and 26 gave answers that related to their temper or anger. This means that 41 men, 56.9% of the total sample, gave answers that were closely related to the actual aims of the programmes.

Others had different expectations and hopes from the programme, as illustrated by the following quoted answers:

- “To have a better relationship with my girlfriend”
- “To feel less stressed”
- “To be a better person”
- “To understand my problems”
- “I have paid enough I just want to leave in peace”
- “I am not sure I need the programme any more” (this from a man who had attended only one session and who had used physical abuse)
3.2.5 What are women expecting from the programmes?

Some of the women had not understood the programme:

“At first I misunderstood the nature of the programme, I thought it was counselling, I discovered it wasn’t [several months in]. I would have liked to have known this sooner. The anger from Michael comes from things in his childhood, I think he needs to be able to deal with these in counselling”. [telephone interview with woman]

Women frequently placed great emphasis on the importance of their partner attending a programme:

“I would consider leaving him if the programme doesn’t work. Him being on it is the only reason we’re still together”.

This comment reflects the decisions made by most of the women interviewed: 14 of the 19 women who answered the question said that the man’s participation on the programme strongly influenced their decision to stay in the relationship or return to the family home. Several implied that it was the only reason.

Re: expectations of the programme (after 8 weeks)

“I don’t know - I hope that the programme will help, but what happens when it’s over?”

RECOMMENDATION:

All men and women coming into contact with programmes should be given very clear information, in a manner appropriate to their needs, about the aims of the work. This information should stress that the over-riding aim of all work in intervention programmes is to promote and enhance the safety of women (and children). This information may have to be provided several times during the course of an individual’s contact with the programme.
3.3 The facilitators

3.3.1 Professional background, qualifications and experience

Facilitators come to the work from a range of professional backgrounds and work in a variety of settings. These include: health, social work, probation, counselling, addiction counselling, marriage guidance, advocacy work with women, youth work, community work.

3.3.2 Number and gender of facilitators

There are no specific recommendations in the Task Force report about number and gender of facilitators. RESPECT minimum standards recommend that facilitation should be done by one man and one woman or one man and two women. Six organisations currently running programmes currently have one man and one woman facilitating the programme (Cork, Dublin Monday, Kildare, Limerick, North Tipperary, Wexford). The four organisations developing but not yet running programmes also plan to facilitate groups using one male and one female facilitator. Most of these treat this as a matter of policy. Three groups are currently facilitated by two men (Athlone, Castlebar, Wicklow). One group is facilitated by a man working alone (Galway) and another by a woman working alone (Dublin Thursday).

Several facilitators who facilitated in pairs of one woman and one man said that they felt they were modelling relationships between men and women based on equality.

“You’re modelling a way of interacting that they’re not used to, it’s invaluable. We don’t go off into a corner and whisper, we do it in the group, we’re open and honest and can challenge each other in front of the group.” [interview with facilitator]

“It’s modelling respect between men and women” [group interview with facilitators of one group]

“Modelling with one man and one woman is a matter of policy for us in our group. It has huge potential – we had to work at it so that they could see the equal partnership. Having the guys see the ways we listen to each other sends out a very clear image and message, one that many of the men don’t see elsewhere. There needs to be a mindset about being able to negotiate between us and being aware and open and able to deal with things between us and negotiate.” [female facilitator, during interview with two co-facilitators—one male and one female]

Other facilitators had different views:

“Sometimes I think that the views expressed are more ideological than practical – I’m not dismissing ideological reasons, but if you’ve got two good facilitators, that’s what counts”. [telephone interview with male facilitator]
If it is hard to recruit suitable facilitators, as several groups are finding, particularly when the work is done in voluntary time, it may be difficult to recruit a mixed group. The quality of the facilitators is clearly the most important aspect, however, the benefits of using one male and one female facilitator working together should be considered by all groups who have not facilitated with a mixed team.

3.3.3 Facilitator understanding of domestic abuse

Facilitators gained their understanding of domestic abuse in different ways. Some felt that they had gained experience from related work, such as drugs or alcohol counselling, or from working directly with victims and perpetrators in social work, probation or counselling/therapy. One facilitator who also carried out partner contact work throughout the programme felt that the direct link to women provided him with a constant way to keep up his understanding of the nature and effects of domestic abuse. Others kept up this understanding through regular liaison with those running the linked women’s support service.

Groups with women’s support services represented on their local management board or steering group were able to keep a direct link to the experiences of women and children affected by domestic abuse. Some of those working in the women’s support services felt that this could and should go further than it currently does.

Not all the facilitators had relevant prior experience or knowledge of domestic abuse or intervention work with men. Some felt that their skills were transferable, but there was evidence that some did not have a full understanding of domestic abuse, the effects on victims, the ways men deny, minimise and blame or of the specific elements of group work with abusers. Some, however, had many years of relevant experience and/or specialist training and knowledge.

In group observations and in interviews with some facilitators, there sometimes appeared to be gaps in understanding of the full nature and impact of domestic abuse, particularly from the victims’ points of view. The lack of formal recruitment procedures or specific training on domestic abuse for many facilitators means that these gaps may well not be filled and that there are few opportunities for groups to consider whether potential facilitators lack particular knowledge or experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. All groups should review or establish policies on recruitment, induction and ongoing specific training for new and existing facilitators. This has already started: many new and some existing facilitators have just attended the MOVE induction training for new facilitators and partner contact workers in July 2004, all four SEDVIP groups have sent representatives to similar training recently and more from both networks are to do so in the next six months. The NDVIA sent representatives to Duluth, Minnesota, for training purposes during 2003. This
momentum should be maintained and supported with adequate funding to compensate the training providers for their time and skills and to pay expenses for those attending.

2. In particular, organisations should consider making greater use of the specialist knowledge held by staff working in advocacy projects for abused women, by commissioning training from one or more of these organisations, supported by sufficient funding to compensate the training providers for their time and skills and to pay expenses for those attending.

3. There are other recommendations about training contained in section 5 of this report.

### 3.4 The group processes

Five different groups were observed once during the evaluation. All facilitators were asked to complete evaluation sheets at the end of each session – facilitators from 6 groups did this, some for several months, some just for a few sessions. Facilitators interviewed were also asked about the techniques they used and their approaches to group work.

Facilitators used a variety of approaches and techniques, partly or perhaps mostly as a result of their professional training or background. Some facilitators tended to rely mostly on open-ended discussions and less structured activities, or to depart from the structured activities quite quickly and move to an open group discussion. This was particularly true of those who were using the MOVE programme, which contains very few structured activities. Although the MOVE programme suggests that participants should complete activities between sessions, homework was rarely, if ever, used, according to interviews with facilitators. These activities could be used as part of the group sessions and some groups are doing so. In some groups, the structure of the meeting tends to be check in, read out the relevant step from the MOVE programme, open-ended discussion about this step, check out.

Many of the steps in the MOVE programme as it is written and presented currently do not relate directly to domestic abuse or are not presented in ways that make the relevance to domestic abuse clear (see the analysis of the MOVE and other programmes, Appendices). This does not mean that facilitators are not making this link, they may well be. However, some of the evidence from the session evaluation forms from men and from facilitators, from the interviews with facilitators and from the data gathered from men and from women, as well as the limited number of group observations suggests that the link is not always made or made sufficiently clearly.

Other groups, typically those using the CHANGE programme, but also including some using an adapted version of the MOVE programme, have a more structured approach to the sessions, usually including an activity that focuses on a particular aspect of the programme, as well as the check in and check out slots.

Facilitators in all the groups observed brought all the participants into the discussions in some way.
3.5 Links between facilitators and women’s support workers

Facilitators have developed structured and formalised ways of keeping in touch with what is happening to the women, via the women’s support worker carrying out contact with partners and ex-partners. As a result of setting up formalised support and contact services North Tipperary, Wexford and Limerick have been able to develop ways of working between the facilitators and women’s support workers. The following practice notes draw on elements of practice in all three of these organisations.

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**Group facilitation practice notes: drawn from the practice of several different groups**

1. **Administration, management and content**

   - The group is facilitated by the same two facilitators throughout the 26+ week or rolling programme, following a programme but adapting or adding to it sometimes. The facilitators are always one man and one woman.
   - The men are assessed by other members of the organisation.
   - Partner contact is carried out by the linked support service.
   - The facilitators meet for at least one hour before the meeting, to review the last week’s meeting, share information and plan the night’s session.
   - A register of attendance is kept. Men are asked to contact a facilitator before the meeting if they cannot attend.
   - Meetings start with a breathing and relaxation exercise. This helps men and facilitators to focus on the purpose of the meeting and to relax after what may have been a difficult day at work or a stressful journey. The facilitators teach the men to do this during the early stages of the group. As the group develops, the men take turns to lead this activity.
   - Check in is structured and carefully facilitated, focusing on what is relevant and carefully but firmly moving away from anything the men bring up that is not relevant. The facilitators model check in at the start of the programme, for the first few weeks. After that, they do not take part in the check in.
   - Facilitators prepare the flip charts or handouts for the night’s activity in advance. They take it in turns to lead or write up.
   - Some groups work straight through the whole session. In others there is a short break in the middle of the session. Men leave the room and the facilitators have the chance to check on the progress of the evening’s meeting, work out what to do next if there have been any specific problems or if timing is going astray.
   - At the end of each session, the facilitators ask the men to make a personal commitment about something they are going to do differently that week, in relation to their treatment of their partner and children. They are also asked to give feedback on the session.
   - Facilitators keep a record of the men’s individual specific aims for change that week and their feedback on the night’s session. This allows the facilitators to refer men back to things they may have said or done in previous sessions, where relevant. This is particularly helpful if the men are minimising or making excuses for their abusive behaviour.
3.6 Supervision and review

Most facilitators had some form of supervision, though not always specific to this work. Some who are mental health practitioners, such as therapists or counsellors, have supervision as part of their professional requirements from another therapist or counsellor. Some have specific supervision. The practice notes on the following page are drawn from several groups.
MOVE Ireland, at the time of writing, reported to the evaluation team that they plan to employ a Clinical Director. One of the roles of this post would be to ensure that all groups have adequate supervision in place.

3.7 Programme curriculum

3.7.1 Introduction

Dobash et al (2000), as a result of evaluating men attending the CHANGE programme in Scotland and comparing it to another programme and to no programme, identify eight elements in the process of change. They stress that this “is not a linear process with each step following the other but rather one that involves several facets that may be progressing at the same time and may, in turn, be mutually reinforcing”. (Dobash et al, 2000). These elements are as follows:

1. **Change is possible** – considering the possibility that change might be both desirable and possible.

2. **Motivation to change** – wanting this change to happen.

3. **Why change?** Sometimes because of a new realisation that there is a personal cost (of abuse) to the abuser, (outweighing their perception that change incurs a personal cost) sometimes because of gaining understanding of the costs to their partners and children.

4. **What changes?** Developing an understanding that they are responsible for the change and can make choices and decisions about the use of violence and abuse.

**Group facilitation practice notes: drawn from the practice of several different groups**

3. Supervision, evaluation and review

- Facilitators have compulsory joint supervision every six weeks specifically for this work, from a relevant professional who has experience of work with perpetrators or survivors of abuse or both.
- Everyone involved in the organisation has access to group supervision, which they use to tease out challenges, discuss problems and progress and develop ideas.
- Facilitators carry out their own regular reviews of the progress of the group, at various points in the process, including after the group finished the programme.
- Facilitators make use of the records they had kept throughout the time of the group and of the information held by the women’s support worker.
- Women’s support workers have supervision from a relevant professional, such as a rape crisis or refuge manager or someone with this or similar experience of work with abused women.

5. **General mechanisms of change** – learning to regulate their own behaviour, rather than relying on external controls or fear of external consequences.

6. **The discourse** – replacing justifications and excuses for abusive behaviour and controlling attitudes and beliefs with new ideas about rights and responsibilities in relationships, based on equality and taking responsibility for one’s own actions.

7. **The medium of change** – talking, listening, thinking, learning, reflecting, and other elements of cognitive restructuring.

8. **Specific elements of change** – learning new skills and ways of thinking. There is a danger in this aspect of change that men are merely learning to “talk programme talk” rather than actually change their behaviour, which highlights the importance of partner contact, in this case to avoid believing that men have changed simply because the things they say in the group have changed.

These findings have been used to inform assessment and review of three specific programmes and to help assess how different facilitators and organisations are promoting change in individual men.

The RESPECT guidelines provide a list of essential elements for programme content and delivery which reflect the lessons learned in evaluation and research. These have been used as criteria for assessing the content of three available programmes, including the two in current use in some form in Ireland.

Adams (1988) notes that men undergoing this process of change go through the same stages as identified by the Kubler-Ross model of the grieving process. This does not mean that the process of giving up abuse is akin to grief, but it does provide another useful conceptualisation of the stages between abuse and equality:

- **Denial** (that there is a problem or that it is their problem);
- **Anger** (that someone is daring to challenge them, such as their partner or the group programme leader);
- **Bargaining** (such as “I’ll give up being violent if she stops nagging”);
- **Confusion/Depression** (not knowing how to behave, as old patterns are going and new ones have yet to emerge);
- **Acceptance** (that they have no right to abuse their partner and that she is their equal).

**3.7.2 Different programmes**

There are several different programmes used in different ways in group work in Ireland with domestic abusers. A summary of each of the manuals developed by MOVE, CHANGE (a programme developed in Scotland, UK, working with court mandated abusers) and DVIP (Domestic Violence Intervention Project, a project in the UK that works with court mandated and non court mandated abusers, not to be confused with NDVIA) is included in the appendices. On the following pages there is a summary of how each of these programmes and that of the DVIP (for comparison) meets the RESPECT minimum standards for programme content. Please note that the actual methods used will vary from group to group and from facilitator to facilitator. Some facilitators stick very closely to a particular programme, others add different activities. Please note that the NDVIA will use its own programme and is not a member of RESPECT.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPECT GUIDINE FOR PROGRAMME CONTENT</th>
<th>MOVE as per materials on website</th>
<th>CHANGE manual</th>
<th>DVIP manual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An understanding of what constitutes violent behaviour</td>
<td>Definition on Step 1 includes mental, physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and economic abuse and threats. Activity in Step 1: asks men to identify forms of abuse they have used. No other activities.</td>
<td>Module 2 defining violence. Definition includes physical, psychological, sexual, controlling behaviour, mind games, threats, violence to property and pets. Modules 11 – 15 demystifying violence, including violence patterns and different case studies. Module 15 compares the ‘power and control’ wheel with the ‘equality’ wheel</td>
<td>Section of activities on ‘violence, power and control’ including three of the Duluth wheels; Violence logs and role plays; Section on sexual violence; Section on threats and intimidation; Section on Emotional Abuse sexual abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the perpetrator is 100% responsible for his violent behaviour</td>
<td>Introduction to MOVE makes this clear.</td>
<td>Definitions make this clear. Module 7 – demystifying violence Module 1: excuses and intent</td>
<td>Definitions make this clear. Section on denial and responsibility; section on accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That violent behaviour is functional and intentional</td>
<td>Steps 6, 7 and 8 focus on intent, but on the intent and function of anger, rather than abuse or violence.</td>
<td>Module 2 makes clear abuse is to achieve power and control. Module 7 (pp 86 – 90) excuses and intent</td>
<td>1. Violence, power and control 2. Violence logs Re-enactments used in all sections on forms of abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To challenge tactics that seek to deny, minimise and/or blame</td>
<td>Introduction includes information about excuses. No specific activity. Some worrying language and suggestions that seem to place some blame or responsibility on women.</td>
<td>Module 7: excuses and intent.</td>
<td>4. denial and minimisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To challenge and change the attitudes and beliefs which support his violence</td>
<td>Step 6: Some roots of anger, Principal irrational beliefs. Again, focused on anger, rather than abuse.</td>
<td>Module 6: male socialisation; looks at influences on boys and men and how these shape beliefs about gender roles.</td>
<td>11. gender and abusing male privilege. Materials look at ways beliefs and attitudes about gender influence behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVE as per materials on website</td>
<td>CHANGE manual</td>
<td>DVIP manual</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To acknowledge and question the social and gendered context of domestic violence</strong></td>
<td>Step I includes some information about context being part of the culture, states that it is caused by irrational beliefs. Some reference to ideas about being a man. No specific activity.</td>
<td>Module 6: male socialisation;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To challenge men's expectations of power and control over partners</strong></td>
<td>Step 1: Alienation. Use of language such as “allow her to …”, in relation to various aspects of relationship, are worrying, as they (possibly unwittingly, but nevertheless significantly) reinforce abusive men's views that they have rights to control partner.</td>
<td>Module 15: comparing power and control wheel with equality wheel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To develop men's capacity to understand the impact of his violence (a) on his partner both in the long and short term</strong></td>
<td>Descriptions included in introduction to MOVE. No specific activity.</td>
<td>Section 1 on Violence, power and control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To develop men's capacity to understand the impact of his violence (b) on his children both in the long and short term</strong></td>
<td>No specific activities about effects on children or on parenting.</td>
<td>Section 1 on Violence, power and control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn and adopt positive, respectful and egalitarian ways of being</strong></td>
<td>Step 4: Rebuilding relationships. Step 9: Becoming positively assertive. Step 10: More about assertion. Step 13: The Path to Empathy. None of these steps is about equality/egalitarian relationships. Some ideas and language patronising to women.</td>
<td>Yes – specific section (pp 377 – 387) with activities for men to examine effects on children and on parenting; plus separate sections in manual one a) about impact of domestic abuse on children and b) for working with children who have lived with domestic abuse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Module 4 – healthy relationships Module 5 – recognising and identifying emotions Module 15: 'power and control' and 'equality' wheels Module 18: Developing empathy Module 19: skills for non-violence: Module 20: negative/positive thinking; Module 21: communication Module 22: fair arguing Module 24: recognising personal change; Module 25: assertiveness/aggression/passivity</td>
<td>Each section on specific forms of abuse contains activity and handout from women's perspectives on the effects on them. Re-enactment requires men to put themselves in victim's place. Section 5 specifically focused on effects</td>
<td></td>
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An evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland working with abusive men and their partners and ex-partners
Each programme also contains other material to guide the work. The table below analyses what each provides to help meet other RESPECT guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPECT guideline</th>
<th>MOVE as per materials on website</th>
<th>CHANGE manual</th>
<th>DVIP manual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The focus of intervention should be on men as perpetrators and not as victims</td>
<td>No guidelines on how to deal with this if it comes up</td>
<td>Module 2: defining violence and abuse. This module contains guidelines to make the focus clearly on men as perpetrators and helps facilitators to deal with men's statements about themselves as victims.</td>
<td>Aims of programmes clear and guidelines in manual help facilitators to reinforce this. 4. denial of responsibility includes notes on this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects should avoid collusion with the perpetrator's attitudes</td>
<td>No guidelines.</td>
<td>Guidelines in the introduction and in specific activities. Manual recommends specific training for facilitators on domestic abuse and perpetrator programmes.</td>
<td>Guidelines in the introduction and in specific activities. Manual recommends specific training for facilitators on domestic abuse and perpetrator programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear statement that couples counselling not appropriate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme lasts minimum of 75 hours over 30 weeks</td>
<td>Rolling 13 step programme. Men may do more or less than this minimum. Some groups use this as fixed length 13 week programme, some as rolling.</td>
<td>26 week fixed length programme in manual, though CHANGE programme is reviewing this.</td>
<td>Yes. Pack recommends sessions last 2-3 hours with break and programme lasts more than 30 weeks in total.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum of two facilitators</td>
<td>No guidelines</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed gender</td>
<td>No guideline</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Other elements of programme manuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MOVE programme materials</th>
<th>Change manual</th>
<th>DVIP manuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and resources for use in contact with partners and ex-partners</td>
<td>None in the MOVE Programme materials. MOVE Ireland guidelines require contact with partners and ex-partners.</td>
<td>Section 6 (pp 35 – 37) plus resources in appendices, specific handouts; information pack for women; partner report forms for assessment of history of abuse</td>
<td>Specific separate manual, with guidelines, resources, plans for workshop sessions including handouts, partner report forms for assessment of history of abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme designed as rolling or fixed length</td>
<td>Programme designed to be rolling. Some use it as fixed length 13 or so weeks.</td>
<td>Designed to be 26 weeks fixed length.</td>
<td>Designed to combine the two: three separate stages to work, men can join at almost any point in each stage; have to complete all of each stage and be assessed as ready before moving on to next stage. Follow on support group suggested at end of programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines on check-in session</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested timetables for structuring sessions</td>
<td>No suggested timetable. Groups usually use handout for specific step; someone will read it out at the start, after check-in, then whole group discussion. Homework activity can be used as part of session. Yes.</td>
<td>Pp 45 – 48 suggestions re timetable and structure. Each activity has lesson plan, estimated time, advance preparation guidance, tips and commentary.</td>
<td>For each activity, there are aims and learning points, equipment needed, description of the activity/exercise, tips and advice on dealing with common traps, handouts or exercise sheets where appropriate. Most of the topics last for more than one weekly session, some will last for several.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other guidelines on programme delivery</td>
<td>No guidelines for facilitators about group work, role play (although Step 5 uses slow motion replay of incidents), handling minimisation etc., handling offensive behaviour</td>
<td>Guidelines about group work, role play, handling minimisation etc., handling offensive behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### 3.7.3 Facilitators' comments on programme curriculum and other programme materials

Views about programme content vary enormously, between facilitators, between organisations, amongst different members of the MOVE Ireland network and between different members of SEDVIP. Each organisation makes its own decision about which programme to use. Two years ago, MOVE Ireland set up a Programme Development Subgroup to consider different programmes and decided to pilot use of the CHANGE programme (written by Monica Wilson and David Morran of the CHANGE project in
Scotland). This programme was designed originally for use with men mandated to attend by the criminal justice system. Some of the MOVE organisations have adopted the CHANGE programme, some are using the MOVE programme and some have adapted one or other. The following quotes are a representative selection from interviews with facilitators of MOVE groups.

“From the first, we had questions about the MOVE programme. Lots of groups just read out the step and then talked about it [see above] – I thought that was ridiculous. Some groups saw it as heresy to change it at all. We started by trying to re-write some of the programme but there was lots of resistance in other groups. [Another facilitator] pushed for the change to the CHANGE programme. From the first time I saw it [CHANGE] I thought it was exactly what we needed. It is very easy to work with, the philosophy is second nature, it reduced preparation time. The old [MOVE] programme meant that we had to spend hours working on material and activities.” [facilitator who has run adapted MOVE programme and CHANGE]

“We didn’t follow the CHANGE programme module by module, we picked and chose as needed, sometimes things emerged earlier. We also needed to do a count down to the close of the programme and worked out the key things we wanted them to have and revised them – like the power and control and the equality wheels and the work on top dog and underdog. There are some process notes but maybe we need more”. [facilitator who has run both MOVE and CHANGE programmes].

“We are using the CHANGE manual but also our own experience. We aspire to have Monica Wilson to do CHANGE training for us. CHANGE is a lot clearer [than the MOVE programme], it’s focused on women’s safety” [facilitator who has not yet used CHANGE, has used MOVE, not currently facilitating]

“I use this programme [MOVE, rolling] because I know it works, with real men, not just theoretical men. It takes time to get violent men to change, it can’t be done in a few weeks or months, it takes years. I think that if men learn to use time out correctly they will never be physically abusive again and I think we teach them that.” [facilitator who uses MOVE programme, rolling]

“We’re using the MOVE programme but we have re-written it.” [member of steering group for organisation not yet running a group]

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- All organisations running or developing programmes should consider how far their programme content meets their overall aims, the RESPECT standards and other guidelines and how well the material reflects the lessons from research on effective programmes. The table provided above can help to guide this analysis. Each individual group could consider using different elements from different programmes when appropriate.
• Facilitators and others should consider regular review of their programme materials and consult each other about different approaches and experiences. Consideration should take into account the purpose of programmes and the possibility that there may be benefits in trying something else, however effective existing work may seem to them to be. This may help to fill gaps in programme materials, particularly those looking at sexual abuse.

• In particular, facilitators using only the MOVE programme, without any substantial changes or additions should consider adding elements from other programmes in order to meet specific objectives that the MOVE programme does not meet and also replacing elements of the MOVE programme that appear to allow the abuser to evade responsibility for their behaviour.

• Programme coordinators and facilitators should regularly consult staff working with women affected by domestic abuse, about programme content and delivery.

3.8 Making men aware of the nature and impact of their abusive behaviour, holding men to account and promoting egalitarian relationships

The following man completed a questionnaire after one month on a programme and was interviewed by telephone two months later.

Are there any more questions we should have asked?
“*What have partners done that has caused or led to people being violent*” [answer given on questionnaire]

Can you explain why you were violent or abusive?
“I blamed everything and everybody, but at the end of the day I’m responsible for my own behaviour. I’ve learned that on the programme, the other things are just factors. I’ve stopped blaming [name of partner], it’s my fault, nobody else made me. I feel more empowered and in control of myself now I understand I’m responsible for what I do. I lacked control before and so tried to control [name of partner].” [telephone interview with the same man after three months on programme]

As commented earlier, in the space of two months, it would seem that this man learnt that the abuse was his responsibility. He may not yet have progressed from realising change was possible to regulating his behaviour, as in the Dobash team’s model of change, but he seems to have started the process. Unfortunately, there is no data from the partner to establish whether his speech reflected his behaviour. He may have simply learnt to “talk the talk”. However, in the absence of other data perhaps it is reasonable to exercise cautious optimism that this man may really have changed his attitudes, and within two months. This reflects the finding of the Gondolf study that programmes of very wide variations of length can achieve similar results.
This man also made an interesting remark about the legal system.

What should be done to stop domestic abuse in general in Ireland?
“Stiffer punishments and a tougher stance from the law would definitely help”

Another man was able to describe how he had progressed through the processes of change, as shown in the following two comments he made during his interview:

What do you think causes you to be abusive?
“Some people say it happens in a flash, but I’ve been taught that there is a process, no matter how quick. I’ve become aware of some of the signals, not all. I’m conscious of things that would have gone unchecked in the past”

Which aspects of the programme were the most useful?
“Power and control wheel, the dynamics, why abusive behaviour happens. It’s eye-opening; not necessarily pleasant but it’s helpful to see it and acknowledge ‘yeah, I do that’; then there’s a chance to go back and not do these things. It highlights your need to see things from your partner’s point of view”
[telephone interview with man towards the end of a six month fixed length programme]

This man demonstrated the value of using activities that challenge men directly, even if this is difficult for them. The man commented that the facilitators had challenged him firmly but fairly and in a way that he could learn from, without being allowed to evade responsibility for what he had done.

Information from men’s questionnaires, interviews with women, interviews with facilitators, group observations and from other research indicates that requiring abusive men to face up to and take responsibility for both the nature and the impact of their abusive behaviour is one of the most fundamental and important elements in a programme to stop abuse. One woman gave the following perspective:

What do you think has been the most significant thing to help to stop him from being abusive, so far?
“the best thing was that questionnaire you sent him, that made him realise what he’d done, all together on one page – it shocked him, it was all there “slapped”, “kicked”, all together and he could see it”.
[telephone interview with woman, four months after start of programme]

This woman didn’t think that this in itself would stop him from being violent and said that it was too early to say that she didn’t think she would be abused again. However, she had seen what her husband had written on the questionnaire and said that seeing the documentation of the abuse had helped her too to understand the impact of what he had done and that it was his responsibility and that the help she had had from the women’s support service had prepared her for what to do if it did happen again.

“if it happens again, I will go to the guards and let MOVE know. And I have A”
[specialist women’s support service for survivors of domestic abuse,
providing women’s support service for partners/ex-partners of men on a programme]. [telephone interview with woman four months after start of programme]

Another woman in a different group described a similar situation:

“*The [assessment] forms identified what is abuse – for both of us. He wouldn’t have thought certain things are abusive. He’s learnt a lot from the MOVE group about what is abuse*”. [face to face interview with woman six months after start of programme]

“*I feel he just plays the game. When he used to come in and tell me how good the group was etc. I used to just nod. Now I challenge him, tell him that he’s just told the group a pack of lies and what’s worse, he’s just told a room full of violent men a pack of lies. I’ve seen him do it. I’ve told [name of facilitator] about this, he said that there’s nothing he can do about this, that if men aren’t honest, there’s not a lot he can do*.” [telephone interview with woman after man had been on programme for 6 months]

This woman illustrates a tension that can seem hard to handle in group work with violent men: when and how to challenge men, without breaking women’s confidentiality or putting them at greater risk.

The following practice example provides illustrations of the ways groups can challenge men about their behaviour without breaching the woman’s confidentiality:

In one group session, the facilitators had received information from the women’s support worker about a specific form of abuse and controlling behaviour that a particular woman was experiencing, during the weekly liaison calls. The woman did not want the information revealing, but she did want the man to be challenged and encouraged to stop using this form of abuse, which was affecting her life and that of her children.

The facilitator skilfully brought up the topic in a general conversation during the group. The ex-partner of the woman experiencing the abuse gave information that directly contradicted what the woman had said, without knowing that he had done so. The facilitator, not wanting to break the woman’s confidentiality, made use of phrases like “that’s not clear to me – can you explain it again?” or “can you tell me exactly what your arrangements with your ex-partner are at the moment?”. She also brought the discussion round to a relevant general subject, in which all the men took part and was able to steer the group to considering the subject from women’s point of view. The man did not appear to be aware of the information the facilitator was privy to, but was effectively and thoughtfully challenged, without being attacked. Follow up call with the woman’s support worker confirmed that the woman’s confidentiality had not been breached.
CONCLUSIONS:

1. The power and control wheel is an invaluable tool for helping men to examine the full range of their abusive behaviour and to compare to the equality wheel, showing the basis of an egalitarian relationship. Facilitators, programme participants and partners could all identify how these tools or something similar helped to bring about change and to hold men to account.

2. Men can be held to account for their behaviour without compromising their partner’s safety or confidentiality, providing the organisation has the resources to allow the partner support worker, facilitators and others to plan for this and to liaise with the woman concerned at every stage.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

• Facilitators not using the power and control wheel should consider using this or a similar tool for getting men to see the range of abusive behaviours they may use, including those that are not physical.
• Regular communication between facilitators and partner support workers is essential and can provide a way of managing the process of challenging a man about his abusive behaviour.

3.9 Interruption strategy – ‘time out’

3.9.1 What is a time out in this context?

All the programmes included teaching a technique called ‘time out’. This is a common phrase in general use, but has a very specific meaning in work with domestic abusers. In both the MOVE and the CHANGE programmes in current use in Ireland, the technique is supposed to be used in the following, very specific way. The following is a summary of what the two descriptions have in common in what they say about the technique:

• ‘Time out’ is to be used when men feel that they are likely to use a form of abuse, particularly, but not only physical abuse. It can also be used when the woman feels that her partner is about to use abuse.
• It is taught in conjunction with activities designed to help men to identify warning signs that they might be about to abuse or threaten their partner.
• The man is supposed to say, either explicitly or using an agreed signal, that he is taking a time out.
• He is supposed to say that he will be back in exactly one hour, or another time limit that has been agreed between them both and that she knows.
• He is not supposed to drink, drive or take drugs during this time.
• He is supposed to use strategies he may have been taught in the programme for calming himself down, to collect his thoughts and remind himself about what his goals are in participating in the programme.
The MOVE programme introduces this technique on step 3 of the 13 step programme. The CHANGE programme introduces it in module 10 of the 26 week programme. Full details of the ways that the two programmes explain these techniques are contained in the appendices.

The two programmes have very similar ways of describing how the technique is to be used. However, the introduction and the guidelines are not the same. There is a more detailed description of the two presentations of the technique in appendix C of this report. The CHANGE programme, for example, includes case studies on abusive or incorrect uses of time out and guidelines for the facilitators on how to introduce and revise the use of the technique with the men so that they understand the difference between using the strategy correctly and incorrectly. It also provides the facilitators with an example of a relationship where the use of time out would not be appropriate.

Both programmes suggest that the men talk to their partner about time out. Both suggest that the man should take a practice time out at a time when he is not about to use abuse. Both suggest that the man and woman need to agree on ways of signalling the need for a time out. The MOVE programme explains the technique in terms of controlling anger and the CHANGE programme explains it as a way of preventing the man from doing or saying something abusive. This may seem like a slight difference, but it is a significant one, given that many abusive men are not angry when they abuse (Mullender and Burton 2001).

The MOVE programme appears to suggest that the woman must comply with this technique, whereas the CHANGE programme emphasises, explicitly, that “It is about making yourself safe and taking responsibility for your actions. A time out is for self control only. Your partner does not have to stop talking or do anything else when you want a time out. It is not a way for you to control her behaviour.” (CHANGE manual). Again, given that many men, when they stop using physical abuse, replace these forms of control with other non-physical forms of control (Dobash et al, 2000), this difference of emphasis is significant.

The CHANGE programme also draws a distinction between false and real time outs: false time outs are an inappropriate use of the technique to exert control or fear. The DVIP programme does not introduce the technique until some way into the programme, because of the worry that it could be used abusively, and states that this technique will not be useful for some women and that some may find it abusive and controlling. Both CHANGE and DVIP are clear that the technique should be used only with the woman’s co-operation.

NDVIA resists any form of technique-teaching in its risk and monitoring work with offenders.

### 3.9.2 Men’s use and women’s experiences of time out

Some of the women interviewed found time out helpful in some way, though they had not always been sure:

“When I first heard about it I thought anytime he doesn’t want to do something he’ll use it as an excuse, to get out of things like washing up, but it doesn’t...
Some women used the technique themselves, though not to avoid being abusive.

“I’ve taken time out myself, with one of the girls – it helped me to get some space away from how he was behaving”. [face to face interview with woman, 2 years after man started attending programme]

However, most of the women interviewed had less than positive experiences. Sometimes this was due to the men’s incorrect or abusive use of the technique, sometimes it was the technique itself that caused the problem, even when used as directed. Often it was because they did not have any accurate information about what to expect.

Most of these women had incorrect information about how time out was supposed to be used and during interview it became clear that it was being used incorrectly. In some cases, the woman seemed to have been deliberately misinformed by her partner.

“He just disappears, leaves me with the kids, then I find him upstairs lying across the bed playing with the kids’ game boy – I feel anxious “what did I do?” and worried when I go upstairs, he’s got a pattern – then he says he’s having his time out. He needs to tell me what he’s doing, I’ve told him this and he hasn’t taken this on. We haven’t even discussed it.” [face to face interview with woman, four months after man started programme]

In further discussion, it was revealed that this woman did not understand what time out was or that her husband was using it incorrectly.

In the following case, the woman had been given clear information from the facilitator who also carried out partner contact about what time out was supposed to be and how it was supposed to be used. It made no difference to his misuse of it, but it did mean that the woman knew more about what was going on and how far she and her children were being manipulated:

“He tends to go for several days, and no contact, which is hard, explaining it to the kids, I know he’s only supposed to go for a set amount of time. It’s hard for the kids, he leaves when they want to talk to him.” [telephone interview with woman, five months after man started attending programme]

However, this woman had not thought of discussing this with the facilitator, partly, she said, because she didn’t know it would be useful and partly because she had separated from the abuser.

Another woman had benefited from knowledge gained from the women’s support service:

“I’d been told what time out was supposed to be, by the programme’s women’s worker, so I knew. But he said “You can just take 20 minutes and go into
Another woman’s experience illustrates the difference between having information about this technique and not:

“The first time he did the programme I didn’t know what it meant, he’d go and take a week out – I didn’t understand it and I didn’t like it. It happened once or twice but then I said not again. The second time round on the programme, he was using time out to his advantage, he’d go to the bathroom or to the car, he’d calm down but he would still hit me, he’d be calm but still violent. Now I know he’s supposed to do it and I just take it for granted that if he leaves he’s doing that – he never tells me but I know. If I didn’t have contact [with women’s support service] I wouldn’t know what it was”. [face to face interview with woman, two years after man first attended programme]

Another woman, now living separately from her partner, also knew how it was supposed to be used, from the women’s support worker and from the programme materials (she used to look at these secretly when her partner was not at home, as he would never let her look at the materials). This again equipped her to spot that he was not using the techniques he was taught on the programme.

“He used to talk about it but never done it to him, it’s a bar of chocolate”. [face to face interview]  [author’s note: ‘Time Out’ is also the name of a brand of chocolate]

3.9.3 Negative effects of the correct use of time out

Men’s use of time out, even if not used abusively, still relies heavily on the woman co-operating with it, which in some cases will mean she is still adjusting her behaviour because of the threat of violence. The following comments, from women whose partner was using the technique as taught, demonstrate this:

“He does it exactly as it says on the handout, so I can’t blame that, it’s the way he does it and the effects it has on me. It just feels as though I am left still holding all the responsibility, looking after the children whilst he takes his time out, explaining to them what’s going on – it feels like he hasn’t changed at all. Yes, he does use it only when he would be heading for a blow-up, but why can’t he learn that he just isn’t entitled to blow up at me in the first place? Last time, it was over something absolutely ridiculous, something that just shouldn’t matter – something about me wanting to go out that night, we’d arranged this between us and he was going to look after the children. I hardly ever go out,
it was my friend's birthday. But he decides it's OK for him to get angry over this, so he decides he needs time out and guess what, I didn't get to go out that night. Nor any night since, for that matter, because what's the point in trying?" [telephone interview with woman, partner on programme for more than 6 months]

“Sometimes he's done it at a time when I wanted to talk and he didn't like what he was hearing and he wanted to block it. We didn't get to discuss the issue and we still haven't. I don't think he feels comfortable with me standing up to him". [telephone interview with woman, two years after man started attending programme]

The evidence above does not have to mean that the technique should not be taught, as it can have clear benefits for many women, in the short term. However, given that it relies on the woman's co-operation, its use could be improved by giving her clear information about it and the chance to discuss this with the facilitator or partner support worker. It also means that facilitators need to exercise caution in how they teach and review the use of the technique. The CHANGE manual provides more information about how to do this without placing responsibility on the women and provides an example of a situation where it may not be in the woman's interests for her partner to use this strategy. The DVIP manual emphasises clearly that the woman does not have to co-operate, as it is not her behaviour that has to change.

3.9.4 Summary of women's experiences of time out

Women interviewed were often confused about what time out was, or how it was supposed to be used in this context. Only 6 out of 24 gave something approximating to a correct answer, that is, one that reflected the way in which the technique is taught on either the MOVE or CHANGE programme, as relevant. In several cases, it was clear that the woman had been given misleading information by their partner, or that they didn't know anything about the technique.

Whenever it was discovered that a woman had incorrect information about time out, the interviewer explained to her, how it was supposed to be used, and suggested that she should talk to the partner support worker or the facilitator if she felt it was being used abusively.

This technique can have positive benefits for women, particularly in the early stages of their partner's attendance on a programme, as it can help to bring about improvements in their physical safety. However, facilitators need to remember how men can misuse this technique and consider carrying out revision sessions on the technique if they hear from a partner that it has been used abusively. Facilitators should also bear in mind that many women continue to live in fear and under control after the physical abuse has stopped, if they feel that they are in a situation where the man might use physical abuse. This can often mean that time out, even when used correctly, increases their anxiety rather than decreases it, as they know that this is a signal that the man has considered using violence.
Some of the women who had experienced time out abusively had told the partner support worker but most had not told anyone. This meant that the facilitators had no way of knowing that the technique was being used incorrectly, which in turn could give them a misleading impression of how it was being used.

Prolonged use of time out seems to indicate that the men concerned have not yet moved beyond interruption techniques and into changing their beliefs and attitudes about relationships. Women often feel that they have to co-operate with this technique, for their own safety or to support their partner in the efforts he is making. However, many women comment that they do not know when their partner is “going to blow up” and that they still, after months or years, have to watch what they do or say. Prolonged use of time out indicates that the potential for abuse is still there.

Some men, as other more long term, larger research projects have found, will perhaps never move beyond these techniques. Many women do appreciate the reductions or cessations of physical abuse they bring. It is possible that more men could be helped to move beyond these techniques, for their own sakes as well as the sake of their partners and ex-partners. The Dobash and the Gondolf research programmes both found that moving beyond interruption techniques was strongly associated with long lasting change and that women whose partners were dependent on interruption techniques like time out frequently continued to feel afraid and/or controlled, even if they were not physically abused.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. During interviews with women whose partners or ex-partners were attending programmes or had recently done so, only 6 out of 24 women had correct information about what time out was, how it was supposed to be used and what to do if they felt it was being used incorrectly or abusively or in a way that was controlling them rather than bringing them safety.

2. Time out, when properly taught, monitored, used and reviewed, can provide some women with improved physical safety.

3. The CHANGE programme contains very detailed and carefully structured activities and materials to use for teaching men to use time out. The DVIP programme contains more materials and guidelines which also make it clear that the woman should not be made to co-operate with this strategy if she does not wish to, or if it is used abusively against her. These materials help men to learn how and when to use the technique and the differences between using it correctly and using it incorrectly or abusively.

4. Structured, planned and regular contact with partners and ex-partners, can help to ensure that women have accurate information about time out and that they can discuss worries they have about it or report incidents where it has been used abusively against them.
5. When men are not taught this technique with care and preparation, or when their partners do not have access to full and accurate information about the technique, or when women do not know how or when to let programmes or support services know about incorrect or abusive use of time out or other related techniques, the technique can become a means of control over the woman or can provoke anxiety and fear.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Facilitators and women’s support workers should discuss how and when the technique is being taught, share information about how it is being used and consider when and how to revise the technique or encourage the men to move from this technique to other ways of ending abuse.

2. Facilitators should review how and when they are teaching this technique and consider using detailed and carefully structured activities such as those in the CHANGE or DVIP manuals to provide a thorough and careful introduction to the technique. They should also actively monitor how long and in what ways men continue to use it, via self reports in group meetings, evaluation sheets completed at the end of meetings, via women’s support workers and contact with partners and ex-partners. They should also consider when and how to encourage the men to move from use of this technique and to other ways of ending abuse, such as changing beliefs, using negotiation, developing respect, understanding that they cannot control their partners and do not have a right to.

3. Partner contact and support must include early and clear information about time out and any other specific violence avoidance techniques. This is specified in the RESPECT good practice guidelines. The woman should be offered the chance to discuss how this technique might affect her, in advance of the technique being taught on the programme. She should also be encouraged to report any abusive use of the technique. Ongoing partner contact should include questions about how time out is being used.

3.10 What do programmes do when men drop out or don’t co-operate?

3.10.1 Dealing with threats and admissions of violence

All organisations were asked to provide information about how they deal with threats and admissions of violence made by the men, to partners/ex-partners, to children and to facilitators and others in the organisation.

Almost everyone provided answers in some form. Most organisations had a written procedure for dealing with threats and admissions of violence, some including how to deal with threats or actual violence to people working in the group. Some were not able to
Facilitators had a range of views about dealing with threats and admissions. These can be summarised loosely as the following four categories:

1. “We have written policies which we would use, but it’s difficult, because we have no real sanction – we want to avoid using the sanction of excluding them from the group, because then there’s nothing, but it’s the only sanction we have”

2. “They would never tell me anything like that anyway, so there’s no need [for a procedure]”

3. “It’s clear if it’s about children. If it’s about women it’s not so clear; as we don’t want to put her at risk”

4. “We would always talk to the partner, as soon as possible, if anything like that comes up – usually via the partner contact worker”.

The first dilemma illustrates further the need for organisations to consider all forms of available sanctions, including close links to the criminal justice system and to partners and ex-partners.

The second statement reflects beliefs and practice that are simply dangerous and irresponsible. These are by definition violent men. Just because this hasn’t happened yet, doesn’t mean it never will. It is essential for all facilitators to consider what they would do in these circumstances, in order to be prepared in advance of it happening and equipped with necessary information, such as means of contacting the woman and the Gardaí if appropriate.

The third illustrates the complexities of doing work with violent men who are mostly still living with their victims and who have access to abuse them further. The guiding principle to use here is promoting safety for the women and children. Practitioners should keep in mind the need to assess all possible courses of action to decide which is risky for the woman and which is promoting her safety (RESPECT guidelines, 2004). The best way of assessing this is to involve the woman in the discussions as quickly and safely as possible, as described in comment 4. This dilemma further highlights the impact on women’s safety if agencies and women do not feel that the criminal justice system can or will protect them if they do report incidents. Even though some police and courts are supportive to women, many are not and women’s feelings towards the criminal justice system are coloured by past experiences or perceptions of what they can expect.

Option four should be the basis of all procedures in instances of threats or disclosures of violence to partners and children.
Case Study: Dealing with an incident of abuse used whilst man was on programme

(As with all case studies and quotes, names and identifying features have been changed or omitted).

During the most recent group, Pat, one of the women whose partner was attending reported an incident of physical abuse to the women’s support worker. This incident had already come to the attention of the Gardaí before the woman told the women’s support worker about it: her husband had been arrested.

The women’s support worker asked the woman whether she wanted this bringing to the attention of the facilitators. Pat said that she wanted her husband to be challenged directly but wanted him to continue to attend the programme. The women’s support worker said that she would contact the facilitators as soon as possible. She also discussed safety strategies with Pat and reviewed who was involved in this incident and with the family in general. The support worker identified three key agencies who were involved with the family: child protection, a nearby refuge and a child protection social worker.

The women’s support worker immediately contacted the co-ordinator and facilitators. A meeting was arranged within 48 hours.

The women’s support worker, the facilitators and the co-ordinator all met to agree a plan for dealing with this matter. They all agreed that the number and range of agencies involved in supporting Pat and in monitoring the family helped them to feel confident that Pat was as well protected as she might be and that the risks of challenging Pat’s husband were outweighed by the benefits, particularly as Pat had requested this.

Confident that Pat was as well protected as she might be and that the risks of challenging Pat’s husband were outweighed by the benefits, particularly as Pat had requested this.

One of the facilitators telephoned the man and asked him to arrive early for the group session that week. When he arrived, he met with both facilitators together, before the rest of the group arrived.

The man was asked about the incident. It was made clear to him that this was serious and that the programme was within its rights to suspend the man. The man was asked to bring the incident up during the group session. This he did. It allowed other men to make disclosures of other forms of abuse.

The facilitators and co-ordinator stressed that they view the behaviour as criminal and that the involvement of other statutory agencies with this family was something that they welcomed, as it helped to promote the woman’s safety.

The co-ordinator sat in on subsequent sessions, as support for the facilitators and to monitor the men’s reactions to this disclosure. She also contacted the evaluation team to let them know what had happened, without providing names of the man and woman.
3.10.2 Dealing with drop out

Most groups could provide some, limited data about numbers of men who dropped out of the programme. Where there was a specific linked women’s support service for partners and ex-partners of men on the programme, the women were consulted about the possible effects of this drop out and were offered ongoing support. Most women took up this offer. This meant that the programmes were able to monitor women’s safety and changes in men’s abuse after the men had stopped attending. However, the evaluation team found no evidence that organisations were making systematic use of the ability to monitor men’s behaviour after drop out. This is not a high priority for many of the groups. However, it forms a useful element of any monitoring and evaluation. As a result of the continuing support offered to women whose partners had stopped attending programmes, such as the case study Kathleen, this evaluation was able to make use of information from several of these women.

Where there is regular partner contact or support, the facilitator or women’s support worker will usually inform women if their husband stops attending. However, we found evidence that some groups are not doing this as well as possible: in one interview with a woman who was receiving support from the linked partner support service, it became clear that the woman did not know that her partner had stopped attending, when the interviewer did have access to this information.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Women should be informed as soon as possible of any incidences of exclusion or unauthorised absence from the programme by their partner or ex-partner. This contact may then need to include some additional safety planning or discussion of future options.

2. Organisations running programmes could consider ways of using the compliance categorisation as a way of helping to respond to or prevent drop-out.
SECTION FOUR: WORK WITH AND FOR WOMEN

Key questions:

• What are the organisations doing to increase the safety of women whose partners or ex-partners are on programmes?

• How far is the safety and welfare of partners and ex-partners affected by the men’s participation in programmes?

Both of these questions are considered in this section.

There are several specific elements involved in increasing safety for women:

• Work done with men during programme meetings – this is explored above, in section 6.
• Work done with women as part of partner contact and support work – the focus of this section, see section 7.
• Actions taken when men or women disclose abuse, particularly physical or sexual abuse, during the programme – see section 6.
• Links to the criminal or civil justice system – see sections 5.6 and 8.6.
• Organisational and administrative matters, such as the limits of confidentiality for men and for women – see sections 5 and 6.

4.1 Contact with partners/ex-partners of programme participants

4.1.1 Purpose

One woman’s interview provided a very clear illustration of the need for sustained, focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes:

On the lack of partner contact in this group at the time:
“We should have a voice. The counsellors are working in the dark, they’re working with men that lie.”

What strategies do you think he has learnt?
“He talks about triggers. He says if I accuse him of lying, the programme says I’m provoking him, that it’s me causing him to be violent.”

In particular, what do you think of the WASP strategy? [This is a technique contained in the MOVE programme only. It stands for Wait, Assess and Slowly Proceed. See appendix D]
“That’s how he abuses – wait assess then slowly proceed to lie, hit and cheat.”
What do you want to suggest to the programme leaders?
“Tell them to try to see beyond the lies, to talk to partners to verify what’s really
happening and get the men to be honest with themselves.” [face to face
interview with woman, 18 months after partner started attending
programme, not attending any more]

This woman was physically and sexually abused throughout the time her partner attended
a programme and afterwards. Her statements help to reinforce some of the reasons for
partner contact, which have been identified in section 1 of this report and are further
explored and described in section 6. In that part of the report there is also information
about the nature, extent and organisation of partner contact. In this some of the
opportunities, challenges, risks and good practice involved in contact with women are
explored in more detail.

4.1.2 Funding for partner contact work

Funding for partner contact is a key issue. Several groups commented that they would like
contact to take place more consistently and earlier, but that lack of funding limited what
they were able to do.

Women’s groups sometimes provide partner contact services as part of their existing
workload without extra payment. However, there are specific tasks that should be carried
out with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes that go beyond the services
that these organisations would offer to other women affected by domestic abuse.
In particular, risk assessment, liaison with facilitators, providing explanations of the
programme stages, are all components that would not be necessary for women whose
partners are not on programmes and each of these can take time. Women’s groups are
not usually funded to provide these specialist services. They should arguably be funded at
least in part as an element of funding for work with perpetrators, as an essential part of
the work with perpetrators, and at levels that allow parity of pay for people working with
men and people working with women, as recommended by the RESPECT standards.

If groups start work with men without someone successfully contacting the women on a
consistent, reliable basis, they are likely to leave the women at increased risk. They are
also likely to have an incomplete and minimised version of the history of abuse, which
leaves them more likely to underestimate the risks themselves. Without accurate early
information from the programme, women are at great risk of being manipulated by the
abuser, having incorrect information from him about the programme or made to feel
responsible. Working with perpetrators without any contact with their partners or ex-
partners is therefore dangerous and in direct contravention of the Task Force and
RESPECT guidelines. Lack of funding should, therefore, not be seen as an adequate reason
for not at least attempting to carry out partner contact at the earliest possible stage: this
is an essential part of the work with perpetrators.
4.1.3  Amount and nature of partner contact

The nature and amount of contact with partners and ex-partners varies widely. This is sometimes because of the preferences of the individual woman, sometimes because the group does not carry out partner contact in a systematic way, for various reasons.

Several groups have found it difficult to make contact with partners at an early stage, partly due to lack of resources, including people. They were all aware that this needed to change and were mostly making efforts to do so.

In one group, partner contact does not take place until the man has been on the programme (in the facilitator’s words) “for at least about 6 to 8 weeks, not until I can see he has changed”. This facilitator said that contacting the woman early on might give her the wrong impression of the group. However, without some form of contact, women are much more likely to be given the wrong impression of the group, from the man, as Kathleen’s continuing story illustrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study: Kathleen continued</th>
<th>Importance of early and sustained partner contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>He used to say [after he had started the programme] “if you stop doing X, it wouldn’t happen” and “you need to read this leaflet”, implying I was at fault, I needed to change and that the programme said so. If it hadn’t been for J. [women’s support worker] telling me it wasn’t my fault, I’d have believed him.</td>
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</table>

Kathleen had access to information about what the programme was really saying to her partner, which gave her further insights into his unwillingness to change. It also potentially allowed the programme to monitor his behaviour.

Kathleen was continually abused throughout the time her partner was on the programme and found it invaluable to be able to discuss this with her support worker. Eventually, she used the criminal and the civil justice system to ensure her safety (he is now on remand in prison, awaiting sentence for violent offences). However, her contact with the programme and the opportunity to talk through how her partner was behaving whilst he was on it, was crucial to this process. From her description of her history, it seems unlikely that she would have had this support and information otherwise. Without the information and support, it would have been very unlikely that she would have been able to use the law for protecting her self and her children.

Early, consistent and clearly focused partner contact can ensure that the facilitator is able to assess the man more accurately, that the woman is given clear information about what the programme is for and about her rights to other services. It can also ensure that the woman does not spend months with the wrong impression of the group. However, even with such contact, women do sometimes get incorrect or incomplete messages about the group:

“At first I misunderstood the nature of the programme, I thought it was counselling, I discovered it wasn’t several months in. I would have liked to have
known this sooner. The anger from [husband] comes from things in his childhood, I think he needs to be able to deal with these in counselling.

[telephone interview with woman]

This is not necessarily because the person carrying out partner contact hadn’t given this woman information. It may be that the woman didn’t understand what she was being told or that she did not raise her questions directly. This seems likely, from other information this woman gave in her interview, which indicated that she had not told the partner contact worker about incidents of abuse that had taken place whilst her partner was on the programme, even though the partner contact worker had phoned her weekly and had met up with her on two occasions. This is again not necessarily because the partner contact worker didn’t ask. In fact this woman confirmed that the partner support worker did always ask how things were going. Perhaps the woman needed more specific questions or perhaps she needed her self-confidence and self-esteem boosting more, before she felt able to disclose abuse about which she felt embarrassed. She may have needed some help clarifying that even if her husband had had bad experiences as a child, this neither justified his behaviour nor caused it. Making women feel that they deserve better and helping them to understand that they are not to blame for the abuse can take time but is vital. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated.

Without partner contact or with limited, ineffective or unfocused partner contact, facilitators can end up feeling that men have changed at home, simply because they have changed their behaviour or language in the group. Men often learn “programme talk” (Dobash et al, 2003). This can be used both to try to convince facilitators that they have changed and also as a new way of manipulating or controlling their partners, as this woman found:

“One minute I’m the best thing since sliced bread, then the next he says he can see a power imbalance in my direction and he wants to correct that. I think this is a new term he’s learnt on the programme, I’ve never heard it from him before. I just said “what?” in amazement. He said “you know what I’m talking about”. There were ten other things going on at the time that I was dealing with. It was said in a very calm way”. [face to face interview with woman, three months after partner started programme]

Early partner contact ensures that women have access to other information that can help their safety directly and indirectly. It can strengthen the impact of the work done with the men in the group, by making the men aware that there are real and possible consequences if they do not change their abusive behaviour. This woman had found the information and support she gained from the facilitator, who has kept in contact with her throughout the programme, invaluable. Contact was fairly regular, in line with her stated wishes and was very focused on her safety and her rights to this:

“In February we split [he started programme in Jan]. I’d been thinking about it for a while. Last November he [she described an incident involving the children] and was reported to child protection and there was an investigation. It made me realise how low he’d brought me when I was interviewed by the guards. [Facilitator] told me about court orders, because I didn’t know about
them. [facilitator] was the first professional who came out and cared about me. He [husband] was seeing a psychiatrist who insisted I had to come in to see him – the psychiatrist said I wasn’t to insist on him leaving, that I must look after him, that he’d kill himself if I left. [Facilitator] was very angry about this. He said that his [the psychiatrist’s] patient was [name of husband], not the rest of us.” [telephone interview with woman, 15 months after man started programme, no longer attending]

Partner contact can help with several aspects of promoting women’s safety and changing men’s behaviour and attitudes:

[what did partner support tell you at first proper meeting?]  
“She told me it wasn’t my fault. I believed it was before then. [women’s support worker] was the first to tell me it wasn’t my fault. She has a good way with words. It makes me more confident to know that there is someone there. It helps that I know and he knows that she’s ringing – it keeps him in check!” [face to face interview with woman, 9 months after man started attending programme]

4.1.4 Pro-active partner/ex-partner contact

The RESPECT guidelines reflect lessons learned in research and evaluation of what helps women to be safer. This can include: helping women to understand that the violence is not their fault and is usually illegal, providing information about their legal rights and referring them to relevant specialist agencies. The RESPECT guidelines recommend that women’s support workers make pro-active efforts to contact the women and not to stop until they have spoken to them and are sure that the woman does not want any further advice, information and support.

The evaluation of DVIP ten years ago demonstrated the value of making pro-active efforts to contact women suffering domestic abuse and to provide information about their rights etc without waiting to be asked. This is now reflected in the development of health service protocols in the UK that emphasise the value of identifying domestic abuse and offering advice and information, without waiting for the woman to ask. This evaluation confirmed the value of such practices. Many women said that they had never received any other advice or approached any other agency for help, many said they would not otherwise have asked. Their knowledge about their legal rights and other services reflected this. In almost every interview carried out with women during this evaluation, the interviewer provided some specific information when it became clear that the woman did not have this and could benefit from it. This included information about the programme, the programme content, the unacceptability and illegality of domestic abuse and about legal rights.
This woman’s story illustrates the need for pro-active work and particularly proactively offering women information about their legal and other rights. It also demonstrates that very often, women will need this information repeating at various points, as they are dealing with so many crises and anxieties during this process that they may well not remember everything and it may not be safe for them to take written information away with them.

Helping agencies, for very good reasons, often feel that they have to wait for women to ask for help or for specific information, or are worried that they might overload the woman with information at the wrong times. These reasonable concerns need to be considered against the risks: that the woman may never come for help again; that she may not realise she has any rights to ask about; that she may know something of legal rights but not that they apply to her; that she may not realise the risk of serious long term consequences for her safety, financial security or other aspects of her life if she does not take urgent action (Debonaire and Muralitharan, 2003). There are leaflets and other resources available from women’s organisations, statutory agencies, the Justice department and other sources to help anyone in contact with abused women to give appropriate and useful information and support.

Other research has shown the benefits of offering information and advice pro-actively, particularly at a point of crisis (Kelly et al 1999). One of the reasons many women don’t
consider taking out legal protection or leaving their partner is because they don’t know they can: if provided with the relevant information, they can then make an informed choice as opposed to a choice based on limited information.

An interview with another facilitator who carries out limited partner contact reveals the contradictions involved in waiting for a woman to ask, or assuming that she already knows:

“they all know it’s against the law and that they’ve got rights, and anyway, I don’t know anything about legal rights, that’s not my job. There’s no point in giving most of these women that information anyway, they don’t want to leave their husbands. I refer them to suitable therapists or counsellors, though they often have difficulty paying.” [telephone interview with facilitator]

However, in contradiction to this facilitator’s assertion, many women in this evaluation did not know that they had legal rights or had inaccurate information. Counselling and therapy may be useful in some cases, but in the short term, the most urgent needs are for clear information about legal and practical rights. The facilitator saw the women’s financial difficulties as an obstacle to paying for counselling, not as a sign that they might need advice about benefits or employment or information about where they could get such information.

Many women do not consider leaving their partner until they know that they can. One woman who has suffered years of abuse, illustrated this in a very specific way:

Would you ever consider leaving?
“Many times I did consider it but didn’t have the courage. This is Ireland, Holy Ireland, it wouldn’t be the right thing”. [face to face interview with woman, four months after partner started programme]

Further questions in this interview revealed that this woman had no idea how she would do this or how she would manage financially or practically if she did. She had been in contact with the programme and found this very supportive. The programme had given her information about relevant women’s support services but she had not taken these up, possibly because of the reason she gave above. There was no evidence from her interview that anyone had pro-actively given her information that she might need, so that she could make an informed choice about her future. During this interview, the interviewer said to her that she would like to ask the women’s support service to contact her, rather than she having to make the contact herself. The woman agreed to this and welcomed the offer. The interviewer made contact with the women’s support service and that support service agreed to make pro-active contact with her.

Survivors of abuse may well have been told hundreds of times by their partner that they deserve no better; it understandably usually takes more than one contrary assertion to convince them otherwise.
4.1.6 Summary of benefits of early, consistent and clearly focused contact with women

Partner contact helps the programme to work with the man more effectively, provides the women with essential information and helps to increase the safety and protection of women and children. These are some of the benefits we found:

- Women are given a chance to say what their experiences of domestic abuse are;
- The programme has better information about the nature and history of abuse;
- The programme is better able to assess levels of denial, minimisation and blame;
- The programme and the woman can monitor her safety jointly;
- Women who would not otherwise come into contact with any relevant service get advice, help and information about their legal rights, practical help and relevant support services;
- Women can hear that the violence is not their fault and that they have a right to live free from violence;
- Women can be given clear information about the programme and what they can and cannot expect;
- Facilitators can be more accountable to women and can have a better picture of the effects of the abuse on her and on any incidents of abuse during the programme.

CONCLUSIONS:

- This evaluation found a great deal of evidence to support the need for partner contact to start before the man starts the programme (as specified in RESPECT guidelines) and to continue beyond the time he leaves.
- Without early and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes, facilitators have no way of knowing the levels of denial and minimisation the men are using. They have no way of verifying the safety of the women during the critical first few weeks, which are a high risk time for a significant minority of women, and they have no way of countering any inaccurate information the men may give to their partners or ex-partners.
- Some partner/ex-partner contact services exceed, by some considerable margin, the minimum amount recommended by the RESPECT guidelines.
- Women can and often do end up with confusing or damaging information, or being given completely incorrect information. They are often put at risk of manipulation or further abuse as a result.
- Women frequently drop or postpone legal proceedings or plans to separate when their partner starts a programme. Without early and focused contact from someone in the programme, women may be putting themselves at greater risk in this way, as a result of lack of information about what she can and cannot expect from the programme and from her partner’s participation in it.
- Some women, whose partners apply to or are referred to programmes, have never and would not consider approaching any other agency for information, help or advice. Many of these women know about barring and safety orders but many have little other accurate information about their legal rights or practical matters. Early and focused contact with partners and ex-partners means that women who would not otherwise have access to this crucial and sometimes life
saving help and information will get it. Programmes have the safety of women as their paramount consideration. Failure to provide early and focused partner contact can act against the safety of women, whilst providing such contact can actively promote it (for women who might otherwise have fewer options for their safety).

• A significant minority of women experienced increased levels of dangerous abuse when their partner starts a programme and these are the women who are most likely to be still experiencing this abuse many years after he finishes it (Gondolf, 2002).

• RESPECT guidelines provide further details of content and amount of contact with partners. The Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) manuals have a specific manual for work with women whose partners and ex-partners are on programmes. This manual contains detailed information about assessments, safety planning, activities for use in support groups, guidelines for carrying out contact and support and lots of useful resources, advice and information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. First contact with the partner or ex-partner should ideally take place as soon as possible after the man has applied to or been referred to the programme. Analysis of the risks and dangers faced by women interviewed, the information provided by men on their questionnaires and from other data in this evaluation suggests that the following elements are the minimum required for contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes in Ireland.

2. Initial partner contact should always include:
   a. Information about what the programme is for
   b. Information about what it will include, particularly information about Time Out and other violence avoidance strategies that the man will be taught.
   c. Contact information and encouragement to contact the group if there is anything she wants to ask or if there is further abuse.
   d. Information about how to contact Gardaí and how to contact the nearest women’s refuge, Women’s Aid, Rape Crisis or similar organisation.
   e. Statements demonstrating that the violence is not her fault, that he is the one who has to change, that he can choose to change and that the behaviour is unacceptable and usually illegal.
   f. Information about what protection, barring and safety orders are and what she should do if she wants to apply for one.
   g. Strong encouragement not to stop existing applications for orders, plans to leave, or other sanctions and safety measures.
   h. Opportunity for her to carry out risk assessment and assessment of abusive behaviour she has experienced.

3. Ongoing partner contact should include:
   a. Checking any recent incidents of abuse.
   b. Re-iterating central messages from first contact re unacceptability and illegality of the abuse and that it is not her fault.
   c. Asking her if she has noticed any other changes in partner’s behaviour.
d. Opportunity to ask questions about the programme.

e. Checking on man's use of time out or other violence avoidance strategies.

f. Opportunity to do risk assessment at the end of the programme.

g. Asking for her feedback about the programme.

4. All organisations should work towards meeting the RESPECT minimum standards for amount and timing of contact with women.

5. The geographical requirements of the work in Ireland may mean that the RESPECT standards on the nature of partner contact are not always appropriate, particularly for those organisations or women who live in rural areas. Phone contact may have to replace some of the face-to-face contact recommended by RESPECT.

6. All individuals carrying out contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes (and other abused women) whether or not they are from specific support services, should have training on legal and practical rights for survivors of domestic abuse and on how to give this information appropriately.

7. All women whose partners or ex-partners come into contact with programmes should be given this information, simply and clearly, sometimes even if it does not appear to be immediately necessary. This may well help women to make informed decisions in the future about their own safety and well-being and may be the only opportunity for women to get this information.

8. Individuals carrying out contact with women should have a checklist of information to cover and messages to reinforce, for use in every contact they have with abused women, but particularly the first and the last.

9. Funding for partner and ex-partner contact activities should be equivalent to and simultaneously provided with funding for group work with men.

10. Providing contact with partners and ex-partners, consistently, appropriately and safely, should be considered an essential pre-requisite of running programmes working with domestic abusers.

11. Couples counselling should not be considered appropriate where there has been domestic abuse, until there has been a substantial period of non-violence and until the woman feels able to contribute safely and equally, without fear of consequences, and able to say what she thinks without feeling controlled by her partner. This is a minimum standard suggested by the RESPECT guidelines and is in line with other standards and research. Everyone involved with programmes and women’s support services must make it clear to any woman or man who enquires, that this is not safe whilst the man is attending a programme or still using abuse.
4.2 Specific support services for partners and ex-partners of men on programmes

Wexford, Limerick and North Tipperary have all had specific linked support services for women whose partners and ex-partners are on programmes or who have been on programmes but have now left. This service goes well beyond the Task Force recommendations and also beyond the RESPECT minimum recommendations for partner contact. The work done in these three services has much to teach other organisations running perpetrator programmes in Ireland, the UK and possibly beyond. These services have existed for more than one year and are now well developed although under funded or unfunded. They are therefore able to offer other organisations the benefits of what they have learnt and have already begun to do so. The women’s support workers have talked to each other by phone or have visited each other, to share information and discuss typical challenges. They have also visited or talked to other developing projects, such as Carlow/Kilkenny, who found this very helpful.

Cork MOVE has well-established links to a local women’s support and advocacy project, One Stop Shop Cork (OSS). The programme and the women’s service make referrals between each other. The programme has also recently developed a partner contact service, whilst still linked to the OSS.

The new SEDVIP groups and the NDVIA all have plans for specific parallel support services for women. According to interviews with representatives of these groups, the services they plan to provide seem likely to reflect the level and consistency of the service currently provided by North Tipperary, Limerick and Wexford MOVE groups.

This woman expresses the feelings expressed by many other women about the partner support service they received:

Did the contact with [partner support worker] help you? How?

“I didn’t have to pretend anything. There had never been anyone else to talk to before. I don’t think that they could improve this service, for me it was easily as important as him going on the programme. Even though he’s finished I can ring [partner support worker] any time, we’re still in touch and meet up. I never had anybody I could talk to.”

[telephone interview with woman, seven months after man started programme, not attending programme any more]
An evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland working with abusive men and their partners and ex-partners

The RESPECT guidelines on partner contact suggest a minimum of one initial contact and then six further face to face contact meetings, or a weekly support group. The geographical spread involved for most of the organisations running programmes in Ireland makes this difficult for some partner support workers to provide. However, the partner support workers in some organisations are exceeding the minimum recommended contact by some margin. Weekly phone calls amount to a great deal more than 7 contacts. Most of the partner support workers do try and often succeed in supplementing these phone calls with face to face contact from time to time. They usually meet women in the lobby of a suitable local hotel, or sometimes in a community services building. The travel time and other expenses involved in this can be considerable.

Case Study: Wexford Spousal Support Service for partners and ex-partners of men on the programme

Wexford MOVE has a women’s support service for partners and ex-partners, known as the Spousal Support Service.

Key features:
- The service is provided and managed jointly by Wexford Women’s Refuge and Wexford Rape Crisis centre.
- The spousal support workers are given the woman’s name and contact details as soon as the man has contacted the programme.
- Women are contacted as soon as possible after men first contact the programme. This is usually within one week, sometimes sooner.
- Women are asked to complete an assessment form to provide details of the history of the abuse, using the same checklists as the programme uses with the applicants.
- They are also offered advice, support, information, and the opportunity to join the support group that Wexford WR runs specifically for partners and ex-partners of men on the programme.
- Spousal support workers usually make weekly phone calls to the women, as well as making it clear that they can phone themselves when they need to: “B. [spousal support worker] rings me every Monday at 12am, you can set your watch by her!”;
- The programme facilitators have weekly phone contact with the spousal support workers, to check on the women’s safety and any other relevant matters.
- The spousal support service is regular, consistent and flexible, according to what each woman needs at a particular point.
  “I used to do one-to-one with J. [spousal support worker] once a week, after he started in September, I think. I needed a bit more than telephone contact. Every week I’d meet up with her for an hour to two hours. I knew that if I had a problem, I could always pick up the phone.”
- Women who come into contact with the spousal support service are divided between the two projects, usually according to their needs and experiences but also taking into account the practicalities of what each organisation and the individuals involved can offer and how.

The RESPECT guidelines on partner contact suggest a minimum of one initial contact and then six further face to face contact meetings, or a weekly support group. The geographical spread involved for most of the organisations running programmes in Ireland makes this difficult for some partner support workers to provide. However, the partner support workers in some organisations are exceeding the minimum recommended contact by some margin. Weekly phone calls amount to a great deal more than 7 contacts. Most of the partner support workers do try and often succeed in supplementing these phone calls with face to face contact from time to time. They usually meet women in the lobby of a suitable local hotel, or sometimes in a community services building. The travel time and other expenses involved in this can be considerable.
Not all groups will be in a position to run regular support groups and not all women will want to avail of these services. However, the feedback from the women who had used this service was uniformly positive. There is a wide variety of source material available for use in such a support group and skilled women's support workers will be well able to develop their own ideas.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

- A specific, formally linked women's support service for partners and ex-partners ensures early, consistent and comprehensive partner contact.
- A structured, well managed women's support service provides the programme with essential information that facilitators need, provides the partners with vital information and support, allows the groups to monitor changes in abusive behaviour, particularly at the important early and closing stages of the man's participation in the groups.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The models developed by the Limerick, North Tipperary and Wexford MOVE groups for women’s support services should be applauded and taken as a model for best practice for partner support services.

2. The RESPECT standards on face to face contact should be altered for application in Ireland to reflect the limits on travel for women and to value the amount of phone contact the partner support workers provide.

3. If perpetrator programmes decide to ask a local women’s agency to run their partner support/contact service they should remember that this service has several key features that apply only to women whose partners/ex-partners are on programmes and do not apply to other abused women. These include: liaison between partner support worker and facilitator, regular pro-active contact, providing information about the programme, carrying out risk assessment and other assessments of change in the man’s behaviour etc. This means that these women’s organisations will need additional funding, resources, information and support to run these services.
SECTION FIVE: THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF ORGANISATIONS RUNNING OR PREPARING TO RUN PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES IN IRELAND AND NUMBERS OF PEOPLE USING THEM IN 2003 - 04

5.1 Developments after June 2004

During June 2004 the evaluation team contacted each organisation involved, including those not yet running programmes and those who had already run programmes. This was done initially in writing, by e-mail and/or post, followed up with phone calls and further e-mails and letters. The team extended the deadline for information, as we were aware of the limitations and challenges faced by groups with little or no funding as well as the practical matter of holiday or sick leave.

After the evaluation activities ended in early July 2004 each group received a copy of a version of section 4. Each group received only the information contained in section four that related to them specifically by name and that which was more general. They also received copies of any case studies that appear elsewhere in the report, if they referred to them by name. This was to allow all groups to amend or clarify any factual information about their specific group by name contained in the report before other groups or other agencies saw the full report.

During the summer of 2004, many groups went through various changes and developed plans or practice to improve or consolidate or expand the work they were doing or planned to do. The evaluation team could not evaluate any activities that took place after 1st July 2004 as this was the cut off date for evaluation. When reading this section please bear in mind that many groups may have made changes since the time of writing.

Some groups have provided summaries or more detailed information about their plans or new activities to improve their services. The evaluation team is delighted to hear just how much work the groups have done or are doing to meet standards of good practice that go well beyond the minimum standards laid down in the Task Force Report. Where possible, the details in this section have been amended, but as the team is not in a position to verify or evaluate any of this new information about developments since July 1st, some could not be included.
5.2 Overview

The organisations have sometimes great variations in the ways they organise, the programme materials they use, the contact they have with partners and ex-partners and other relevant features. The one feature they all share is that they aim to improve the safety of women and children. For all but one of the organisations, the main or sole way that they do that is through running group work programmes with men who abuse their partners.

The SEDVIP groups have a policy that “work with abusive men must always be in parallel with the partner support programme and guided by the women themselves as the safety of the women and children affected by domestic violence is the priority” (from communication with SEDVIP co-ordinators).

The NDVIA “has a wider set of objectives, including developing and piloting information sharing protocols, risk assessment, case tracking and monitoring through different elements of the criminal and civil justice system. The focus of the NDVIA’s work with domestic violence offenders is risk assessment, monitoring, tracking, accountability and sanctions” (from communication with NDVIA representatives).

Table 1 (follows) provides an overview of the organisations running or developing programmes to work with abusive men in Ireland, as of 1st July 2004. All the information contained in this chapter and in the tables is from the information provided by groups during the evaluation, between July 2003 and 31st June 2004.

MOVE Ireland has a plan for developing services and the management of groups that will possibly already have begun by the time this report has finished. This may also be the case for all the organisations involved.

Membership of networks

MOVE Ireland is a member of RESPECT, the UK national organisation for organisations running programme with domestic abusers. Individual MOVE groups are not yet members. Some are applying for membership at the time of writing. Some individual members of MOVE groups are members of RESPECT. This does not bind their organisations to the RESPECT aims and principles.

The SEDVIP groups have drawn on the RESPECT guidelines for good practice as part of their development.

NDVIA is not a member of RESPECT.

The UK National Practitioners’ Network (NPN) for work with perpetrators meets twice a year and is open to any interested individuals and organisations, whether or not they are members of RESPECT. It was out of the NPN network that the need for a national organisation was established, but NPN operates independently of RESPECT. Several groups have started sending representatives to the meetings of the NPN.
North Tipperary MOVE runs a holding programme for men waiting to start.
5.3 Adherence to Task Force recommendations and core principles

5.3.1 Task Force recommendation about referral

“Protocols regarding referrals should be developed;”

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**Referrals: Key Findings**

1. The table above does not provide a full picture of the source of referrals and there is more information provided elsewhere in this report, together with a full discussion of the nature and potential of referrals. All groups currently running programmes ask men to make the formal application to the programme themselves. This is usually referred to as self-referral. Organisations currently running or about to start running programmes generally use standard forms which either they or the men complete. If professionals from other agencies refer men to existing groups, they are usually told to ask the man to contact the group himself.
2. As described in more detail elsewhere in this report, men attending groups currently operating are given information about programmes or requested to attend them by several different agencies and individuals: social workers, guards, probation officers, GPs, Community groups, judges, priests, counsellors, addiction services, solicitors. Groups can and sometimes do give these other agencies information about the man’s attendance or non-attendance on the programme, if asked.

3. North Tipperary and Limerick MOVE have referral forms and protocols for other agencies to use as well as forms for men to use.

4. However, the Task Force recommendation is ambiguous. It does not state that all organisations should have and use such a protocol, only that they should be developed. It does not state by whom or for what purpose. This ambiguity leaves much to be desired.

5. Organisations running programmes should consider developing such a procedure, which could still exist alongside an application process requiring the man to make the application himself. This would allow key agencies to share relevant information about the history of the abuse and any other sanctions or interventions. It would also help facilitators to get a fuller picture of the man they are dealing with and have another possible way of sanctioning the man if he fails to attend or breaches programme conditions. Social workers, probation officers etc are likely to have such information.

6. One group (Limerick) has recently decided to try keeping the name and contact details of at least one relevant professional working with each of the men in the groups, if possible. They will refer back to this professional, who may have made the initial referral, after the man has attended assessment and group meetings and as part of the assessment process. This can also help the organisation to deal more effectively with absence, abuse used during the programme, child protection concerns and other matters. They will then refer back to this professional either at the end of the programme or if the man does not attend.

7. NDVIA is developing formal referral procedures, alongside assessment and case tracking procedures, with the courts and probation services in their pilot areas of Bray and Dun Laoghaire. They will be taking referrals only from the court system and will provide information to men about the programme only when they are referred by the courts and judiciary.

8. Definitions about referral, self referral and mandate are sometimes not clear or inconsistently applied. In some cases the use of one of these terms ignores a more complex situation, which could, in some cases, lead to inaccurate risk assessment or safety planning work with victims. There is further detailed discussion of this topic on pages 77 – 88, section 2.6.

9. Some groups use publicity drives using radio, newspaper and public awareness
raising events which bring about referrals from individual men and from agencies.

A formal referral system should include:

1. A written procedure for how men can apply to the programme and a similar one describing the processes agencies should use for making referrals;
2. Guidance about who is and who is not appropriate for programmes, with information about how acceptance criteria will be assessed and whether or not the results of the assessment can be passed back to the referring agency;
3. An application or referral form, to provide programmes with information about the applicant;
4. Details of how to contact intervention programmes and what agencies can expect.

The application forms or referral forms could include:

1. Relevant personal information (name, age, marital status, whether cohabiting or not, number of children, address, phone numbers, occupation);
2. Details of any criminal record, current or pending criminal or civil proceedings they are subject to;
3. Details of any current child protection investigation they are involved with;
4. Details of any drug or alcohol addictions, past or present, and information about treatment currently received for these;
5. Any other relevant medical information, such as details of mental illness, disability etc.;
6. Any other relevant information the referring agency has, such as documentation or details of allegations of abuse;
7. Reasons for the referral/application.

REFERRALS: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organisations should urgently consider having a formal referral system for other agencies to use. This can exist alongside self referral policies.
2. Organisations should also urgently consider the need to use standard forms for applications and referrals, in order that they may be better equipped to monitor the use of their services. Such information will be required by any statutory funder and is an essential tool for monitoring and evaluation.
3. Organisations could consider developing a tool for other agencies to use to inform how they respond to abusers, how they engage abusers without collusion, whether or not to refer men to programmes and if so, how. Of relevant interest may be the practice tool that the Westminster Domestic Violence Forum in London, UK, is developing for external agencies to use to guide their work with domestic abusers. The purpose of this tool is similar to that outlined here.
4. Organisations should consider use of a clear set of definitions of referral and mandate, such as that proposed in this report in section 2.6 (pages 77 – 88) as
this will reflect more accurately the category of compliance each man is described by and contribute to a more thorough assessment of risks for the victim.

5. Networks could consider setting up a short term working group to review information from relevant sources in order to guide the development of such a tool.

6. All of these tasks take time and resources and therefore require funding to be carried out effectively and safely. Recommendations about funding are included in section 5.3.8.

### 5.3.2 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ABOUT ASSESSMENT

“Assessment procedures should be established;”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Who does assessment with man?</th>
<th>How often does assessment take place?</th>
<th>Individual meeting with man</th>
<th>Checklist of abusive behaviour used with man</th>
<th>Individual meeting with woman as part of assessment</th>
<th>Who does assessment with woman</th>
<th>Checklist of abusive behaviour used with woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>F + O</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>no-one</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebar</td>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>no-one</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonmel</td>
<td></td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>Partner contact in development</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Mon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F; new service In development</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Thurs</td>
<td></td>
<td>When place on group available</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>S In development</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>N but encouraged to attend</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O; developing partner contact service 04</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>F + O</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDVA</td>
<td>O - Clinical Director</td>
<td>Every step of process</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tipp</td>
<td>F + O</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>F + O</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSESSMENT: KEY FINDINGS

1. All groups currently running programmes carry out some form of assessment with the man to assess his suitability for the programme. This usually includes an individual meeting with the man to discuss why he is there, what he expects and the sorts of abusive behaviour he has used. All MOVE groups use the MOVE application form, which includes a checklist of abusive behaviour as part of this. This is used in different ways by different groups and to varying degrees.

2. Most groups do not have a formal procedure to guide this assessment, setting out clear criteria for refusal and what to do if they feel that the man is not suitable.

3. One group (Limerick) has a group meeting for all potential participants, in order to provide them with clear information about the programme before assessment. Where there is a specific partner contact service, the woman is usually involved in assessment for programme suitability, in separate sessions with the women’s support service worker. In all these cases the women’s support service worker uses the same checklists of abusive behaviour etc., as those used with the man. This session will almost always take place before the man is allowed to start the programme. This allows the facilitators and others to get a picture of the level of denial and minimisation that the man is using, before he starts. However, this information is not available to groups who do not make contact with women until after the programme has started.

4. Some organisations do carry out initial and ongoing risk assessment.

5. There are some organisations currently running programmes that do not have procedures for assessing the level of continuing risk for the women and children, at the start of the programme, during or at the end. Evidence from this evaluation (see elsewhere in this report) and from research carried out elsewhere demonstrates that this means these programmes are not able to identify and manage risk as effectively as they could and that their ability to help the women to make safety plans or monitor the abuse, is also limited. This can be very dangerous for the women. Whilst the programmes are not responsible for the men’s abuse, they should consider that they have a duty to do as much as they can to identify risk and contribute to protection and risk management, particularly as they are in the unique position of being able to monitor this regularly and also because their stated aims are to try to bring about safety for women and children. Risk assessment is a key feature of this.

6. Organisations currently running programmes do not have procedures for assessing how far the man has changed his behaviour. Again, they are often in a position to do this if they have ongoing contact with women or other relevant agencies and should consider the need for doing this formally and consistently in order to monitor their effectiveness and identify what can help to improve their practice. The data from this evaluation and elsewhere demonstrates that it is dangerous to assume that an intervention will always be successful, simply because it seems to
have been with some men or for some women. Everyone involved in domestic violence intervention can benefit from learning more about what helps to stop domestic violence and finding and using ways of assessing change is something that intervention programmes are well placed to do.

7. Organisations currently running programmes do not carry out risk assessment for other agencies, nor do they provide formal reports to other agencies, such as courts, probation or child protection, on the reasons for refusing a man a place on a programme or about his progress on that programme if he participates (See below). NDVIA is developing inter-agency procedures.

8. Assessment for programme suitability can and sometimes does involve partners and ex-partners of programme applicants. However, at the time of writing, not all groups make contact with women at this stage and therefore do not involve women in assessment for programme suitability.

9. Risk assessment cannot be carried out without involving the partner/ex-partner. Where there are women's support workers, or where the group is working closely with specialist local women's agencies such as rape crisis centres or similar, refuges or similar (see elsewhere in this report, section 4) staff or volunteers working with the women always carry out some form of risk assessment and safety planning with her. Section 4 describes the work in more detail and makes recommendations to help guide the development of this work in those groups who are not currently able to provide this level of service.

10. In any case, it is essential that organisations running programmes keep clear records of the men and women they have contact with. This is needed to help with any change of facilitators or other staff, for safety planning with women, for other agencies if necessary and possibly other reasons.

**ASSESSMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. All groups should have a formal, written policy on assessment including a clear procedure to follow, criteria for assessment and guidance for what to do if a man is not suitable. Developing such policies and procedures would bring programmes into line with RESPECT guidelines.

2. Organisations running perpetrator programmes should consider how to develop procedures for assessing and monitoring risks for women.

3. Individuals carrying out assessments with perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse should have training in risk assessment, monitoring, risk management and safety planning for women. This training should be built on the lessons learned in research and practice worldwide on domestic abuse risk indicators, risk assessment and safety planning.

4. The Task Force recommendations should be developed, so that the minimum standard for assessment can be clearer about possible purposes and functions of
such procedures.

5. Assessment for programme suitability should establish which of the six categories of mandate, compliance and referral specified in section 5.6 of this report each man falls into. This would help facilitators to establish any conditions attached to the men’s attendance and use these when necessary, for example, if a man is absent from the group or re-assaults his partner and to be clear about the men’s motivation for starting the programme.

6. All of these tasks take time and resources and therefore require funding to be carried out effectively and safely. Recommendations about funding are included in section 5.3.8.

5.3.4 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORE PRINCIPLES ABOUT LINKS TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- “Intervention programmes should be linked to the judicial process where possible;
- Contact with the judicial system should be used as a gateway to intervention programmes. Judges should have options to recommend that offenders be assessed for participation in intervention programmes, but never as an alternative to criminal sanctions currently available nor should they have implications for the granting or duration of a barring/safety order;
- Judges in civil cases should be made aware of what programmes are available and should be able to refer men for assessment for suitability to participate in such a programme as a mandatory part of the court order.”
LINKS TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM: KEY FINDINGS

1. Seven groups have guards and/or probation officers on their Board of management.

2. Judges and probation officers are referring men to perpetrator programmes, though not in large numbers. This is not the same as mandating men to attend, whether via a court order or as part of a sentence.

3. Currently, there is little evidence of formal policies and procedures to formalise links between the organisations running perpetrator programmes and the civil and criminal justice systems. Some groups do receive what are effectively referrals from other agencies including probation, by allowing probation officers and others to use their application form to introduce a man to the programme. The NDVIA is developing such formal interagency procedures and policies.

4. Facilitators, probation officers and others connected to perpetrator programmes hold varying views and contradictory information about the scope for and use of mandates to attend programmes. Some programme facilitators reported that they had men on their programmes who had been mandated to attend, as part of a probation order. Others stated that this was not possible in Ireland, that there was no such thing as mandated attendance.
5. Probation officers interviewed said that it is possible for them to require men to attend programmes as a compulsory part of probation orders, and that judges can include participation in programmes as part of criminal sentencing. This would seem to indicate a need for programmes and probation service to have clarification of the nature and scope of mandates and referrals and of the difference between the two.

6. At least two participants in two different groups were mandated to attend in the last year, one as part of a probation order and one whilst criminal proceedings were suspended at court. This shows that despite confusion about who can mandate, both the courts and probation service can and do. However, probation officers and facilitators gave the impression that in reality, there are very few sanctions actually used by the courts for non-attendance at group.

7. The NDVIA, when it runs programmes, will only take men as part of a court or probation mandate, with an attached sanction if the men fail to attend or co-operate.

8. There is more information elsewhere in this report (section 2.8) about the sources of referrals, court mandates and voluntary referrals.

9. Local and national women’s organisations working with victims of domestic abuse have a very clear and comprehensive picture of the nature and impact of the civil and criminal justice systems in relation to victims of domestic abuse. There is overwhelming evidence from this evaluation (in interviews with women’s organisations and with women) and from relevant research (O’Connor and Kelleher, 1999) that the civil and criminal legal systems are not consistently providing women and children with the protection they are legally entitled to and are not sanctioning abusers as they could. Having a relevant women’s organisation on the board or steering group may also help to inform the links between programmes and the criminal justice systems.

10. Lack of effective and consistent responses from the civil and criminal law undermine the strength of perpetrator programmes, as confirmed in this evaluation by interviews with some of the facilitators and the women’s support workers and in other research such as Gondolf (2002) and Dobash et al (2000). It is difficult for men’s programme facilitators to have full confidence in teaching men that their behaviour is not only unacceptable but illegal and that it could have severe consequences for them such as criminal proceedings if they do not have reasonable confidence that such consequences are likely. Facilitators often commented that they found it difficult to know how to enforce men’s attendance or compliance when there seemed to be no sanction available other than suspending them from the programme. Whether or not programmes have formal links with the justice systems, they have to work with the consequences of the successes or failures of these systems and their work would be strengthened by a more consistent and effective response from the legal system.
11. Organisations currently running programmes do not carry out risk assessment for other agencies, nor do they provide formal reports to other agencies, such as courts, probation or child protection, on the reasons for refusing a man a place on a programme or about his progress on that programme if he participates.

12. Several groups and some professionals working in the court system have made considerable efforts to develop links between the courts and the programmes for abusers. The Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform has a role here, in encouraging courts and the judiciary to link to local groups. The NDVIA also has a role, as the organisation piloting new methods of responding to domestic violence, particularly those involving the courts. The results of their work with courts in their pilot areas could be used to support the development of better links in other areas.

**LINKS TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM: RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should issue clear guidance to all groups running programmes, to probation officers and to courts, about the current legal status of different types of referrals to groups, making clear which are mandatory and suggesting how these might be enforced.

2. This guidance should include a reminder to all those involved in work with domestic abusers that most of the behaviour involved is criminal and can be subject to the criminal law. The department could consider including a list of abusive behaviours, linking each to the corresponding crime and to any relevant legal remedies, both civil and criminal. This would help organisations and individuals involved to retain a clear understanding of the role of the legal system in responding to domestic abuse and to provide abusers and victims with this clear understanding.

3. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should urgently consider the recommendations made by the Safety and Sanctions report, in order to strengthen all available responses to domestic violence, including the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes.

4. Clear policies and procedures should be established between organisations running programmes and the courts and probation services. These should be to ensure that appropriate referrals are made and inappropriate ones not made, to ensure that courts have a clearer understanding of programmes and programmes have a clearer understanding of the role of courts and probation. These procedures could include: clear contracts between groups and courts/probation, stating what information each agency would want to know or would provide, the status of any referral and the sanctions available, who would carry out risk assessment, etc.

5. MOVE Ireland and/or SEDVIP should consider establishing a working group on links to the justice system in order to review the possible courses of action. The
networks could then pilot and develop these policies and procedures with groups able to do so and then to disseminate the lessons learned. The working group could be established along similar lines as the MOVE working groups on programme development and on partner contact.

6. Each organisation running a programme for abusers should make active efforts to recruit a board or steering group member from at least one criminal justice agency, such as court, probation, Gardaí.

7. The pilot project being developed by the NDVIA should be monitored and evaluated so that the lessons learned can be used by all those involved in sanctioning and working with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

8. Greater consistency in the enforcement of existing legislation would benefit women’s safety and would benefit the operation of intervention programmes.
5.3.5 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ABOUT CONTACT WITH PARTNERS OF MEN ON PROGRAMMES

“There should be contact with the partner to verify the safety and well-being of the abused women and children;”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provided information re how to contact prog</th>
<th>Formal partner contact policy and procedure</th>
<th>How much contact proactively offered during prog</th>
<th>How much contact proactively offered after programme ends or man leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Developing – to be ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebar</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonmel</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Mon</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>meeting 3 times p/a; occasional phone contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Thurs</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>[at start woman can contact facilitator]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>weekly by phone; some face to face contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDVIA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Not currently running programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tipp</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>weekly by phone; some face to face contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Regular; according to her needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTACT WITH WOMEN: KEY FINDINGS

Making and maintaining contact with women, June 2004

Please note: the Task Force specifies contact with “partners”. We have extended this to include ex-partners of men currently on programmes, particularly as some women who
are living with their partner when he first makes contact with the programme subsequently separate from them and therefore become ex-partners, but also because ex-partners are often still in contact with men on programmes.

Three groups (Limerick MOVE, North Tipperary MOVE, Wexford MOVE) provide structured, formalised women’s support service for partners and ex-partners of men contacting programmes, including those who apply but subsequently leave or do not start. Some aspects of these services go beyond some of the minimum standards laid down by the RESPECT network of perpetrator programmes. All three go well beyond the Task Force guideline stated above. These services provide other organisations in Ireland and beyond with a model for best practice that should be widely applauded, supported and promoted.

The four groups developing new programmes all plan to have formal support services for women, running on similar lines to those described above (Waterford, Clonmel, Carlow/Kilkenny, NDVIA). As long as the actual service provided is close to the plans they have made, these groups will be fulfilling both Task Force recommendations.

One group that does not provide a separate women’s support service nevertheless maintains regular contact with partners and ex-partners throughout the time the man is on the programme, via one of the two facilitators. (Wicklow MOVE)

- The facilitator has the benefit of being able to use space, time and resources paid for by an employer who supports this work. This is in effect a subsidy to the programme by that employer, who is not in the Justice system.
- This facilitator’s practice and the effects it has had on the women involved demonstrate that contact with partners can be consistent, early and focused, even if not provided by a partner support service. This level of contact should be taken as a minimum acceptable standard and is close to fulfilling the RESPECT guidelines on amount and content of contact with partners. However, the delivery of it is in contravention of the RESPECT guideline that partner contact should not be carried out by anyone working with the men. There is further discussion of this practice and the reasons for considering separation of the two functions of work with men and contact with women elsewhere in this report, both in the research review (above) and in the more detailed findings about practices in current use in Ireland (below).

Five further organisations (Cork, Dublin Monday, Dublin Thursday, Galway, Kildare) are meeting or close to meeting the Task Force recommendation, to varying degrees. This variation highlights the fact that the recommendation is a bare minimum and needs further clarification in order to be more effective. From information provided by the chair of MOVE Ireland during the time of writing this report, all of these organisations are currently reviewing their ability to meet this guideline. This includes planning how to meet the standards required by the Task Force and by MOVE Ireland.
Four of these five groups try to make the first contact as soon as possible after the man’s assessment interview. (Cork MOVE, Dublin Monday MOVE, Galway MOVE, Kildare MOVE).

Cork MOVE makes contact with the partners and then offers to refer them to One Stop Shop Cork (OSS Cork). The person making contact with the woman is not the same person facilitating the work with the men. As OSS Cork is represented on the Board of Cork MOVE and the representative is an active member of Cork MOVE and MOVE Ireland, there is scope for this service to be developed and formalised quickly. Cork MOVE co-ordinator also makes contact with women from time to time during the programme. **Since the time of writing this report, Cork MOVE have reported to the evaluation team that they are developing an ongoing contact service with partners and ex-partners of programme participants, in close consultation with OSS Cork.**

Both Dublin groups are operating entirely in voluntary time and the facilitators for both groups have other full time occupations, which limits the amount of time available to make regular contact with partners. The Dublin groups are planning to sub-contract partner contact for both groups to an individual practitioner.

Kildare MOVE has also, for similar reasons, found it difficult to make contact with the woman before the man starts the programme, but wants to do so. The group is larger than the two Dublin groups but is still run almost entirely on voluntary time and by people with other full time occupations, which limits the amount of time available for partner contact. They are currently developing a formal partner contact service with a local women’s support service. As of September 2004 this development has been delayed, due to lack of resources available to the women’s support service concerned.

Galway MOVE encourages women to be involved at the assessment stage and encourages women to contact the facilitator if they have any concerns. The facilitator does attempt to make early contact with the women but does not carry out regular contact throughout the programme.

One group (Dublin Thursday) does make contact with partners and ex-partners of men on the programme, but has a policy of not attempting to make contact with them until the man has been on the programme for between 6 and 12 weeks. Although this meets the Task Force recommendation, it highlights the fact that this recommendation is a bare minimum. Other groups also do not currently manage to make early contact with women, but wish to do so and are making efforts to do this. The facilitator of this group does not. Research and practice evidence highlights the fact that a significant number of women are at increased risk during the first few weeks of a man’s participation in programmes (Gondolf, 2002) and that without contact from the group the women can be easily manipulated by her partner giving her inaccurate information about the programme nature, purpose and content (see information elsewhere in this report). Women can also feel that the programme leaders are on her partner’s side and not working for their safety if they are not contacted early on and reassured that this is not the case.
Two further groups (Athlone and Castlebar) were not in a position to maintain contact consistently during the evaluation, although both groups try to make contact with women at the start and always invite the women to contact them. Both groups wish to provide early and consistent partner contact services and are currently developing partner contact services involving local women’s organisations. These organisations are currently not meeting the Task Force guidelines but are working towards them. Information provided by the chair of MOVE Ireland other relevant individuals during the writing of this report indicates that both these organisations are currently reviewing their ability to meet the standard and the relevant MOVE Ireland guideline and planning how to improve this ability.

MOVE Ireland is currently reviewing the systems for making and maintaining contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes (personal communication between the chair of MOVE Ireland and the evaluation team, July 2004). This review includes the establishment of a working group on partner contact (first meeting, June 2004), to share ideas and practice. It also includes systematically reviewing the partner and ex-partner contact service provided by groups at the moment and identifying methods of providing such contact for groups not currently able to do this, or only able to do this to a limited extent. MOVE guidelines require all member groups to carry out contact with partners and ex-partners. These developments are welcome and indicate that the network as a whole is committed to ensuring contact wherever possible and safe for the women.

Groups can only find out which women do and do not want this service by making early contact with all partners and ex-partners as a matter of course. The women should first be provided with very clear information about what the programme does and does not offer, what they can expect from their partners during the programme, the support and information available to them through the programme’s support service for partners and ex-partners and the support available to them through other routes. They should also be clearly told that they are not responsible for the violence or for helping their partners to change. They should then be told exactly what the support and contact service offers them and given the opportunity to discuss what use they wish to make of this service.

**Promoting women’s safety**

Although most groups are providing early partner contact and a significant number are developing or already providing ongoing contact, the purpose of this contact is sometimes missed or not fulfilled as much as it could be. Many of the individual facilitators and some of the partner contact workers carrying out such contact do not routinely give women basic information about their safety and their rights to protection. These are essential pieces of information if the purpose of the contact (“in order to verify the safety and well-being of women and children”) can be fully met. They are also essential for meeting RESPECT guidelines on content of partner contact.

Information about legal and other rights for abused women is essential and life saving. Abused women usually do not know about these rights and sometimes remain with
abusive partners simply because they do not realise that they have other options. 3 people carrying out contact with women said that the women should know about their legal rights from other sources yet 2 out of those 3 and one other person carrying out partner contact revealed that they themselves did not. One partner contact worker stated that she did not know much about legal rights and had inaccurate and incomplete information about civil orders. Further individuals and organisations involved in this evaluation stated that they can and do give specific information about legal and other rights to abused women whose partners/ex-partners are attending programmes. However, in some of these cases, the evaluation team found that even though the individuals carrying out partner contact said that they had provided this information, the women concerned did not know what their legal rights were and in several cases they were in great need of this information.

In at least two cases, the evaluation interview was suspended in order that the interviewer could provide this information, which was clearly the greater need at the time (see case study “Carol” in chapter 7 of this report). This highlights the fact that no-one, evaluator, partner contact worker, women’s support worker or other, should be complacent about providing information and about the manner in which it should be provided. It was also a reminder that some information will need to be repeated and that practitioners need to be aware that the woman in front of them at any one time may never come back again and therefore may need to be given information that does not appear to be immediately useful, as she may well need it in the future. For example, if women are not told that they are entitled to help with re-housing if they ever do want to leave, many women will not consider it. It is therefore important to give all women this information, including those who say that they do not want to leave. It doesn’t take long to say and may well save their lives in the future.

There could be many reasons why individual women did not have information they needed: because the information had either not been given at all, it was not at an appropriate time or that the information was not specific or not repeated when necessary. This does not mean that the people carrying out partner contact do not know the correct information or that they are not providing it. It does mean, however, that this information will usually need to be provided more than once, given in ways and language that are appropriate for each individual specific woman and that sometimes women may be given information during a crisis that subsequently needs to be repeated, sometimes more than once, in ways that make sense for her and are specific to her situation. It is also vital that the information is accurate and up to date. This can be helped by ensuring that the person doing partner contact has access to the accurate information, via training, relevant leaflets or websites and contact with relevant legal and other professionals.

Several (at least 3) people carrying out partner contact appeared to focus on information about counselling and other mental health services, rather than information about protection and practical help. They appear to be making assumptions that if the woman wants such help, she will ask for it, or that if she is not considering leaving her partner, she will not need it. This also demonstrates a tendency to assume that if a woman hasn’t already tried to leave or doesn’t ask about how she could leave, that she doesn’t want to. Many women fear that they will be judged if they tell someone that they want to leave their husband, the father of their children. Others do not realise that this is an option.
These are therefore risky assumptions to make about abused women. Many women may not believe they deserve or qualify for such help. Many have such damaged self confidence that they will not ask for information. There is further discussion of this elsewhere in the report (chapter 4).

In many cases, women's safety cannot be promoted simply by making contact and neither can it be reasonably assumed that all such women have access to all the relevant information about their options for protection and help. Evidence from this evaluation and from other research (see Burton et. al, 1998) confirms that many abused women who come into contact with perpetrator programmes have never had any information or advice from any other source and that many have no idea about their legal or other rights.

People working with abused women are often wary of offering too much information, or offering information to women in crisis, because of concerns about over-loading the women with information or because of practitioners’ assumptions about what she wants to do. However, pro-actively offering this information, without making any assumptions about whether or not the woman needs it at that time, is essential, if the Task Force recommendation is to be met fully, and is often life-changing for the women concerned.

**CONTACT WITH WOMEN: RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Contact with partners is required by the Task Force and by RESPECT guidelines and should be treated as compulsory for all groups running programmes for domestic abusers.

2. The Task Force recommendation should be considered a bare minimum, as it does not specify amount, purpose and nature of this contact and risks leaving some women in increased danger. This standard urgently needs to be developed and made more specific, in order to promote women’s safety more consistently and reduce the risks associated with a man's participation on a programme. Failure to make early contact with partners, ideally before the man starts the programme, means that the woman’s safety cannot be assessed and her understanding of the programme is at great risk of manipulation by her partner.

3. Everyone carrying out contact with partners should have specific training on women’s legal and practical rights, including their rights to police and court protection, specialist women’s services such as refuges, women’s support services, Women’s Aid groups (national and local) and Rape Crisis centres, money advice and divorce laws. This need only be an overview and should be supplemented by information about where women can go for more detailed advice.

4. Everyone carrying out partner contact should make every effort to offer information about legal rights and relevant support services, including refuges, to all women they contact.

5. Women should be provided with clear information about the purpose and nature of the programme, the purpose and nature of partner contact and support. It is
particularly important that women understand that the purpose of the work is to improve their safety and welfare.

6. The RESPECT guidelines provide minimum standards for purpose, amount, nature and content of contact with women whose partners and ex-partners are on programmes. These could form the basis for this aspect of standards for programmes in Ireland.

7. See also other recommendations about contact and support with and for women, in section 4 of this report.
5.3.6 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFETY

- “There should be limited confidentiality to allow for the sharing of any information that can advance the safety and protection of women with the appropriate persons/agencies;
- The protection, safety and security of women and children should be the paramount consideration in developing programmes;”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Safety for women stated on literature as paramount</th>
<th>Procedures for dealing with information about risk to children</th>
<th>Procedures for dealing with information about threats and admissions of abuse to woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebar</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonmel</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Mon</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Thurs</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDVIA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tipp</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All organisations stated clearly on their literature that promoting the safety of women and children is their primary aim. Interviews with facilitators and others involved in running programmes and partner contact services confirmed that this aim is reflected in individual commitment. All organisations operating programmes have clear child protection policies and procedures for dealing with admissions and threats of violence to women. Most facilitators, however, said that these policies and procedures were untested in practice.

Groups tend to use the Health Board guidelines on the protection of children as a basis for their child protection policies.
5.3.7 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- Work with men should not be done in isolation, but in full collaboration with the statutory services and women’s organisations.
- There should be a co-ordinated approach between treatment programmes, the courts, the Gardaí and agencies providing support for women. The issue should be addressed by the National Steering Committee;

I. Collaboration with Women’s Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of women’s organisations on Board</th>
<th>women’s org provides or manages partner contact</th>
<th>women’s orgs involved in reviewing programme content</th>
<th>women’s orgs consulted re policy and practice</th>
<th>established, relevant women’s organisation in area?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Steering gp in development, includes women’s org.</td>
<td>In negotiation</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebar</td>
<td>Steering gp in development. No data about women’s orgs.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonmel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In development</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Mon</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Thurs</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDVIA</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tipp</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>no board</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LINKS TO WOMEN’S ORGANISATIONS: KEY FINDINGS

1. Five groups (Castlebar, Dublin Monday, Dublin Thursday, Galway, Wicklow) currently have no women’s organisation on their board of management or do not have an active board and have no contact with women’s organisations, apart from giving women contact information about these organisations. These five groups are not meeting the Task Force recommendation about links to women’s organisations.

2. Nine groups (Carlow/Kilkenny, Clonmel/South Tipperary, Cork, Kildare, Limerick, North Tipperary, NDVIA, Waterford, Wexford) have an active board of management
or steering group with at least one women’s organisation actively participating on that board. These are usually the local women’s refuge or the local Rape Crisis group or another women’s support service that includes responding to domestic abuse in their work. In all of these groups, the women’s organisation concerned is running, managing or being consulted about any women’s support service for partners and ex-partners of men on programmes. Most consult the women’s organisation about their work in some way. These groups are currently meeting Task Force Recommendation about links to women’s organisations.

3. One group (Athlone) is currently developing a steering group or board which includes a relevant women’s organisation. When this steering group is established, provided it does include a women’s organisation actively able to participate and collaborate with the work, this organisation will be meeting the Task Force Recommendation about links to women’s organisations.

4. Relevant specialist women’s organisations, such as refuges, Women’s Aid groups, Rape Crisis Centres and other similar organisations have specialist skills, knowledge, resources, information and contacts. These resources can help programmes: a) to work more effectively with women whose partners and ex-partners are on programmes by providing women with relevant specific information about legal rights, for example; and b) to carry out the work with men more effectively by providing an independently run but linked service which ensures women can have accurate information about the programme, can represent women’s interests to the rest of the organisation including facilitators, can help to promote safety of women and children, particularly in situations where the man has made threats or admissions of abuse, etc (Paymar 1999). They also help to provide a regular reality check for individuals working only with abusers, to help keep the focus on women’s safety and maintain an understanding of the effects of abuse on women.

5. In particular, relevant women’s organisations have enormous amounts of information about the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on women, the use and impact of the legal systems, difficulties women face in getting help and protection, and the impact of programmes on women they have contact with. All of this information can help programmes and particularly facilitators working with men to maintain an overview of the behaviour of the men they work with and the consequences of that behaviour.

6. From the point of view of women’s support organisations interviewed in this evaluation, the relationship between them and a programme working with men can be full of concerns and tensions, as well as opportunities. The concerns raised include:

• Worry that their association with a particular programme will seem like a vote of confidence or seal of approval without real evidence for this;
• Time needed to put into the development of services for men, when funding for services for women is not enough;
• Any evidence or suspicion of allowing men on programmes to justify or
minimise their abusive behaviour or blame it on someone else will increase the concern that the programme is knowingly or unknowingly allowing men to continue to abuse and justify their abuse;

- If the programme is seen as counselling or therapy for the men, abusers and partners will see the abusive behaviour as something medical or as a result of something done to the abuser, rather than the abuser’s own responsibility;
- Concern that programmes are not the most effective intervention to deal with domestic violence;
- Programmes are not addressing all forms of abuse or use inappropriate language (or women’s organisations believe this);
- Feeling that they are not given sufficient time and opportunity to give their views and represent women’s experiences adequately and that sometimes they are being used rather than properly consulted;
- Women’s organisations are often poorly resourced and may simply lack the worker hours and resources to make this a priority for them, even if they want to.

At times it can seem too overwhelming to take these challenges on, in the face of dealing with the reality of the effects of domestic abuse on the women and children they help every day. At other times or for other combinations of organisations, the women’s organisation sees participation in running a perpetrator programme as an essential or desirable opportunity, for these reasons, amongst others:

- In order to ensure that women’s experiences are heard and made an integral and central part of the programme, with increasing safety of survivors as the programme goal;
- Because women repeatedly request a service for their partner to change his abusive behaviour;
- To ensure that partner contact and support is done appropriately;
- Because they feel that the element of the service that is focusing directly on helping women is part of their organisational aims;
- To make contact with women who would not otherwise have contact with any relevant agency;
- To make sure that the facilitators and others involved have the widest possible understanding of women’s experiences of abuse, the risks and needs, and particularly about women’s experiences of sexual abuse, as abusers often fail to disclose this;
- In order to hold programmes to account.

7. If women’s organisations are not properly resourced, investments of funds in perpetrator programmes can seem profoundly unjust and possibly unethical and inappropriate to women’s organisations and others, especially given the high levels of attrition and recidivism amongst programme applicants and participants. With this background and given the concerns above, recommendations to perpetrator programmes that they work in collaboration with women’s organisations may simply not be met.

8. In three cases where the group is already running programmes (Wexford, North Tipperary and Limerick), the partner support service is provided by one or two
local specialist women’s organisations, usually the local women’s refuge or other similar specialist organisation and/or the Rape Crisis Centre. They bring with them the skills, knowledge and resources of their other work with survivors of domestic violence, which has the potential to add considerably to the benefits to the women.

The three remaining South East groups are also working with relevant women’s organisations to provide contact with partners and ex-partners when they are running programmes.

9. NDVIA does not expect women’s organisations to provide support to the partners/ex-partners, as this is an integral part of any work with offenders and the responsibility of those engaging with offenders.

10. In at more than one case, local or national women’s organisations designed and delivered domestic abuse awareness training for other members of the group, including the facilitators.
## 2. Links to statutory agencies and regional networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Justice agencies represented on Board/Steering group</th>
<th>Health and social care agencies represented on Board/S. gp</th>
<th>Represented on local or regional networks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Steering gp in development</td>
<td>Steering gp in development</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebar</td>
<td>Steering gp in development</td>
<td>Steering gp in development</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonmel</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dublin Mon</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
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<td>Dublin Thurs</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>No steering group</td>
<td>No steering group</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDVIA</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>North Tipp</td>
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<td>Waterford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>No steering group</td>
<td>No steering group</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LINKS TO OTHER AGENCIES: KEY FINDINGS

1. Many of the groups were started originally by a probation officer or with the support of the probation service.

2. Many facilitators and co-ordinators have professional connections to or work within many different relevant local agencies, which brings referrals and liaison between agencies.

3. Organisations with an active board of management have several statutory agencies and at least one women’s organisation on that board.

4. Some men were brought to the attention of programmes because of a child protection enquiry.

5. Each of the organisations currently running programmes has at least one and usually more than one facilitator or steering group/Board member who is a mental health practitioner, a social worker; an alcohol or drugs counsellor or a probation officer. Some also have members from education, Accord or other advice agency. This inevitably brings links to these specific services, which is usually a benefit, though sometimes a challenge. Some services provide help in kind, or subsidise the work...
of the group by allowing a facilitator or someone else to do work relating to the programme using time and resources provided by these services. However, it can also sometimes lead to the organisation having a focus on the work guided mainly by their own professional background, particularly if there is no active board or steering group to widen the organisational perspectives.

Case study example of programmes collaborating with women’s organisations: SEDVIP

The four groups in the SEDVIP network all have at least one and usually two or more relevant women’s organisations on their steering groups or boards of management. These women’s organisations have been able to provide information about women’s experiences, maintain accountability to women, guide the development of women’s support services for partners and ex-partners and review programme materials. Some women in the partner organisations commented that this had sometimes involved challenging discussions but that this struggle was perhaps inevitable and in any case healthy, as part of the development of work responding to abusive men. All felt that their presence was vital. Interviews with other members of these organisations and with the SEDVIP co-ordinators confirmed that the other people also saw the presence of women’s organisations as vital. They also found the challenging discussions vital for developing services that are as accountable to women as possible and for working towards delivering programmes that are grounded in women’s experiences of domestic abuse.

This year, SEDVIP has started an ongoing consultation process with women’s organisations and with women who are in contact with those organisations. Following consultation amongst its member groups, including the women’s organisations involved, the co-ordinators sent multiple copies of a short questionnaire to all the relevant women’s organisations in the region (verified in interviews with three of these organisations). The questionnaire asks for views and experiences to answer the following questions:

1. What can this group (the local steering group involved in setting up programmes for perpetrators) do to help women and children be safe i.e. what are your concerns about your partner being involved in the group?

   If you no longer live with your partner what concerns do you think the steering group needs to be alerted to in relation to safety issues for women and children?

2. What issues do you think should be addressed in a perpetrator programme?

3. What can the perpetrator programme do that would be supportive to them?

The network invites the organisations to circulate these questions to any women they feel would be willing to give their views. They have stated that this is an ongoing process, to continue as long as programmes are running, as a direct form of feedback from women to men’s programmes. The SEDVIP co-ordinators also included information about what each of the steering groups running or developing perpetrator programmes are doing.

Women’s organisations interviewed said that they welcomed this consultation and had begun circulating the questionnaire. Some women have already given their views and the SEDVIP co-ordinators are compiling these.
LINKS TO WOMEN’S AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organisations running programmes can take various steps to include women's organisations in their work, as required by the Task Force recommendations. A checklist of activities to guide this process has been included in the appendices. The case study above provides an example of consultation with women's organisations that highlights the fact that organisations working with and for abused women have a unique and vital perspective on the experiences and needs of women and children affected by domestic abuse that cannot be gained in any other way.

2. Organisations running perpetrator programmes should listen carefully to any objections or questions raised by the women's organisations, consider what, if anything, they may need to change in order for women's organisations to be able to work with them and offer to start a dialogue at least, even if the women's organisation is not in a position to make formal links. The onus of responsibility should be on the programme working with violent men, to be able and prepared to demonstrate to those working with the victims of violent men how joint working is safe and appropriate, not on the women's organisations to have to fit in with the programmes.

3. Women's organisations can use Task Force recommendations and other good practice guidelines as part of deciding how to link with a group running perpetrator programmes. A checklist of activities to guide this process has been included in the appendices.

4. Organisations with no active board or steering group should take urgent steps, supported if necessary by the network to which they belong, to recruit more board or steering group members from a range of statutory and voluntary agencies, particularly specialist women's organisations.

5. Links to local women's organisations often include the fact that women's organisations are running or supervising the provision or development of support and contact services for partners and ex-partners of men on programmes. These organisations are often best placed to run the partner and contact service. However, the service for partners and ex-partners of men on programmes should be specific for those women, as they have specific needs that other abused women (whose partners or ex-partners are not on programmes) do not have. This means that the partner/ex-partner contact and support service, even where it is provided by a local specialist women's organisation, should have specific funding for this work and should be well linked with the intervention programme working with the men, in order to ensure that women have access to accurate information about the programmes, that facilitators have access to accurate information about the women's experiences and safety, and for the other reasons specified above and in chapter 4.
5.3.8 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT FUNDING

- “Intervention programmes for offenders should be adequately resourced and should be available in areas where support services for women and children (such as refuges) are in place;
- Funding intervention programmes should be based on local need and priorities; and adherence to the core principles set out above;
- Funding for programmes should be provided by the Department of Justice from their Probation and Welfare service votes.”

Funding, June 2004: KEY FINDINGS

1. All the organisations currently running programmes are operating in areas where there are established specialist support services for women and children. These typically include refuges, Rape Crisis Centres and other similar services for women experiencing physical, sexual, emotional and other forms of abuse from a partner or ex-partner. There are several other areas where such support services exist for women but as yet there are no perpetrator programmes.

2. Assessment, facilitation, contact with women, specific support services for women, and ongoing liaison with group members/partners and other relevant people in order to run the group are all time consuming and incur expenses including travel, phone calls and letters. They are carried out most consistently in those groups where there is either a paid co-ordinator or a facilitator who is able to use time and resources paid for by their usual employer.

3. Specific support services for women whose partners and ex-partners make contact with or are attending programmes involves a great deal of work. Some aspects are specific to partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and do not apply to other women.

4. The support services for women are essential for the programmes to do effective work with the perpetrators and therefore should be considered part of the programme, rather than part of the existing women’s service, for funding. Running support services for partners and ex-partners out of existing funding for women’s support services means that the programmes are receiving a subsidy from these women’s services and from the Health Boards and other agencies funding women’s services, which is in contravention of the Task Force recommendations.

5. Specific funding for organisations running programmes, where it exists, is mostly from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, usually distributed via the networks concerned.

6. Three groups in the MOVE Ireland network currently receive some of this funding for employing a paid co-ordinator (Limerick, Cork, North Tipperary).
The department also funds the two job-share co-ordinators of SEDVIP, through the Men’s Development Network (MDN).

NDVIA has one full time paid co-ordinator and one part time Clinical Director, funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. NDVIA receives funding from the department for a range of activities, not solely for the provision of perpetrator programmes.

As of June 2004, all groups currently running programmes receive funding from the Department of JELR, via MOVE Ireland, for facilitator expenses.

The SEDVIP groups are currently applying to the department for funding for training of key staff and volunteers and for attending the National Practitioners’ Meetings (of the network of programmes working with domestic abusers) in the UK.

No group currently operating receives funding to pay fees or wages for the facilitators. Some facilitators or others involved in running the groups are doing so partly in work time for other employers, particularly Health and Probation services. Some groups use meeting space donated by Health, Probation, Community or Children’s services. Some can use phones and other office facilities provided by their employer.

Some groups have waiting lists and several are worried about doing advertising or promotion of their programme if they do not have funding to pay for the assessment, facilitation etc., that would be required to meet anticipated demand.

This evaluation represents the first formal external evaluation of organisations’ ability to meet the Task Force standards and other criteria for effectiveness. Groups and networks do have their own self-monitoring systems, though the evaluation team did not find evidence that all groups take part in this at present. This evaluation forms a starting point for external monitoring and the findings can be used to inform future funding decisions and the development of any monitoring and accreditation system.

The Task Force recommendations are a minimum standard for what is necessary to run programmes that do not endanger women’s safety. Further and more detailed standards could be developed, based on research evidence about what is most effective for changing men’s abusive behaviour (see elsewhere in this report for a fuller discussion of this).

If groups are run primarily by volunteers, this often limits the amount of time and resources available to the group, which in turn can limit their abilities to develop an effective and accountable programme that adheres to good practice standards or to maintain the administration, publicity and other aspects of the service that are necessary to sustain an effective ongoing programme. Lack of funds profoundly influences how many men a group can handle.
FUNDING: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Funding for perpetrator programmes, as specified in the Task Force recommendations, should come from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

2. Perpetrator programmes have three essential elements, as confirmed by the Task Force recommendations: administration and coordination, work with men and work with women. All three are part of the work to change offending and abusive behaviour of domestic abusers. The funding for all three elements therefore should come from the department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR), according to existing policy.

3. Funding is needed to pay for the time and resources needed to carry out assessments with men and with women, for dealing with applications and initial contact with partners/ex-partners, for facilitating groups and for carrying out partner contact work. This work is skilled, time consuming and involves dealing with violent and risky behaviour. The staff involved need to be trained and to have access to ongoing training. They must keep careful records, have to deal with difficult behaviour and have to have regular contact with different agencies. They may also be involved in taking difficult decisions which can affect the safety and welfare of women and children. The work therefore needs to be treated professionally and funded as such.

4. Many programmes stated that they had insufficient funds, resources, staff time etc. to allow them to carry out some of the activities, such as assessment, partner contact, record keeping, participation in evaluation activities. This is understandable. However, in work with violent men, there are risks from not carrying out certain activities that are too great to take. The evidence from this evaluation, as described in more detail in chapters 4 and 6, is that something is NOT always better than nothing, when working with domestic abusers. Delivering a partial or poorly administered service or one lacking in partner contact or one without the ability to monitor ongoing abuse can be and often is more dangerous than delivering no service, particularly as it can give the survivors of abuse false and therefore dangerous hope.

5. The minimum levels of funding to run a professional, consistent service seem to be:

1. funding for a part time permanent salaried co-ordinator and the resources required to maintain records, deal with enquiries, liaise with other agencies and co-ordinate the group,
2. funding to pay for the time and resources needed to carry out assessments with men and group facilitation,
3. funding to pay for the time and resources needed for partner contact work, and
4. funding for case and organisational review and for staff to attend training and supervision.
6. The exact amount of money needed to pay for each of these elements may vary from group to group, depending on the population, geography and other considerations.

7. In particular, women’s organisations (and their funders, usually Health and Community services) should not fund or be expected to fund or subsidise the work with women whose partners or ex-partners are on programmes. First, because the work involved includes many elements that are specialised and require additional skills, knowledge and resources; secondly, because the work is an essential, not an optional, part of the work to change men’s behaviour through programmes and thirdly because such funding would probably divert funds from the essential work with abused women, such as funding for women’s advocacy services or refuges.

8. Organisations running perpetrator programmes should not seek or accept funds from sources that are specifically for women’s advocacy services, particularly but not only if they believe that such funds have been diverted from women’s services.

9. All future funding should be based on adherence to the Task Force recommendations as a minimum. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should consider methods of consistent and effective monitoring and evaluation for all programmes and incorporate these into the funding agreements for any programmes whose stated objectives are to try to stop or reduce the use of domestic violence and abuse in individual men. Organisations should be prepared and willing to demonstrate how they do or will meet standards. The recommendation 10.42 on local need (Task Force report) suggests that groups should also consider ways of demonstrating needs. They could do this through liaison with local women’s agencies and other relevant statutory agencies.

10. See also all other recommendations about funding and practice contained elsewhere in this report, particularly in sections 3, 4, 6 and 7.
5.3.9 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ABOUT EVALUATION

- “Existing intervention programmes with men should be subject to on-going monitoring, evaluation and review so that their effectiveness as a response to domestic violence can be gauged”.

EVALUATION: KEY FINDINGS

1. There are four main elements to any internal or external monitoring and evaluation system: i) monitoring of numbers and other details of men and women in contact with programmes, length of programme attendance etc.; ii) monitoring organisations’ compliance with Task Force recommendations and principles and any other agreed criteria; iii) evaluation of changes in women’s safety; iv) evaluation of changes in men’s behaviour, beliefs, attitudes etc. Further discussion about this is contained in the appendix on evaluation methodology and in the conclusions in chapter 7.

2. The request for this evaluation came not from the organisations concerned but from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in Spring 2003. The organisations concerned were informed by the department that participation in the evaluation was a condition of current funding and was needed to inform decisions about future funding, in order to ensure that public money is spent effectively and with accountability.

3. At the time of writing, most programme participants are not required to comply with evaluation as a condition of participation in a programme. This evaluation has been limited by the lack of compliance from individual men and other individuals involved. Lack of compulsion (on programme participants and on organisations running programmes) to take part in evaluation activities will continue to limit any internal or external evaluation and monitoring. Administration can also affect participation: one group started a new programme before we had finished the men’s questionnaire, others did not tell us when they were starting or finishing, some found it difficult to fit into the ways that they took information.

4. Organisations involved in the evaluation were consulted about the methods and approach and involved in the design of the work at the first stage, before any evaluation activities took place, at three consultation meetings in June – July 2003. Individuals and organisations were asked to discuss concerns and problems with the evaluation team in order to try to find mutually satisfactory solutions that did not compromise the integrity of the evaluation. Many took this opportunity and solutions were usually found through discussion and negotiation.

5. At least one group (Limerick), did various things to participate in the evaluation. Most significantly, they inserted a clause into the contract for programme participants as follows: “I agree to participate in a government requested evaluation of the MOVE programme”. A similar clause in the participants’ contract for the current and all future contracts states: “I agree to participate in any evaluation of the MOVE programme”.

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6. As discussed in more detail in chapter 4 (women’s experiences) women interviewed whose partners or ex-partners were or had been on programmes evaluated often said how important they felt it was that the evaluation was taking place and that it included asking the men to consider in detail what they had done to their partners and children. In one case, a woman said, unasked, that the single most useful thing that she felt had helped her partner to change his abusive behaviour was “your questionnaire – it was all there, he had to see it down on paper, everything he had done”. At least one man made a similar comment.

7. Several other groups expressed dissatisfaction with the nature, content and methods of the evaluation at various points during the year. For example, the following is a quote from an organisation currently running a programme: “……. felt hampered by the way the evaluation was conducted. The initial information and assessment forms reached us late and caused great disruption to the start of the group. Additional tasks and forms following on caused disruption and dissatisfaction to both facilitators and men, thus we were unable to meet all the requirements of the evaluator. Both facilitators felt, as did our local steering committee, that the integrity of the group was paramount”.

8. Evaluation of programmes and evaluation in general has many different aspects, which can all take time and effort from everyone involved. There are methods and tools available to evaluators which have been tried and tested in other very similar evaluations. These are described in more detail and their implications for and use in this evaluation discussed in chapter 3 of this report.

9. This evaluation is addressing the need for monitoring, evaluation and review and identifies ways that this can be done in future.

10. Groups that carry out systematic, ongoing women’s contact and support already have and use a method of monitoring and evaluation of change in men’s behaviour and women’s safety.

11. (copied from the findings on funding, above) This evaluation represents the first formal external evaluation of organisations’ ability to meet the Task Force standards and other criteria for effectiveness. Groups and networks do have their own self-monitoring systems, though the evaluation team did not find evidence that all groups take part in this at present. This evaluation forms a starting point for external monitoring and the findings can be used to inform future funding decisions and the development of any monitoring and accreditation system.
EVALUATION: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Participants should be required to comply with evaluation and monitoring as part of their contract with the programme.

2. Monitoring and evaluation activities can be carried out separately and possibly by different individuals or organisations.

3. Individuals carrying out contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes should try to give women information about external evaluation as well as internally operated monitoring and review, so that women can make informed choices about whether and how to participate in such evaluation and monitoring.

4. Organisations carrying out perpetrator programmes should keep clear and accurate records of applications, assessment, attendance, exit and partner contact and make these available (within the bounds of confidentiality agreements) to external monitoring where necessary.

5. Organisations should consider carrying out reviews of their internal operations, their work with men and their work with women on a regular basis, in order to inform and improve all of the work they do. North Tipperary MOVE and other organisations use methods of internal review and evaluation that could be more widely applied. MOVE is considering developing its own internal review and evaluation of member groups, which could also support this work.

6. See also the appendix on evaluation methodology in this report, for further information.
5.3.10 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ON TRAINING

“Specialist training should be introduced for people to run intervention programmes. Funding for the specialist training should be a priority for year 1 spending.”

TRAINING: KEY FINDINGS

1. Some, but not all, facilitators had participated in specific training for this work. This training included: training provided by CHANGE programme leader Monica Wilson, training provided by Women’s Aid Ireland, training provided by the local women’s support services, training specifically developed for this work by members of groups currently running programmes (see below).

2. The Department of JE&LR has funded specialist training from Monica Wilson of the CHANGE programme Scotland for members of the MOVE network. This is particularly useful following the recommendation by the MOVE Programme Development Group for MOVE groups to pilot the CHANGE programme within their network.

3. The Department of JE&LR has also provided funding for further such training events for newly developed groups in the South East DVIP network. Four representatives, usually two potential facilitators and two potential partner support workers, from each of these four groups will attend training from Monica Wilson in July 04. They have also organised training for four members of each group, led by Monica Wilson of CHANGE, which took place in July 04 and is due to be repeated in October 2004.

4. Members of SEDVIP have attended and organised two pieces of training by Women’s Aid and supported local training to be provided by Women’s Refuges, Rape Crisis Centres and local Women’s Aid on domestic abuse with those who are preparing to support the women and run groups with the men. Currently they are organising a series of training days on spousal support and partner contact in the region. They are also liaising with Michael Paymar of the Duluth programme in Minnesota, USA, to try to arrange further training from him in 2005. The South East DVIP network is currently arranging for people in the four organisations to have specialist training from Michael Paymar of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. They hope that this will take place in Autumn 04. Michael Paymar is highly experienced practitioner and has been running perpetrator programmes for many years.

5. Representatives of the NDVIA spent a week on site at the Duluth DAIP in Autumn 03, to gain information about the project and all its aspects, including, but not only, the perpetrator programme.

6. A number of facilitators had little or no prior experience of working specifically with domestic violence before becoming involved in programmes. Some had considerable relevant experience gained from working with perpetrators in other contexts, such as in drugs or alcohol work or in mental health work. However, few
of these had direct experience of work with survivors and had no specific training to provide them with this understanding before beginning work with perpetrators.

7. During group observations it sometimes seemed that some facilitators had some gaps in their understanding of domestic abuse from the survivors’ points of view. This does not mean that the facilitators did not have this understanding; it may be that during the time they were being observed for this evaluation, it was simply not obvious. However, during interviews with some of the facilitators, this concern was not completely allayed. Again, it may well be that they did have such an understanding, but the need for it was often missed by facilitators, when answering questions about what essential knowledge and experience they thought facilitators should have. Some groups were not operating programmes at the time of the evaluation and others were not, for various reasons, able to allow the evaluation director to observe a group. Added to the fact that the evaluation director only observed single sessions where observation was allowed, it would not be fair or helpful to name the specific groups concerned here. However, it is important that all groups and networks have an ongoing commitment to ensuring that their facilitators, partner support workers and others all have specific initial training before they commence their work, and that they continue to take part in training and other activities to maintain that knowledge and understanding.

8. MOVE Induction training:

Limerick MOVE and North Tipperary MOVE have organised induction training for facilitators and partner contact workers. In 2004, the Limerick MOVE co-ordinator, working nationally, arranged for this training to be offered to all MOVE Ireland groups. The training was run by experienced practitioners involved in North Tipperary and Limerick MOVE groups. At the time of writing this report, there were 27 people from 9 of the 11 move groups interested in attending and a further 5 from partner agencies. From further information taken during August 2004 as part of the consultation period on this report, the following information was obtained from the MOVE Ireland co-ordinator:

Because there were 27 interested people, MOVE Ireland decided to split the group and have a second session of the induction training to be held in the Midland/Western area in Athlone in September 2004.
Following evaluation of the July induction training, the September 2004 training will include sections from women working in women’s advocacy organisations, to keep women’s experiences as a key focus in the training.

The board sanctioned the July 2004 National Induction Training which was held in Portlaoise with 15 attending (details below). They also sanctioned a further 2 day session to be held in Athlone in Sept 2004, due to the oversubscription and the high numbers from the Mayo, Roscommon, Athlone, Galway, areas.
July 2004 participants
Cork: 2 facilitators, 1 Partner contact, total 3 (all women).
Limerick: 2 facilitators, 1 Partner contact, total 3 (1 man, 2 women).
Kildare: 3 facilitators, 2 partner contact, total 5 (2 men 3 women).
Dublin: 3 facilitators, 1 partner contact, total 4 (1 man, 3 women). These 4 people were not sponsored by Dublin MOVE groups. They have contacts within other MOVE groups but happen to live in the Dublin area.

September 2004 participants
September 3rd/4th saw the second Move National Induction training event in Athlone, with now a facilitation team of 4, with 9 participants.
Limerick 1 partner contact worker.
Athlone 10 in total: 5 facilitators, 3 partner contact. 1 man, 7 women, plus the 2 existing male facilitators attended part of the session.

Another 11 (4 men 7 women) (8 facilitators, 3 Partner Contact) names are on a waiting list for the next session which we hope will be in the new year, from Limerick, Athlone, Roscommon, Mayo, Nth Tipp.

Communication with MOVE National Co-ordinator

Evaluation note: this would seem to imply that no-one from Wicklow or Galway MOVE groups attended any of the training. There may well have been good reasons for this absence.

9. Training by relevant women’s organisations:

Carlow Women’s Aid and Carlow Rape Crisis have designed and delivered training for the Carlow steering group members and network, on domestic abuse awareness. Other specialist women’s groups have also provided training for other groups.

Facilitators, partner support workers and others sometimes stated that they had attended other relevant training run by women’s organisations such as Women’s Aid (National) conferences or training courses. Others stated clearly that they had never had domestic violence training but had professional training as therapists or mental health workers or social workers. Whilst this training is of course useful, it was often clear from interviews and sometimes observations of facilitators and others that they had some gaps in their knowledge of domestic abuse, the effects on women and other relevant information.

TRAINING: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All facilitators, partner contact workers, co-ordinators and those people carrying out assessments should have training on domestic abuse awareness from the survivors’ point of view, theoretical understanding, legal responses to domestic abuse, children’s experiences of domestic abuse, skills for running or working in intervention programmes or women’s support services. These courses should work along the good practice recommendations and core principles of the Task Force report and other minimum standards, such as the RESPECT standards.
2. Facilitators and partner contact workers in particular should have their knowledge and consequent training needs monitored and regularly reviewed as part of their supervision.

3. Partner contact workers should have sufficient training and information to ensure that they have a good understanding of the nature and content of the group work with men, so that they can keep women accurately informed.

4. All training should ensure that all facilitators have a clear understanding of domestic abuse from the survivors’ points of view and that this is central to their practice.

5. The skills, knowledge and experience of people already involved in running programmes and/or support services for women should be valued. Many individuals have skills that can be used more widely. Training should help support the development of good practice and work along these principles. The training already devised and provided by existing programmes or women’s services could be made more widely available or replicated.

6. Training for group work with domestic abusers could be provided by staff from Duluth DAIP, CHANGE, DVIP and from within the network of existing programmes or from other specialist sources. Practitioners wishing to develop training should consider participating in appropriate training courses to develop relevant training skills.

7. Both the Dublin MOVE groups and the Wicklow and Galway MOVE groups appear not to have sent any facilitators or partner contact workers on specific training for this work in the last year. The facilitators here have been carrying out the work for some time, but this is not enough of a reason not to attend training: attending training allows everyone to review their own practice, learn new information, practice different approaches, compare experiences and challenge their own and other people’s preconceptions about the work. Information gained during this evaluation suggests that all of the facilitators in these groups would benefit from this. The facilitators for these groups and any new partner contact workers should prioritise attending the next MOVE Induction training.

8. Funding for individual organisations running programmes and for the networks involved must include funding for specific training, including funding for travel expenses.
5.4 Summary of organisations’ ability to meet Task Force recommendations, June 2004

The evaluation team could not evaluate any activities that took place after 1st July 2004 as this was the cut off date for evaluation. When reading this section please bear in mind that many groups may have made changes since the time of writing.

5.4.1 Adherence to Task Force Recommendations

The following organisations currently running programmes meet all of the Task Force Recommendations, as of June 2004, according to the information provided by them during the evaluation, verified using other means during the evaluation and re-checked wherever possible during June 2004:

Cork MOVE, North Tipperary MOVE, Limerick MOVE, Wexford MOVE.

Cork MOVE does not currently have a proactive partner contact service running throughout the time men are on the programme. This means that although it meets the Task Force recommendations, it does so in this area on a minimal level. At the time of writing, the evaluation team have received information that Cork MOVE is developing the partner contact service.

The NDVIA and three out of the four SEDVIP groups are not, at the time of writing, running programmes. However, from the evidence available to the evaluation team, the systems they have in place etc. should ensure that they are meeting all the Task Force recommendations.

All the organisations currently running or preparing to run programmes, including the three above, could make improvements to their current ability to meet Task Force recommendations. The information on the following pages outline the changes individual organisations need to make in order to meet the Task Force recommendations and core principles.

RESPECT has recently commissioned research into the feasibility of an accreditation scheme for perpetrator programmes and allied women’s services. The report of this feasibility study is due to be published in November 2004. If RESPECT decides to implement an accreditation scheme, groups could consider applying for accreditation under this scheme. Any accreditation scheme would take some time to set up and would also have cost implications for applicants or funders. Further discussion needs to take place between the co-ordinators of MOVE, SEDVIP, NDVIA and RESPECT about how to proceed. In the mean time, all groups could consider working towards meeting RESPECT standards of good practice for both programmes and parallel services for partners and ex-partners of programme participants.

Some of these improvements require additional or more secure funding, or require the co-operation of other agencies. However, all of them must be considered minimum standards of practice for programmes in Ireland. All organisations running perpetrator programmes should prepare a plan of how they will attempt to meet all these
recommendations within 12 months, if they wish to be eligible for funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It should also be borne in mind that the Task Force Core Principles and Recommendations are not detailed and provide a minimum standard only.

In particular, the recommendations about early, regular and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of women to ensure the safety and well-being of women and children must be met as a matter of urgency. The implications of available research are that failure to do so increases the risks of danger for women and children and is likely to make women vulnerable to manipulation from their partners at the very least.

Recommendations about involvement with criminal justice agencies need the cooperation of the criminal justice agencies to be effective. Organisations running programmes can start this process, by making contact with relevant individuals and agencies and offering to provide clear information about the programme and about how to make referrals. Other recommendations above provide further ideas for how this involvement could be developed.

Recommendations about involvement with women’s organisations also require the cooperation of relevant local women’s organisations to be effective. Organisations running programmes can consider various ways of establishing a relationship or improving an existing one (see recommendations above). If they find that the relevant women’s organisations are resistant to forming a relationship, they would benefit from considering all the possible objections the women’s organisations may have, reviewing their practices if necessary and being prepared to allow women’s organisations more open access to their operations, so that women’s organisations can make more informed decisions about their relationship with programmes. The Appendices contain suggestions for how organisations running programmes and women’s organisations might review the relationships between them.

The MOVE network already has good practice guidelines and the SEDVIP network has nearly completed their good practice guidelines. Both sets go further than the Task Force report and could form the basis for minimum standards for all programmes, supplemented where necessary by the RESPECT guidelines or by other state standards.

There is scope for the development of mandatory standards for intervention programmes and to monitor and enforce these regularly, within existing structures and using the lessons learnt and tools developed in this evaluation.

MOVE groups and SEDVIP groups have a code of practice. MOVE is currently appointing a Clinical Director and this could help the development and monitoring of good practice in this network. The evaluation team has not seen a copy of the job description for this post and cannot confirm how far it might be responsible for monitoring practice.

Organisations’ abilities to meet Task Force recommendations must be carefully monitored and future funding decisions should relate to this.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEETING TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Organisations that cannot provide systematic, early and focused partner contact should be suspended and not allowed to operate until they are in a position to carry this out, as a failure to do this is dangerous.

2. All organisations, including those listed above, should review their procedures for referrals and assessments.

3. All organisations currently or planning to run programmes should take active and urgent steps to demonstrate how they will reach Task Force Recommendations within 12 months at the most.

4. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should consider revising the recommendations and core principles in the Task Force report so that they are clear, specific and unambiguous. They could then be used as criteria for making decisions about funding. The department should also consider developing these into a more comprehensive set of standards for programmes. This could be done as part of the work of the perpetrators sub committee of the Steering Committee on Violence against Women, in consultation with organisations running programmes, with women’s organisations and with the criminal justice system. Alternatively or in addition, the RESPECT guidelines and statement of minimum standards could be used and developed as a basis for further development of good practice standards. State standards from other parts of the world could also be considered.

5. The development work being carried out within the MOVE network and within the SEDVIP network could support the implementation of these recommendations. Existing links between these networks can allow useful sharing of information and discussions about developing the work.

Any good practice standards should build on the lessons learnt in relevant research and evaluation, including but not only the findings from this evaluation.

5.4.2 Changes needed in specific organisations, in order to meet Task Force recommendations and core principles

All organisations currently running programmes or in development need to do the following:

1. Develop systems for receiving referrals from other agencies, even if they then ask the men to make their own application;

2. Develop systems for risk assessment, risk management and monitoring changes in men’s behaviour and women’s safety;

3. Improve the levels of knowledge about other services and rights that can contribute to women’s safety, particularly for those individuals carrying out or considering carrying out contact with partners and ex-partners;

4. Review their levels of involvement with the criminal justice system, women’s
organisations and other relevant organisations, including child protection and identify where improvements could be made.

It should be recognised that at the time of writing, several organisations are already making efforts to carry out the changes suggested below. From the information available to the evaluation team at the time of writing, the changes needed in order to meet the Task Force recommendations and core principles are as follows:

**Athlone:**

1. Develop procedures for and ability to carry out assessments with women;
2. Develop stronger links with the civil or criminal justice systems;
3. Develop consistent and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and operate only when this can be provided;
4. Develop a steering group or board of management;
5. Ensure that any steering group or board includes representation of relevant women’s organisations and of other relevant agencies;
6. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and consider specific training for all facilitators and women’s support workers working with partners and ex-partners.

**Carlow/Kilkenny (no group running yet):**

1. Use all relevant recommendations from this report, Task Force and other standards to guide the development of services;
2. Set a date within the next six months to review this.

**Castlebar:**

1. Develop procedures for and ability to carry out assessments with women;
2. Develop consistent and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and operate only when this can be provided;
3. Develop a steering group or board of management;
4. Ensure that any steering group or board includes representation of relevant women’s organisations and of other relevant agencies;
5. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and consider specific training for all facilitators and women’s support workers working with partners and ex-partners.

**Clonmel/South Tipperary (no group running yet):**

1. Use all relevant recommendations from this report, Task Force and other standards to guide the development of services;
2. Set a date within the next six months to review this.
Cork:

1. **No action needed to meet task force recommendations.**
2. Regularly review of ability to meet task force recommendations.
3. Consider working towards fulfilling all the RESPECT minimum standards and apply for accreditation if and when such a system is established.

Dublin Monday:

1. Develop procedures for and ability to carry out assessments with women;
2. Develop stronger links with the civil or criminal justice systems;
3. Develop consistent and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and operate only when this can be provided
4. Develop a steering group or board of management, possibly jointly with Dublin Thursday group;
5. Ensure that any steering group or board includes representation of relevant women's organisations and of other relevant agencies;
6. Facilitators and partner contact workers should attend the next MOVE Induction training;
7. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and consider specific training for all facilitators and women's support workers working with partners and ex-partners.

Dublin Thursday:

1. Develop procedures for and ability to carry out assessments with women;
2. Develop stronger links with the civil or criminal justice systems;
3. Develop consistent and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and not operate until this can be provided by someone with the relevant skills and understanding;
4. Develop a steering group or board of management, possibly with Dublin Monday;
5. Ensure that any steering group or board includes representation of relevant women's organisations and of other relevant agencies;
6. Recruit a larger pool of facilitators so that the group is not facilitated by one person alone;
7. Facilitators and partner contact workers should attend the next MOVE Induction training;
8. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and ensure that all facilitators and partner support workers attend the next MOVE Induction training.
Galway:

1. Develop procedures for and ability to carry out assessments with women;
2. Develop stronger links with the civil or criminal justice systems;
3. Develop consistent and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and not operate unless this can be provided;
4. Develop a steering group or board of management;
5. Ensure that any steering group or board includes representation of relevant women’s organisations and of other relevant agencies;
6. Recruit a larger pool of facilitators so that the group is not facilitated by one person alone;
7. Facilitators and partner contact workers should attend the next MOVE Induction training;
8. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and consider specific training for all facilitators and women’s support workers working with partners and ex-partners.

Kildare:

1. Develop procedures for and ability to carry out assessments with women;
2. Develop stronger links with the civil or criminal justice systems;
3. Continue with plans to develop consistent and focused contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes and not operate unless this can be provided;
4. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and consider specific training for all facilitators and women’s support workers working with partners and ex-partners.

Limerick:

1. **No action needed to meet task force recommendations.**
2. Regularly review of ability to meet task force recommendations.
3. Consider working towards fulfilling all the RESPECT minimum standards and apply for accreditation if and when such a system is established.

NDVIA (no group running yet):

1. **Use all relevant recommendations from this report, Task Force and other standards to guide the development of services;**
2. **Set a date within the next six months to review this.**

North Tipperary:

1. **No action needed to meet task force recommendations.**
2. Regular review of ability to meet task force recommendations.
3. Consider working towards fulfilling all the RESPECT minimum standards and apply for accreditation if and when such a system is established.
Waterford (no group running yet):

1. Use all relevant recommendations from this report, Task Force and other standards to guide the development of services;
2. Set a date within the next six months to review this.

Wexford:

1. **No action needed to meet task force recommendations.**
2. Regular review of ability to meet task force recommendations.
3. Consider working towards fulfilling all the RESPECT minimum standards and apply for accreditation if and when such a system is established.

Wicklow:

1. Develop stronger links with the civil or criminal justice systems;
2. Develop a steering group or board of management;
3. Ensure that any steering group or board includes representation of relevant women’s organisations and of other relevant agencies;
4. Review recruitment and training for facilitators and ensure that all facilitators and partner contact workers attend the next MOVE induction training.
5.5 Summary of organisations’ ability to meet RESPECT minimum standards as of June 2004

It should not be assumed that all the RESPECT standards are completely appropriate to the work in Ireland. In particular, the recommendations about the nature of contact with partners and ex-partners of men on programmes do not seem to apply. See section 4 for further discussion about this topic. However, at present, they form a useful and possibly the most relevant set of good practice standards that amplify the Task Force recommendations. As many groups in Ireland have been influenced by these already and several are in regular contact with RESPECT, it seems sensible to use these standards as a starting point, even if some have to be amended. SEDVIP groups have been amending and adding to the RESPECT guidelines as part of their process of developing good practice.

No organisations currently running programmes meet the RESPECT minimum standards completely, although some meet or exceed these in part. In particular, the following specific aspects need attention from all groups currently running programmes and those not yet running programmes:

Pro-active contact with women whose partners/ex-partners are on programmes,
Limerick, North Tipperary and Wexford groups are all exceeding the minimum standards on content and quality. They are not meeting the standard on the amount of face-to-face contact, but, for reasons explained elsewhere (Section 4) this does not seem to be a problem; they are easily exceeding the standards in other ways. All other groups are not yet meeting the RESPECT guidelines AT THE TIME OF WRITING. Groups that cannot provide early, relevant and consistent partner contact should not operate until they can ensure this provision.

Specific training on course content and methods:
From the data provided by the MOVE Ireland co-ordinator during the report consultation period (August/September 2004) it seems that many of the organisations are now meeting or close to meeting RESPECT standards on training. However, there are some groups who have not sent anyone to this training and who would benefit from it. These groups are: Dublin Monday, Dublin Thursday, Galway and Wicklow MOVE groups. All of these groups should prioritise sending facilitators and partner support workers on the next MOVE Induction training.

Length of programme and individual sessions
RESPECT guidelines recommend a minimum of at least 75 hrs over a minimum of 30 weeks. None of the fixed length programmes running in Ireland meet this guideline at the moment. The rolling programmes may meet the guideline, providing the men attend for the required length of time. As they run using a 13 week programme, many men will leave after only 13 or so weeks, well below the minimum.

Standards on assessment and monitoring should be urgently considered by all the organisations, as recommended above.
Ex-abusers involved in running programmes
Two groups have an ex-member involved in co-facilitation. This is not forbidden by any guidelines. However, RESPECT guidelines recommend using a careful review procedure before known ex-perpetrators work with clients, and suggest that they should have been violence free for a significant period of time, usually five years (RESPECT, 2004 and previous).

Programme content
The specific recommendations about the nature, content and duration of group work with men and support services for women should also be considered by the organisations concerned, as recommended in section 3. Organisations using the MOVE programme without any significant additions or alterations are not able to meet RESPECT standards and should urgently review their materials. Organisations using CHANGE are better able to meet these standards but would also benefit from regularly reviewing the RESPECT guidelines and considering whether to supplement the CHANGE programme with other materials, particularly those focusing on sexual abuse and on the impact of domestic abuse on children and parenting. Both of these topics can be addressed using material from the DVIP pack. This does not mean not using CHANGE, it simply means considering adding to it.

Any review of the Task Force recommendations and core principles and any other development of good practice standards should consider using these recommendations or similar ones as a basis. These guidelines reflect current knowledge about effectiveness in work with perpetrators and are clear to use.

The most recent minimum standards are contained in a 31 page document. The evaluation team did intend to include this as an appendix to this document and have permission to do this but at the time of writing do not have a final version of the most recent guidelines, as these were updated during the last month of the evaluation.
An evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland working with abusive men and their partners and ex-partners
SECTION SIX: MEN CHANGING?

Case Study: Sinead and Ian

When first interviewed, Sinead said that Ian was usually likely to use physical violence if he didn’t get his own way. On his questionnaire, Ian said that he didn’t often do this. Sinead said that Ian would always give her a hard time if she wasn’t at home when he expected. He said that he would never do this. She said that he would always punish or give her a hard time if she had a friend round without asking him first. He said that he would never do this. Sinead said that he never took her opinions seriously and Ian said that he sometimes did.

Ian minimised the amount of physical violence Sinead said she had experienced.

In her second interview, three months later, Sinead said she left for a week just after first interview not because of a flare up but to give space for her and daughter. Ian was worried but respected her decision. She said he does time out a lot which makes her “very much happier”

Do you think he’ll be verbally abusive to you in the next three months? (No hesitation) “No! And if he was he’d be out the door”.

Do you think he will be physically abusive? “I hope not – but I never count chickens before they’re hatched”.

What do you think he learnt on the programme?
“I think he was taught how to control his own behaviour and thinking. He used to be paranoid, now he’s questioning. He has a lot more respect – for years he would never acknowledge my birthday and we’d never go out. Last October on my birthday he took me out and now we go out together once a month. There’s been a gradual change but vast improvement, especially this time round” [Ian has attended fixed length programme more than once]

All of the aspects of Ian’s previous use of controlling behaviour and attitudes listed above have now improved, according to Sinead.

This evaluation, given the small numbers, wide variation in assessment, group work and partner contact, the lack of any control group and the short time for follow up, cannot draw firm conclusions about how far men have changed as a direct result of attending the programmes. However, lessons from previous research can be used to inform the work and should be more fully considered by practitioners. The data gathered in this evaluation can help to place some of these lessons in context, to illustrate how they work in practice and to add to the knowledge of what helps reduce abusive behaviour and increase women’s safety.

Using the lesson from the multi site evaluation (Gondolf, 2002), the main source of data about whether or not men had changed their abusive behaviour was women. Other sources were: interviews with men, questionnaires completed by men who had attended
programmes for more than 26 weeks, observation of groups and one focus group interview with participants from one group, including 2 men who had attended more than 26 sessions.

In interviews, the women were asked several different questions about their feelings of safety, changes in their quality of life, changes in abuse used by their partner since they started the programme and where relevant since they had left. Men were asked similar questions. Women were also asked if they had ever been afraid of their partner and if so, whether they still were. They were also asked if they thought that they would be verbally or physically abused in the next three months and if they now thought of their partner/ex-partner as abusive.

6.1 Women’s fear of their partners

17 out of the 19 women who answered said that they had at some time been afraid of their partner. 1 said she never had and 1 said she didn’t know.

13 women out of the 20 who answered the question said that they were no longer afraid of their partner. 4 out of the 20 women said they were still afraid and 3 said that they didn’t know. One woman whose partner had been on a programme for 18 months at the time of interview said that she was still afraid of him.
6.2 Women’s predictions of future abuse

Ten out of the 13 women who answered said that they thought that they would be verbally abused in the next three months and one was not sure. 2 women said they thought they would be physically abused in the next three months and 5 weren’t sure. The two women who thought they would be physically abused in the next three months were both still living with their partner. The partners of these two women had been on a programme for 4 months and 7 months.

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<th>Women’s predictions of verbal abuse in next three months (14 women)</th>
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<td>do you think you will be verbally abused in next three months</td>
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<th>Women’s predictions of physical abuse in next three months (14 women)</th>
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<td>do you think you will be physically abused in next three months</td>
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6.3 Women’s views of their partners

Women’s assessments of how far their partner or ex-partner had changed developed as they were asked different questions. Of the 16 women who answered the question “do you now think of your partner as violent or abusive?”, 6 said that they thought their partner/ex-partner was still abusive or violent, including 2 who were no longer living with this man. Of these 6 women, 2 of their partners had been on a programme for 18 months, the rest had been on programmes for four months or fewer. 7 women said that they no longer thought of their partner as abusive or violent. 1 woman said that she wasn’t sure, as she was no longer living with the man who abused her. 1 woman said that she had never thought of her partner as abusive or violent. In other parts of her interview, this woman revealed that she had been physically, emotionally and sexually abused by her partner and on some occasions her injuries had required medical treatment.

This perhaps suggests that some women will not choose to use these terms about their partner. It also demonstrates that the process of documenting a history of abuse as well as changes in behaviour benefits from asking subtly different questions. This not only helps with external evaluations such as this, but more importantly, can help with risk assessment and safety planning and with internal monitoring of changes in men’s behaviour.
Women’s comments on changes in their partner or ex-partner’s behaviour and attitudes towards them reveal further detail:

“What changes have you seen so far in his behaviour, since he started on the programme?”

“He’s not as demanding as he used to be – before [the programme] he used to treat me like a slave, now he’ll do things. It’d be “get this, get that”, him never doing the washing up – this has changed since we moved [fortnight before the interview], now he takes the child out, last week he dried the dishes, but we’ve only been moved two weeks, in two weeks maybe it won’t be the same. What used to get to me was he was asleep in the chair after work and I’d never get to sit down all evening.” [face to face interview with woman, four months after man started programme]

This woman had a specific suggestion she wanted to give to the facilitators:

Re: What suggestions do you have for the facilitators?

“I’d love them to put him in my shoes and see how it feels”
[face to face interview with woman, four months after man started programme]

When men stop being violent, women often find that the physical abuse is replaced by other forms of controlling behaviour (Dobash et al, 2000) or that they are still fearful even though they are not being abused (Gondolf, 2002). R. was interviewed after her partner had been on a programme for several months:

How has his abusive behaviour changed?
“['The anger seems to have gone, you could see the fists and you knew what was coming next. I think it is definitely to do with the programme. He talks through everything with [FACILITATOR]. I’m pretty much on a high at the moment for

![Bar chart](chart.png)

**Are the men still abusive or violent? Women’s views (18 women)**

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number of women
our relationship, we're renewing our vows in September this year on our 10th anniversary. It's all down to the programme. It's changed our lives around and that's why I was so happy to come today". [face to face interview with woman after man attended programme for a year]

The same woman felt that her partner's attitudes had changed significantly as a result of his participation on the programme:

[How has his attitude towards you changed?]
“it's completely changed. He's never been happier in his life, able to show feelings, able to say he loves me. He never used to say out loud “Thanks” or “I love you”. Now he's able to say these and is more open in showing his feelings"
[face to face interview with woman after partner on programme for six months]

This woman's partner had not been subject to any form of criminal or civil justice intervention. She had benefited from and seemed to have changed as a result of her contact with the women's support service. The changes in her could have influenced the changes in her partner. Whether it was because of the support she got, the intervention programme working with her partner or because of a combination of the two, it would seem that her life and her safety had changed for the better as a result of the intervention programme as a whole, at least in the short term.

However, her comments about her feelings towards all this reveal another side to the process of change:

“I can't change overnight, like he has. I am at fault. I feel guilty because he's put in so much effort.”

do you feel able to make your own decisions without worrying about or being afraid of what he will do or say?

“not all the time. I wanted by buy a suite of furniture last week and worried and worried about it. I rang him up to ask. He said I didn't need to. I know he's changed but it's not easy for me. He didn't understand why I was worried. In the past he might have given me some grief. He doesn't want me to worry about things like this”. [face to face interview with woman, four months after man started programme]

This woman illustrates the huge need for programmes to provide continuing contact with and support for partners like her, beyond the time spent by men on the programmes, as recommended by the RESPECT minimum standards.
Case Study: Aoife and Martin

Evidence of change?

Aoife said that since Martin attended the programme: “He’s not perfect, but he’s better……more considerate……I used to be afraid of him, most definitely, before the programme, but not now. I can tell him what I think”.

“He would have thought my opinion didn’t count for anything, now he knows it does. I used to make sure the place was spotless, shopping done, dinner done, now I won’t”.

BUT: “I wanted him to learn not to be paranoid and jealous. At the moment I don’t think he needs the programme because he has learned not to be violent but he still accuses me of staring at men. I don’t wear my glasses when we go out – I can’t see beyond two feet. I don’t want to be sitting in the pub, worried and tense that someone might say hello or salute me. It’s got to the point now where I won’t go out, which also annoys him! I can’t see that he’s overcome this problem”

Martin, during his phone interview, after nearly six months on the programme:
Do you think you’ll be physically violent again? “I would hope not. I hope I’ve learned enough never……I would hope not……I couldn’t say never to be honest”

Will you use other ways of controlling Aoife? “Likewise I hope not. I hope and pray never again. I pray every day”

Aoife’s story is both encouraging and a cause for concern. Martin is clearly still using controlling behaviours, which may be a warning sign that she will be physically abused in the future. He does not recognise his jealous behaviour as controlling, which is also worrying. However, Aoife’s quality of life inventory showed many improvements, the support she received from a women’s organisation was very helpful and her feelings of safety have also improved drastically. She had not been assaulted for several months at the time of the interview.

6.4 Men’s strategies for stopping abuse, women’s strategies for dealing with it

Information from men’s session evaluation forms, completed by themselves or the facilitator at the end of group sessions, show that many men continue for long periods to rely on time out as a strategy for being non-violent. For abusive behaviour to stop long term and for women to stop being fearful, the controlling behaviour as well as the physical abuse needs to stop and the men need to move beyond interruption techniques such as time out and to changes in attitudes (Gondolf, 2002; Dobash et al, 2000). Facilitators need to review the use of time out and take on the lessons learned about men’s use of it, from this evaluation and from others. The CHANGE, DVIP and other long term programmes contain useful resources to help explain this and to teach men new skills beyond interruption. Facilitators using the MOVE programme should consider using the handouts and activities from these other programmes to supplement the teaching and reviewing of this technique. All the facilitators should consider revising the technique and remember
that if men are to move away from abusive behaviour and beliefs permanently, they should not be relying on interruption techniques.

Some women felt that the controlling behaviour had changed, some did not.

One woman whose husband had been on programme for three years and was still attending at the time of interview had the following comments:

[Re: time out and other strategies]
“It’s been over a year since we last needed it [time out]. Now he’ll drop the subject. He stops and considers my feelings. He’s learnt to be a nicer and more positive person – he used to be joyless. If we’re having a disagreement, I can see him stop and consider.”

Are you still frightened of him?
“No, he’s changed. He’s admitted what he was doing was wrong, he wasn’t ever physically violent but what he was doing was wrong and was frightening. He would have blown at anything: me, the kids, I’d be walking on eggshells and tiptoeing around, keeping the kids quiet, so now it’s better.”

Have you any suggestions for the leaders of the programme?
“I have no suggestions I think they’re doing a good job”
[telephone interview with woman, man on programme for 3 years]

These and other comments this woman made indicate that it is possible for men to move beyond interruption techniques and towards a significant, hopefully long lasting, change in attitudes towards their partner and beliefs about the roles of men and women in relationships.

Women’s Strategies

Another woman reports changes in physical violence:

“As time goes on, [name of partner] has become less physically violent and more manipulative.”

Re: Physical behaviour
“he hasn’t used or threatened physical violence since he learnt I knew my rights”
[telephone interview with woman, man on programme for year]

This last comment is significant. The woman was given information about her legal rights by the facilitator of the programme, which meant that even though her husband was “learning to be more abusive”, she felt that she was physically safer. It is even more significant given that the facilitator concerned has stated to the evaluation team on several occasions that the methods used in that group “work” with all the men who attend regularly and that in particular, provided they learn to use time out correctly, he feels that they will never be abusive again. He also states that he does not see the point of
An evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland working with abusive men and their partners and ex-partners

considering other programmes or approaches as he knows that his is the most effective. [information from interviews and in written correspondence with this facilitator].

All the women interviewed whose partners or ex-partners were attending this particular programme had nothing but praise for the facilitator and had all been given help, support and advice from him, as the example typifies. However, two of these women (quotes below) were not as sure as the facilitator that the programme had “worked” in terms of their partner’s use of abuse.

“We separated whilst he was on the programme. I was in counselling while he was in MOVE, I made a decision that if this thing ever happened again, I would ask him to leave. It did happen. He stalled for a while, then left.”

[tell me how he uses time out]
“He tends to go for several days, and no contact, which is hard, explaining it to the kids, I know he’s only supposed to go for a set amount of time. It’s hard for the kids, he leaves when they want to talk to him.” [telephone interview with woman]

The second woman explained how her partner’s use of abuse had changed but remained a problem:

[do you think you will be physically abused again by him] hesitation – “it’s been a long time, I don’t know how he thinks anymore, I used to think I knew him, since the separation I don’t know. I feel he’s heading for a blow up – he’s getting very angry. He’s much more manipulative, able to make me feel bad. Most of the time I can cope, he’s learning to be more abusive, but more subtle. I thought he was suicidal, now I realise that he was just being manipulative.” [telephone interview with woman]

Both these women had received the positive support and advice that typified this facilitator, according to interviews with women whose partners or ex-partners were attending or had attended this particular group. Both their stories illustrate that this in itself can bring about women’s safety, even if the man doesn’t stop being abusive, because the women were better equipped to make more informed decisions about their safety and felt supported in some way when they did. However, it also shows that facilitators could perhaps make better use of this contact, to be better informed about the actual impact of the programmes on the women, and also to be open to differing appraisals of what “works”.

It may also be that these women, having received very positive encouragement and support from the facilitator, may have felt unwilling to let him know that his work with their partners was not having much effect. It could also be that the women were wary of bringing this up with the facilitator, in case he inadvertently let this information slip to the man during the group. Alternatively it may be that they these women did at least once tell the facilitators about continued abuse but did not see any result from this and so didn’t again. One of these women said that she was told by the facilitator concerned that
there was nothing he could do if her husband was lying to him in group about his continuing use of abuse. This may well mean that she didn’t bother to tell him about further incidents of violence or abuse.

These possibilities would be less likely if the contact was with a separate women’s support worker, it would be part of the support worker’s role to provide the woman with space to talk about this and do some safety planning or be able to give her practical support to think through some of the options. It would also be the role of the support worker to act as an advocate on her behalf with the facilitator, to discuss possible ways that the man might be effectively challenged directly or indirectly in the group, as happens in other groups (see above, case study Limerick) in ways that do not endanger the woman’s safety.

These possibilities strengthen the argument made by others (Edleson, 2001) that there should be a ‘firewall’ between the people working with the men and those working with the women, however caring, knowledgeable and supportive the facilitator is.

6.5 Men’s use of physical abuse whilst on programmes

Out of the 12 women who answered the question, 7 said that they had been physically abused whilst their partner was participating in a programme. The partners and ex-partners of these 7 women had been attending different programmes, some a rolling MOVE programme, some a fixed length CHANGE programme. This does not necessarily demonstrate that both programmes are ineffective, it probably supports the findings from other research that no matter how efficient and well delivered the programme is, there will be a significant number of men who continue to use physical abuse whilst they are attending programmes. Gondolf found that these men were likely to be the ones who continued to use physical abuse after the programmes ended. These 6 women therefore demonstrate the value of having systematic and consistent contact with partners and ex-partners and particularly during the first few months, when a significant minority of women will be at risk of physical abuse, and for encouraging women to consider other responses to the abuse, including legal responses. It also strengthens the argument for carrying out more systematic and focused risk assessment and monitoring with women, as well as the need for better links with the criminal justice system.
CONCLUSIONS:
1. There is some evidence that change can occur at least partly as a result of group work with men.
2. There is further evidence to show that neither men’s nor facilitators’ testimonies are sufficient to verify this.
3. Systematic, focused and regular contact with women is essential to form an assessment of whether or not men have changed or are likely to in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:
1. Carefully structured and managed group work with men should be supported, providing that:
   • the work includes the elements identified in this report as necessary for safe and effective operation of programmes;
   • there is further long term monitoring and evaluation;
   • the people working in those organisations, the funders and others, particularly those working in the criminal justice system recognise the risks as well as the opportunities involved and take every step possible to minimise these risks and maximise the opportunities;
• the work is recognised as a professional service, requiring very specific skills, resources and information;
• any funding for this work does not in any way whatsoever jeopardise the funding or other aspects of the existing and future work with abused women. This is particularly important in relation to the funding for work with partners and ex-partners of abusers attending programmes;
• Supporting and funding perpetrator programmes is not seen as an alternative to strengthening and using the criminal justice system and civil law;
• All relevant Task Force recommendations are adhered to, by all relevant organisations involved in work with perpetrators.

2. Future research and evaluation should investigate, during a follow up period of at least one year and preferably longer, the value and functions of assessment with women. If, of course, the women’s predictions are used most effectively, for example, to encourage women to take legal action or to separate, it may be that their predictions do not subsequently become fact. Research and evaluation should therefore include monitoring all the sanctions and interventions used by women in response to the abuse they suffered.

Case Study: Kathleen continued
Effects of partner's participation in programme

Quality of life
Kathleen felt the programme had absolutely no effect on her safety, quality of life etc. But since the separation and since she realised it was likely to be permanent (he is now in prison for a serious offence) “everything has got better!” Her answers to the quality of life inventory, for example, all show great improvements, with many much better or better. But this has all happened since he left. Her relationship with her current partner is good.

When she looked at the checklist on non-physical behaviour, she said that her ex-partner had used every form of emotional abuse and controlling behaviour listed. She said that a couple of these got slightly better for a very short while when he started the programme but then got worse again, that most never changed and none changed for long. She felt that overall the programme had no effect on his abusive behaviour in any way. He attended for around 6 months.

This confirms the finding earlier on about risk assessment. Kathleen’s partner did not change.
6.6 The impact of other factors or interventions

6.6.1 Sources of support and help
In the interviews with women, we asked them to look at a cue card with a list of strategies that they might have used, based on strategies women do use, for dealing with the domestic abuse. We asked them to look down the list and tell the interviewer about any of the strategies they had tried or thought about and to say what the result was or usually was. We also asked them to add any other strategies they had used or considered that weren’t on the list.

Most of the 22 women who provided information about strategies they had used to deal with the situation had not asked anyone else for help. 8 women had contacted a specialist women's support service such as Women's Aid, Rape Crisis, a refuge or something similar. They had all found this helpful or very helpful.

6 had ever involved the Gardaí, of whom 2 had found this not very helpful, 3 had found it partially helpful and 1 had found it completely helpful.

8 had involved marriage guidance counsellors. 3 found this completely unhelpful, 2 not very helpful and 3 partly helpful.

2 women had asked a priest for help and both had found it totally unhelpful.

6.6.2 Women’s own strategies
Most women had several strategies, some of which helped temporarily and some of which did not help:

“I told [husband] I'd had contact with the guards when it last happened. It was physical and it was while he was on the programme. I told him I'd been and made a statement. I did go, but I didn’t make a statement, I used it to shock him and it worked. He hasn’t physically abused me since.” [telephone interview with woman after husband on programme for four months]

“Standing up for myself for a boundary, like calling the guards helped until he locked me out”. [man wasn't arrested]. [face to face interview]

“We went to Marriage guidance but it's only as good as what's put into it”. [telephone interview]

“I've put money away in case I need to leave. I haven't needed it but it helps knowing it's there.” [face to face interview]

“Talking to friends has been very helpful, my own friends who I can trust and they don’t treat him different so he doesn’t realise I’ve been talking about it.” [face to face interview]
6.6.3 Gardaí and Justice Systems

“He once assaulted me so severely I was unrecognisable. I took him to court but the court ordered that we both have a psychiatric assessment and found him not guilty. He has a friend in the guards.” [face to face interview with woman whose partner was attending programme at the time of interview]

“The barring order has really helped. It stopped him in his tracks, sent him a really powerful signal. I don’t really know whether it’s that or the programme that’s made him change the most” [telephone interview with woman whose partner was attending programme at the time of interview]

Most of the women interviewed had never contacted the guards or used the courts for their own protection. Women’s organisations expressed a mixture of feelings about all aspects of the justice system.

“Overall I think that the justice system lets women down. They have difficulty getting an adequate response from Gardaí, or it’s not consistent. This leaves women worse off, because if they have a bad response once, they won’t call again.” [interview with woman from relevant specialist women’s organisation]

Women’s organisations developed their own specific ways of trying to get more protection for women from the system.

“We have a named guard we can call, about cases, who will call us if anyone coming to their attention needs our help” [interview with manager of relevant specialist women’s organisation]

“Judge [name of judge] is very sympathetic, we would always hope our women get their orders heard by her” [woman working in relevant specialist women’s service. This comment reflects several made by different women’s advocates about the same judge]

The main problems expressed by women’s groups were:

- Lack of adequate information
- Guards making women decide whether or not to prosecute, placing all the responsibility on them and putting them at risk of retribution
- Lack of effective enforcement of orders
- Too much variation between guards
- Very low rates of convictions, even with plenty of evidence
- Women losing faith in the system as a result
- Gardaí arresting both people
These reflect the problems found by two separate research studies of the use of the legal system to respond to domestic abuse in Ireland (Kelleher and O’Connor, 1995 and 1999). However, the present evaluation was not commissioned to evaluate the justice systems and the numbers involved are low. Comments made must therefore be read without drawing general conclusions.

6.6.4 Combination – the system matters

Gondolf’s multi site long term evaluation found that the system overall was what mattered, that it was impossible to separate out what effect was due to programme work and what to other interventions or the women’s own strategies. This evaluation found similar evidence. It is possible to make tentative conclusions about which women have been helped so far by intervention programmes working with abusive men, but it is less easy to identify conclusively what makes abusers to change or women to be safer. This seems to be illustrated well by the final part of Kathleen’s story:

Case Study: Kathleen continued
What brought about her safety

[why are you not afraid of him any more?]

“He’s in prison in another country. The support group helped. My Social worker helped. My family helped. The main thing was my two children – I don’t want them going through this any more, I didn’t have to go through it as a child. Oh, and the seven outstanding warrants against him in Ireland! [laughs]”

Kathleen had been severely abused in every possible way by her very violent partner, who was also involved in other criminal behaviour. She had been, in her own words, “a wreck” when she first came into contact with the programme, as a result of a referral made by a social worker following an incident where her partner’s violence affected her child. She had consistent, intensive and very focused advice, support and help from the women’s support service associated with the programme. Kathleen had not contacted any helping agency herself. However, there were eventually several agencies involved in her life – some of them she found useful, some less so, but eventually the combination of all of them, added to her own considerable process of personal change, contributed to an almost total transformation in her life and the lives of her children.

Kathleen applied for a protection order in March 03, then barring and safety orders in October, following a really bad incident. She had to fight to get these: she first got a 7 day order from one court, so she went to a different court and got the same. She went back to the first court, took her children and said “seven days isn’t enough, in seven days you’ll have a murder on your hands”. The judge gave her a 3 year order.

Kathleen added: “He’s been done for stalking, harassment, threats with shotgun. In the most recent incident, [involving all of this] his solicitor fought with the guard, who was on my side,”
Other women, as expressed in elsewhere in this report, felt that their safety had been improved at least in part because of the programmes their partner had attended or because of the support they received as a result, or because of a combination of these things. This help is not always the success that perhaps many practitioners in programmes and others were expecting: sometimes it was the help to leave safely whilst an abusive partner was being monitored partly by the programme; sometimes it was the result of constructive and careful challenging carried out by facilitators in ways that supported strategies women were using; sometimes the men do seem to change their behaviour as a result of programme attendance; sometimes they do not change their thinking but become more aware of the consequences, legal and otherwise, of their abusive behaviour and seem to start to change as a result.

Whatever the criteria for ‘success’, it is vital that programmes continue to do all they can to ensure that their practices are safe and appropriate. It is also vital that programmes in and of themselves are seen as part of a wider system of responses, not as the only answer to this dangerous criminal behaviour. The lives of women and children depend on this.
An evaluation of intervention programmes in Ireland working with abusive men and their partners and ex-partners
SECTION SEVEN: THE FUTURE

It is clear from Kathleen’s story that there has been at least one life saved in the last 12 months through the work of a coordinated intervention programme with parallel support services for women, even if it was not saved because of changes in the man’s behaviour. There may be others. There are some women who feel that their lives have been changed for the better, because of the changes in their partner. There are others who feel that the improvements have been limited, or that they cannot tell yet if changes are going to last.

The lessons we can learn from the ways these women were helped, the ways some men changed and the ways some did not, can all help to inform the development of effective programmes that do not increase risk to women, that increase women’s safety and sometimes change men’s behaviour.

Interviews with various people in this evaluation reflected a common tension or dilemma that has been present in many state and international responses to domestic abuse and wider forms of violence against women: where can resources, energy and commitment be most productively targeted? Should it be in work with survivors of abuse and their children, helping them to get away and start new lives or to stay with their abuser and try to change the relationship? Should it be in work with perpetrators of abuse, and if so, should this be to sanction them, incarcerate them, publicly hold them to account or try to change them? Should it be in work with the next generation, working with all children and young people to educate the future potential victims, perpetrators and their friends and family but also the future judges, police, social workers, journalists, politicians and so on?

The findings from this evaluation seem to confirm that this debate should not be seen in terms of ‘either-or’, but rather ‘both – and’. In the long run, work with children and young people to prevent domestic violence could well be the most effective, but that does not help the survivors of today. Many of the perpetrators will need to be locked up, but eventually they will be released and we could make the most of their incarceration by trying to change their beliefs and attitudes whilst they have not got any distractions. Many more of the perpetrators will not be locked up, but it is arguable that their partners, children and future partners should be able to expect that if there is anything that can effectively and safely change the abusive behaviour, that this will be available. Abusers should not, however, be able to use programmes as a way of evading legal sanctions for their criminal and often very dangerous behaviour. Women and children living in fear should not be made to feel that they have to continue to live with the abuser, just because he agrees to attend a programme, if they are still afraid of him and really want to start a new safe life elsewhere.

Ireland has a great opportunity to pursue the ‘both-and’ approach, as the work to support and protect victims and children is funded by one government department and work to challenge and change abusers is funded by another. The evaluation team are not aware of any imminent plans to fund wide-scale education work with children and young people in Ireland, but the scope is there, as are the materials and some useful research. The work done in Australia and Canada, as well as the UK, will be relevant for the development of prevention work.
Several times during the evaluation, facilitators and others commented “at least we’re doing something”. A great deal of respect is due to the very committed individuals who have put in time, thought and energy in to this work, often for very many years and in unpaid time. However, something is not always better than nothing. When responding to domestic violence there is always the risk that doing the wrong things or carrying out the work without sufficient resources will increase, not reduce, the danger. These dangers can usually be foreseen, especially given the fact that there is a body of relevant research and practice lessons to draw on from sources all over the world. Where there is evidence available about possible dangers, there is no excuse for interventions to fail to use those lessons. To take on work with domestic abusers means accepting that the work involves danger, risk and contact with often dangerous and manipulative men and keeping all of that in mind in every contact with perpetrators and victims. To do otherwise would be to ignore the base line principle in work with domestic abuse: to DO NO MORE HARM.

There are findings and recommendations throughout this report which should all be considered. What follows is a summary of the main points.

7.1 Men changing:

- Some men do change whilst they are on programmes.

- Some of these changes do seem to be attributable at least in part to the men’s participation on the programme, although it is difficult to isolate what is due to the programme and what due to other factors, principally the influence of separation or the threat of it and the effects of other interventions or the threats of them.

- Some men do not change whilst they are on programmes.

- Even if they do not change, programmes could be a way of assessing and monitoring their behaviour and holding them to account.

- Programmes could form a link into the criminal justice system, though this does not appear to be happening consistently.

7.2 Women becoming safer:

- Women who come into contact with the programmes when their partners apply to participate often get help, advice, support and information for the first time. Some of these women are unlikely to have received this help from anywhere else.

- Some women are able to use this information and help to make informed choices about their own protection. When they do, they often find increased safety as a result.
Some women get such high levels of support and advocacy that they feel that their lives have changed completely, even if they did not feel that their partner or ex-partner changed.

Women's safety, women's choices, facilitator's abilities to keep men attending and the effects of programmes on men's behaviour are strongly affected by the response or lack of effective response from the criminal and civil justice systems.

Weaknesses and inconsistencies in the justice systems frequently let women down and fail to provide them with protection to which they are entitled.

7.3 Men's routes onto programmes

There are many forms of mandate or compliance in operation, not just court or probation mandate. They can be summarised as the following six categories: court/probation mandate; agency compliance; partner compliance; individual enhancement; agency referral and genuine self referral. Facilitators and programmes in general could make more effective and consistent use of the different forms of mandate or compliance, particularly if they develop formal ways of liaising with other agencies.

There is a false polarity operating in the debate about voluntary and mandated participation in the programmes. Some of the organisations at present mostly working with voluntary participants would like to increase the number and strength of referrals from courts and probation. Some facilitators complain that they lack sanctions to keep men on the programme. Groups currently taking only “voluntary” referrals could consider encouraging more referrals from criminal justice agencies. Making better use of the agency and partner compliance elements of the allegedly “voluntary” referrals would help increase their ability to keep men on the programme. The NDVIA could consider accepting men under other forms of compliance as well as court mandate.

Most organisations would like to develop closer relationships with the criminal and civil justice systems. The existing networks could consider piloting this in specific areas and sharing the lessons learned with all the other organisations.

7.4 Programme content

There is an assumption operating amongst some, but by no means all, facilitators, that there is such a thing as a programme that always “works”, just because it seems to have produced some change, even profound change, in some or most of the men attending that particular group. The evidence from this evaluation and elsewhere indicates that there is probably no such thing as a programme that always or usually “works”, especially when it is not supported by other interventions. This assumption can lead to further, dangerous assumptions: about women's safety and about the programme's ability to bring about change in large
numbers of men. It is highly likely that in some cases the nature of the referrals, assessment and programme conditions limit the type and number of men participating for significant lengths of time or demonstrating significant changes in their abusive behaviour. It does not follow that simply because some men have changed on a particular programme that all men have or that more men could.

• Some facilitators have a clear understanding of the fact that no matter how good the programme or the partner contact, there will probably always be some men who will not change. Some facilitators have a clear understanding that some men will present a continuing, sometimes escalating risk to women and children and who will need to be sanctioned or held to account by the criminal justice system.

• Not all programmes are the same! Some programme materials are very clear about aims, methods and approaches. Some are less clear or sometimes misleading or missing the focus on domestic abuse.

• Some programmes overall reflect the lessons from research about what helps the maximum number of men to have the maximum amount of change. This does not mean that other programmes never bring about change with any men, rather that some programmes are more likely to bring about such changes more frequently and with more men. CHANGE programme and particularly the DVIP programme are programmes which reflect the lessons from other research and evaluations on what brings about change most consistently and for the longest lasting effects. Organisations running programmes should consider a wider range of materials and curriculum.

7.5 Programme standards

• Most of the organisations currently running programmes are meeting or close to meeting the Task Force recommendations and core principles. Three organisations are close to meeting most of the standards for minimum practice as laid out by the RESPECT network and would probably be able to achieve RESPECT accreditation within the next year.

• Some organisations are attempting to meet these recommendations but struggling to do so, because of lack of people, effective links to other agencies, funds, expertise, resources or knowledge. Some of these problems can be remedied by the organisations concerned, providing they take on the lessons learned in this evaluation and elsewhere. Some depend on other organisations.

• Some are not willing to try to meet some of the recommendations in the Task Force report and would not achieve RESPECT accreditation without significant shifts in thinking as well as practice.

• The process of evaluation seems to have prompted some organisations to change their practices, which is welcome.
• The Task Force core principles and recommendations are a minimum. They would benefit from further development. The MOVE network already has good practice guidelines and the SEDVIP network has nearly completed their good practice guidelines. Both sets go further than the Task Force report and could form the basis for minimum standards for all programmes, supplemented where necessary by the RESPECT guidelines or by other state standards.

• There is scope for the development of mandatory standards for intervention programmes and to monitor and enforce these regularly, within existing structures and using the lessons learnt and tools developed in this evaluation.

• MOVE is currently appointing a Clinical Director and this could help the development and monitoring of good practice in this network. The evaluation team has not seen a copy of the job description for this post and cannot confirm how far it might be responsible for monitoring practice.

• The RESPECT network has a comprehensive code of practice for both programmes and associated women’s support services. This could form the basis for detailed good practice guidelines, building on the Task Force recommendations.

• Funding for coordination of each group would help to ensure programmes and women’s support services comply with all relevant standards, as the responsibility to ensure this could be a part of the job description for any part or full time coordinator post.

• The Task Force recommends that groups should adhere to the recommendations of the Task Force report as a condition of future funding. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should consider whether to make adherence to a stronger and more detailed set of minimum standards, such as the RESPECT guidelines or other state standards a condition of funding.

• The Department of JELR should further consider whether the state standards should also contain a list of proscribed practices, as other state standards do (see, for example, the state standards of Alabama, USA, http://www.biscmi.org/other_resources/docs/alabama.doc). If supported by relevant legislation or policy changes, this could include forbidding any organisation from describing itself as running a programme for domestic abusers (or similar) if it did not adhere to the Task Force or other standards, so that women are not placed at risk through unsafe practices or agencies given the wrong impressions about a particular organisation.

7.6 Developing skills and capacity

• There are skilled, knowledgeable and committed individuals working in different roles in intervention programmes and in relevant women’s organisations in Ireland. Supporting and making best use of the skills and knowledge they have will help to develop the capacity and effectiveness of intervention programmes.
• Organisations running perpetrator programmes do not currently have effective methods or sufficient skills or confidence to operate risk assessment and risk management procedures. This, along with the development of partner contact in every intervention programme, is something that urgently needs remedying. This involves the development of procedures for use in risk assessment and risk management and specialist training, grounded in the lessons from relevant research, for those individuals who are carrying out assessment with men or with women and for anyone who is regularly in contact with either.

• People doing assessment, facilitators and partner contact workers need to have training on domestic abuse awareness, basic legal rights for survivors and legal sanctions for perpetrators as a requirement for their work with perpetrators and survivors of domestic abuse. Facilitators also need thorough training on the use of the programme materials and on group work skills in this setting. Women’s support workers also need training on the nature and content of the programmes, advice and support specifically for abused women, risk assessment and safety planning with women.

• Specialist women’s organisations have a great deal of knowledge and skills to offer those working with perpetrators and this should be actively sought out by the programme facilitators and co-ordinators. Where the women’s organisation is reluctant or cautious about getting involved, the individuals involved in the programme should consider carefully why this might be and pro-actively work to improve relationships and joint working.

• There are already good working links between MOVE and SEDVIP networks and individual staff. The two networks could and should consider building deeper relationships. This does not have to mean that all intervention programmes and networks have to merge or become exactly the same. It simply allows programmes to share experiences, ideas and good practices more efficiently, which in turn benefits the individuals whose lives are affected by these programmes.

• The lack of funding to pay salaries or fees for facilitators and women’s support workers means that organisations are at risk of losing knowledge and expertise when a volunteer is no longer able to give their time for free, or when a suitable applicant does not feel able to provide voluntary time from the start.

7.7 Funding

• Funding for perpetrator programmes, as specified in the Task Force recommendations, should come from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

• Perpetrator programmes have three essential elements, as confirmed by the Task Force recommendations: administration and coordination, work with men and work with women. All three are part of the work to change offending and
abusive behaviour of domestic abusers. The funding for all three elements therefore should come from Justice.

• Funding is needed to pay for the time and resources needed to carry out assessments with men and with women, for dealing with applications and initial contact with partners/ex-partners, for facilitating groups and for carrying out partner contact work. This work is skilled, time consuming and involves dealing with violent and risky behaviour. The staff involved need to have access to training, must keep careful records, have to deal with difficult behaviour and have to have regular contact with different agencies. They may also be involved in taking difficult decisions which can affect the safety and welfare of women and children. The work therefore needs to be treated professionally and funded as such.

• The minimum levels of funding to run a professional, consistent service seem to be:
  i. funding for a part time permanent salaried co-ordinator and the resources required to maintain records, deal with enquiries, liaise with other agencies and co-ordinate the group,
  ii. funding to pay for the time and resources needed to carry out assessments with men and group facilitation,
  iii. funding to pay for the time and resources needed for partner contact work,
  and
  iv. funding for case and organisational review and for staff to attend training and supervision.

• Funding for programmes should be dependent on adherence to Task Force recommendations and core principles as a minimum standard. Future and ongoing funding should be dependent on organisations’ abilities to demonstrate how they adhere to these and other standards and to provide clear documentation of the amount, nature and outcome of all work with individual men and individual women, all internal development and all liaison with other relevant organisations and networks.

• All organisations receiving funding for perpetrator programme work should be able to produce an annual audit of work carried out.

• Funding for training, including domestic abuse training, for all those involved in this work should be maximised by making use of available training skills and resources within the networks, such as the MOVE groups induction training and the SEDVIP member groups who have run domestic abuse awareness training for steering group members, as well as buying in external trainers. Links between networks could help to make the most of available training.
7.8 Future evaluation and monitoring

- All organisations running intervention programmes working with domestic abusers should be subject to regular external evaluation and monitoring and required to keep clear records. Men who apply to programmes should be required to co-operate with evaluation as a condition of entry onto the programme.

- Organisation records should include:
  - Case records for each individual man, including dates and information about application, assessment, group attendance, sessions missed, action taken, behaviour reported by partner, involvement with criminal or civil justice systems, other information about type of mandate/compliance, liaison with other agencies such as addiction, child protection, exit interviews.
  - Case records for each individual woman, including dates and information about all contact, starting from initial phone call/visit, assessment, ongoing assessment, use of support groups, information provided, experiences of time out, experiences of abuse during programme, contact to inform women when men stop attending programme, assessment of change in behaviour, safety planning, referral to other agencies.
  - Employment records for all paid and unpaid staff, including clear job descriptions, contracts and other relevant documents.
  - Weekly attendance sheets.
  - Some form of evaluation for each sessions, whether completed in writing or verbally.
  - Assessment tools and results of assessment, including any assessment of change in the levels of abuse or in the women’s safety. Organisations could make use of the checklists of abuse, quality of life, safety strategies and other evaluation tools used and developed during this evaluation, particularly the use of the specific cue cards. They could also make use of other available evaluation tools such as those provided by CHANGE, DVIP and the Duluth DAIP.

- External evaluation tools should include:
  - Questionnaires for men to complete before they start programmes, after three months on a programme, at the end of programme and at intervals after programme completion or leaving programme. Interview schedules for supplementary or alternative use at any of these stages.
  - Questionnaires/interview schedules to use with women as soon as possible after their safety and consent can be established, after their partner has attended three months on the programme, at the end of their partner’s attendance on the programme and at intervals after programme completion or leaving programme.
  - Cue cards to use during interviews with men and women about abuse.
  - Checklists of information required to fulfil standards of good practice, based on tools used during this evaluation, or from the World Health Organisation handbook for evaluating violence intervention programmes, or from the assessment tools developed to use to evaluate compliance with state
standards in other states, or a combination of all of these.
- Group observation sheets for external evaluators to use when observing
  group sessions, based on that used during this evaluation (which was in turn
  based on one developed in Duluth DAIP), or other relevant checklists, based
  on the relevant standards for group content and management.
- Specific interview schedules/questionnaires for use with group facilitators,
  coordinators and women’s support service workers.

i. Evaluation should include monitoring and assessment of organisations’ abilities to
  meet standards and evaluation of any change in the lives of individual men and
  women, particularly men’s use of abuse and women’s experiences of abuse and
  safety.

ii. There is a great deal of scope for more long term research on the effectiveness of
  different interventions, including but not only programmes working with violent
  men.

7.9 Other considerations for future development of intervention programmes

• There are many other specific lessons drawn out in the rest of this report which
  should be carefully considered.

• Programmes at the moment are dealing with a very small number of men each
  year, a tiny proportion of the total number of abusive men. Even if the amount
  of men coming onto programmes was multiplied by five, this would still only
  mean a few hundred men at most each year, a small proportion of the total
  number of abusive men. The programmes and the Department of JELR should
  guard against treating programmes as the only or the main form of intervention
  against domestic abuse. The criminal and civil justice systems and most
  importantly women’s organisations, have a crucial role to play and their
  effectiveness can and should be monitored and improved at all levels, in order
  to improve victim safety, in order to hold men to account and sanction them
  appropriately and in order to support the valuable work done in some
  programmes.

• In the light of the low numbers currently attending programmes, organisations
  and networks should consider how they might increase numbers, without
  compromising the work, how they might best target their services, criteria for
  acceptance onto programmes, criteria for deciding when it is time for men to
  leave. They should then identify how this would affect future funding needs.

• The overall system of interventions to respond to and prevent domestic abuse
  should be monitored and reviewed and the lessons already learnt in relevant
  research and in this evaluation should be considered. In particular, the need for
  secure funding for all relevant women’s services, the need for monitoring,
  evaluation and enforcement of good practice guidelines for the Gardaí, the need
for improved responses from the criminal and civil justice systems and the need for practical help for abused women and children, such as housing or financial help should be addressed.

- Work with children and young people to prevent domestic violence is now well-established in some parts of the world and developing in others. It is possibly more effective in the longer term than prevention work with men who are already abusive. If it is carried out in schools, it has the added benefit of educating a whole community, including the future police and probation officers, judges, social workers, politicians, health workers, women's advocates and facilitators of domestic abuse intervention programmes, as well as the potential survivors and perpetrators. It also provides a channel for information to reach adults and children already affected by domestic violence. Policy makers may want to consider the potential for developing such work with children and young people in schools.

7.10 The future of domestic abuse intervention work in Ireland

Ireland is potentially in a position to lead Europe in developing a coherent and effective system of responses to domestic violence. The people, the commitment and the knowledge are all there. So is a network of experienced well-established women's support and advocacy services. The justice system potentially has most of the essential ingredients to become really effective for protecting women and children — the necessary legislation and policies are mostly in place and there are systems of accountability to help improve these in practice. Some organisations have begun developing prevention work with young people in schools. Funding, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation of all these elements will help Ireland to make radical improvements to women's safety and ultimately should help to reduce the scale and impact of domestic abuse.

With effective standards, training, monitoring, enhanced services for women, links between programmes and the justice system, intervention programmes can improve their ability to help make more women and children safer. There is work to be done in developing really effective programmes but it doesn’t have to start from scratch. Existing research and evaluations, as well as this report and the lessons from other practice can all be used. Ireland could show many other European countries what can be done, providing the work is done in a systematic, careful and strategic way, focusing always on enhancing the safety and well-being of domestic violence survivors and their children first and foremost. There needs to be more monitoring and evaluation, using longer follow up periods and involving larger numbers of men and women.

It would be of benefit to all the organisations and networks and to helping to increase safety for women and children if working communication links between networks and organisations could be developed and strengthened. The organisations, networks and individuals involved all have almost very similar aims. The differences between these organisations and networks are sometimes not as large as some appear to think and the perception of great difference is sometimes contributing to suspicion and divisions
between different networks or between groups. Sometimes, where there are larger differences, these would be worth discussing, as there are useful debates to be had that could help to develop more effective interventions against domestic abuse.

Maintaining barriers between networks and organisations within networks takes time, effort and resources that could be better spent developing ways of making women safer and men less abusive. These barriers create blocks to mutual learning, prevent debate that would be useful for developing effective practice and allow unnecessary duplication of work to take place. They also obscure significant differences between individual organisations in each network, which could result in poor practice going unchecked and good practice going unnoticed. Those not meeting accepted standards need to be brought to account, those meeting or exceeding them should be used as examples to help others. Lessons learnt in one organisation should be available to all the others. Better links and communication between networks is a priority for a future national strategy for the development of effective intervention programmes in Ireland.

Monitoring and evaluation in twenty years’ time could be showing many lives saved. Some practitioners in some countries claim to have helped to bring down their regional domestic homicide rates drastically or even reduced to zero. Ireland could be in a position to show other countries how it can be done. Lives are at stake: this is a cause worth the effort.
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CHANGE programme www.changeweb.org.uk/change_mens_programme.htm

The Courts Service www.courts.ie

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform www.justice.ie

Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) www.dvip.org

European Women’s Lobby www.womenlobby.org/index2.htm

MOVE Ireland www.moveireland.org/aboutus.htm

RESPECT www.respect.uk.net/

U.K Home Office www.homeoffice.gov.uk

U.S. State Standards for batterers’ programmes:
www.biscmi.org/other_resources/docs/alabama.doc

Violence Against Women online library, University of Minnesota: www.vaw.umn.edu/library/bip/

World Health Organisation Handbook for assessing violence prevention programmes:

Women’s Aid Ireland www.womensaid.ie/
APPENDIX A: EVALUATION METHODS

1. Overview

There were two main strands to the evaluation:

1. Exploring any change in men's behaviour and women's safety: gathering data about individual men and their partners and ex-partners in contact with as many of the existing organisations as possible, gathering histories of abuse and demographic data from both, assessing how far the women's safety changed during and shortly after their partners or ex-partners took part in a programme and identifying risks and opportunities;

2. Exploring the nature of the organisations and programmes involved: gathering data about the way the programmes are run and managed and what approaches they use in their work with men and with women. This element includes an analysis of how far each is meeting the recommendations and core principles outlined in the Task Force report on Violence against Women. It also includes an overview of how far each is able to meet the minimum standards for good practice as described by RESPECT, the registered charity and national membership organisation promoting best practice for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated support services in the UK (see below), as many of the organisations involved are already members of RESPECT or have used their guidelines to develop their own practice. This allowed the evaluation team to identify challenges and risks for the groups running programmes and the women whose partners are attending programmes and to suggest ways for groups to deal with these. It also allowed us to identify current good practice and suggest ways of developing this.

2. Data sources

Gondolf, when attempting to identify the best predictors of risk (by looking back at cases over the four years) found that:

"the most consistent and strongest risk marker was the woman's perceptions of safety and the likelihood of re-assault. In fact, the women's predictions were as useful as all the batterer characteristics combined."

Contact with partners and ex-partners is therefore crucial in order to attempt to measure change accurately about most, if not all, of the above possible criteria. Unless the men are imprisoned or dead, there is no other way of knowing that the safety of women and children has in any way improved.

There is a delicate balance between wanting to include and validate women's experiences of abuse and any changes or otherwise in abusive behaviour and not wanting to make them feel responsible for this process. Liz Kelly's research on sexual violence also provides us with very useful and relevant suggestions for how to make interviews with
women as positive an experience as possible (Kelly, 1986). Campbell and Dienemann (2001) discuss the ethical issues in research on violence against women. They feel that evaluations and research should build on collaborations between researchers and activists, particularly activists working with abused women. They make some extremely useful suggestions about how to address the reasonable suspicions and fears that women's advocates may have about research. These suggestions help allay some or all of these fears and improve the quality of the research, practice and mutual learning.

Gondolf used police statistics and the Dobash team looked at court records to gather supplementary data. Health and social services also have information that could potentially help programmes to assess success or not. Organisations providing specialist support for survivors of domestic abuse also have information that may be relevant, but they may be unable to provide such information because of the need for confidentiality in the services they provide for victims.

**Implications for this evaluation:**

1. Data was collected from as many men, women, facilitators, co-ordinators, board or steering group members, partner/ex-partner contact and support workers and others involved in each organisation running or developing programmes as possible.
2. Data was collected from some professionals working in the criminal and civil justice systems.
3. Data was collected from relevant specialist women's organisations.

3. **Naturalistic evaluation of domestic violence prevention programmes**

The evaluation questions guided the content of the naturalistic elements of this evaluation. Gondolf's multi site evaluation and some of the US state tools for assessing programmes' abilities to meet state standards were also useful sources of information.

The World Health Organisation recently produced a handbook for the documentation of interpersonal violence prevention programmes, including programmes working with abusive men (Sethi et al., 2004). The handbook was not published at the start of the evaluation. The tools it provides for gathering data about the nature, structure, purpose and operations of the intervention programmes reflect the questions asked in this evaluation. This handbook could be used for future evaluations or for monitoring programmes.

**Implications for this evaluation:**

4. The questionnaires and other data gathering tools for assessing the operation, functions, purposes and structure of organisations running or developing programmes to work with abusive men were based on the evaluation questions, supplemented by other tools used in relevant evaluation.
5. Interviews with facilitators, co-ordinators and others listed above were used;
6. Verification was drawn from various sources: interviews with women, questionnaires from men, interviews with the women's support workers in linked
services for partner contact service, interviews with staff working in other agencies, particularly women’s organisations, weekly monitoring sheets.

7. Organisations were asked about specific questions such as dealing with threats and admissions of violence at various times during the evaluation, sent via e-mail or post.

4. **Definitions of domestic abuse**

Earlier evaluations have been criticised for using only narrow definitions of abusive behaviour (for example, ignoring sexual abuse) or not looking at the effects of controlling behaviour or belief systems on the survivors of domestic abuse. Others have been criticised for failing to gather data from participants and partners/ex-partners after the programme has ended. Recent evaluations have consulted women’s organisations, survivors and others and developed evaluation tools to address these criticisms. All three of the evaluations listed in the previous paragraph used inventories of violent behaviour, controlling behaviour, injuries and quality of life, some given only to abusers, some specifically for partners and ex-partners of abusers and some for both. The work in Duluth provided the basis for these indexes and other evaluation methods.

Dobash et al. asked specific questions about first, worst and most recent incidents of physical abuse. This provided a picture of significant events, allowed women a way of telling interviewers about these in ways that weren’t dictated by inventories and often uncovered forms of abuse that the women (or men) had not remembered when responding to the inventories.

*Implications for this evaluation:*

8. The evaluation team used a wide definition of domestic abuse. Inventories of abusive behaviour, covering emotional abuse, controlling behaviour and attitudes, physical abuse and threats, sexual abuse and coercion, were used.

9. The questionnaires for men and the interviews with women included questions about first, worst and most recent incidents of physical violence, to assess physical safety. Women who said that they had not been physically abused were asked about the first, worst and most recent incidents of any form of abuse.

5. **Follow up periods**

The Dobash et al. evaluation had a 12 month follow up period. The Gondolf team had a 48 month follow up in that study of four programmes. They used carefully thought through methods of tracking participants, their partners, ex-partners and new partners wherever possible. These included: asking women to give the contact details of a safe third party who would be unlikely to move and likely to stay in touch with the woman concerned – this helped to reduce the number of women whom the evaluation team might not otherwise have been able to contact after they had moved. Programme participants were also required to provide initial contact information for their partners as a requirement of programme participation. Nevertheless, despite this and other strategies,
the work involved in keeping in contact with partners and ex-partners of programme participants was considerable. Burton et. al., evaluating DVIP in London, UK also tracked partners and ex-partners. They also had the assistance of a requirement on the participants to provide contact information, and more importantly, the existence and work of the Women's Support Service at DVIP which kept in safe contact with partners and others.

**Implications for this evaluation**

10. The evaluation time limits meant that there could be only a limited follow-up period and the conclusions were limited by this.

**6. Interviews with women**

Sexual abuse has sometimes been excluded from research. This is sometimes because of women’s reluctance to talk about it or researchers’ lack of understanding or their fears about asking women difficult questions. It can be affected by women not naming it as abusive or not using the same language as researchers to describe it. It can also be because activists discourage researchers from asking about sexual abuse because they are afraid the women will find it upsetting or intrusive. However, some researchers have found that women can also find it a positive experience, particularly if they have never talked to anyone about the experience before and get support, information or simply validation of their feelings from this experience.

Other women have said that they found it useful to get the story out in the open, as a way of moving on (Kelly, 1986). For some women, talking about emotional abuse can be as hard or harder than talking about other forms of abuse.

There is obviously a need to exercise caution and sensitivity in interviewing women about any form of abuse in any case and it is vital that the interviewers have the skills and information necessary to do this in a way that is if possible, positive for the women concerned. Liz Kelly, in her study of rape and sexual assault, provided much useful information about how this can be done. This includes choosing time and place carefully and negotiating these with the women. It also includes making absolutely sure that the interview was the women’s choice and by providing relevant information about legal rights and support services or by helping women to explore what they want from the interview (Kelly, 1986).

The Dobash team developed cue cards, which they used in interviews. During interviews with perpetrators and with survivors of domestic abuse, the interviewer would hand the interviewee a prepared card, which had on it a list of abusive behaviours, each next to a letter. The cards were in different categories, one for controlling behaviour, one for physical abuse and one for sexual abuse.

This has several benefits for both interviewees and for the evaluation: it allows survivors to give information about a range of abuse they have suffered and abusers to do similarly about behaviour they have used, without having either to hear or to say it out loud as part of a list, by saying simply “a”, “g” etc. rather than “hit”, “kicked”. It acts as an aide memoir.
to both survivors and perpetrators, prompting them to recall incidents of abuse they do not recall when asked an open question such as “what form of physical abuse have you used/experienced?” It allows interviewers to ask more specific questions about first, worst and most recent incidents of abuse with more chance of getting full information and with less distress than asking interviewees to describe these incidents in detail. However, the use of cue cards does not work for everyone, particularly those with limited literacy or who do not speak the same language as the interviewer. Also some people will prefer to describe incidents in their own words.

All of the most large scale recent evaluations have also used open questions and other interview techniques to allow interviewees to tell their story in their own way and at their own pace.

**Implications for this evaluation:**

11. The evaluation team made use of the questionnaires and inventories used by other relevant evaluations and research, particularly those listed above.
12. The use of cue cards was incorporated into the evaluation activities with women.
13. The evaluation team liaised closely with women’s support workers where possible, to ensure that interviews were a choice for the women and that they took place at a time and place that was safe and suitable for them.
14. Women were always offered the choice of being interviewed by telephone or in person. Many expressed a strong preference for one or other method, some said that they had no preference.
15. Women were always interviewed by a woman who was experienced and knowledgeable about responding to domestic abuse.
16. The evaluation team developed and interview pack which was used in all interviews, whether in person or by telephone. As well as the interview schedule and form for recording answers, this included a prepared card with the numbers of local women’s services and relevant statutory agencies written on specifically for each interview, leaflets and other information about legal protection, housing and financial help, checklist for ending the interview. The interviewer also kept a running list of specific information that seemed, from what the woman was saying, to be particularly important for her to have. For example, if she said that she did not know anything about the programme and said that she wanted to or seemed confused about it, the interviewer kept a note of this and asked her towards the end of the interview if she would like further information. If she did, this information was either given immediately or another appointment made.
17. Facilitators and women’s support workers were asked to give women information about the evaluation, using a one page summary written for this purpose by the evaluation team. They were asked to request permission for their names and contact details to be passed to the evaluation team. Some facilitators did not do this at all or were not able to, because of the limited nature of the partner contact. Where there were women’s support workers providing partner contact services, the connection between the woman and the evaluation team was much simpler and safer to make. In several cases, the facilitator provided name and phone number but no other details, such as whether or not the woman was still living with the man, whether she had been in recent contact with the programme or
even whether or not she had consented to having her details passed over. Again, sometimes the women gave limited times and dates for contact, which it was sometimes possible to accommodate, but not always. Some women never responded to calls and the interviewers were wary of leaving messages. However, persistence often paid off.

18. It was also useful that the evaluation team director had a background in work with women experiencing domestic abuse. This proved to be useful for establishing trust and understanding between the evaluation team and some of the women’s support workers who were initially wary of helping to set up interviews with women they were working with. It was also invaluable for the interviews themselves – in almost every interview the woman needed some information, support or specific understanding or response in relation to her experiences.

7. **Change in survivors’ lives and expectations:**

Even if the violence ends, the past experiences and continued fears and expectations that it will return will often mean that many survivors will not feel safer after their partner has completed a programme. In other cases they will feel that their quality of life has not changed, or has become worse.

Evaluation teams have started to use quality of life inventories and questions for women about their expectations of whether they are likely to be abused again and other ways of working with survivors to gain a more accurate picture of the effect of any intervention on their safety and well-being. The Dobashes, Gondolf and Burton evaluations all used these methods in their tracking interviews or questionnaires to survivors. In interviews and questionnaires for abusers they used questions designed to elicit information about changes in their attitudes and controlling behaviour. These all help to find out more about whether a programme has improved survivors’ feelings of safety, their ability to make their own decisions and their experiences of controlling behaviour other than violence, as well as the longer term effects of living with abuse and its aftermath on their mental health or welfare.

*Implications for this evaluation:*

19. Quality of life inventories were used as part of the interviews with women.

8. **Evidence from the criminal justice system**

The Dobash team had access to court records throughout the life of the research, including the follow up period. Their experience of this form of data provides us with useful lessons. 10% of the men not attending the programme and 7% of those who had attended the programme were convicted during the follow up period. The Dobashes note that this evidence on its own could lead to three dangerous, false conclusions: it would appear that a) at least 90% of all men subject to a criminal justice response of some sort
were not violent, that b) all types of sanctions have an extraordinary effect on reducing violence and that c) there is little significant difference in effectiveness between programmes and other criminal justice responses to domestic abuse. These false conclusions don’t take into account low reporting of abuse to criminal justice agencies.

Gondolf’s team found several methodological problems with gathering evidence from police records – arrests not classified as domestic assault, variations in police practices, lack of computerised records. However, there was useful corroborative evidence from police records, where they existed: nearly a quarter of the women called the police in response to reassault during the first 15 months of follow up and this was consistent across the four sites of the evaluation; 8% of men were arrested for crimes classified as domestic violence during the 15 month follow up and 11% in total during 48 months. Gondolf also noted the differences between cases where the abuser was re-arrested for re-assault and those cases where he appeared to “get away with it”. He suggests that “arrest records need to be used with caution in verifying women’s reports of representing recidivism”. (Gondolf, 2002, page 131).

**Implications for this evaluation**

20. The evaluation team were not given access to police or court records. Women were asked questions about their use of criminal and civil protection. Men were asked about their involvement with the criminal and civil law.

9. **Information about and from men**

The women were given cue cards with the checklists, as the Dobash team did. For telephone interviews this was managed with the co-operation of either women’s support workers or facilitators who were in touch with the women and able to pass these on in person if it was safe to do so. They were always given the option of ignoring one or more of these checklists and some chose to do so. However, most did not.

The questionnaire was originally designed for men to complete at the start of their contact with programmes, so that it might be possible to track men and gather follow up data. However, it quickly became clear that this was not going to be systematically done, for the following reasons:

- Programmes were starting at very different times, or were rolling, and the evaluation was to last only one year;
- Participants were not required to comply with evaluation as a condition of participation, so many objected or did not complete forms.
- Very few completed more than one questionnaire and very few consented to interview. Those men who did consent to be interviewed usually gave us very limited times to call them or did not answer calls or return messages, which meant that in many cases interviews did not take place.
- Facilitators sometimes felt that the forms were too long for men to complete at the start of the programme. (The forms were based on those used in other
relevant evaluations and research, and were checked by another relevant researcher before they were issued.)

- One facilitator said that it was pointless giving them to men until they had been on the programme for a while, and did not seem to accept or understand that the evaluation wanted to measure change in attitudes and behaviour.

- Some facilitators did not give out the questionnaires until several months into the evaluation. One refused to give them out at all. Two programmes did not return completed questionnaires until several months after they had been completed.

- One facilitator refused to give out questionnaires. However, this facilitator did allow the evaluation director access to men as a group in her presence. The evaluation director was then able to give out questionnaires directly.

**Implications for this evaluation:**

21. Men were asked to provide demographic data and information about the background of their relationship with the woman they had abused.

22. As part of the questionnaire and during interviews, in line with and based on the tools used in other research (Dobash et al, 2000; Gondolf, 2002, etc.) men and women were given four checklists: controlling behaviour and attitudes, emotional and verbal abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. The sections were not labelled “emotional abuse” etc. as the questionnaires were mostly to be distributed to men who had only recently started a programme or not started at all and therefore might not at this stage identify their behaviour as abuse.

23. The men were asked to tick forms of behaviour they had ever used, at any time, against their current or most recent partner. They were also asked if they had done so in the last three months and then to give an estimate of how many times in the last three months they had done so. At the end of each of these sections men were asked to add any other forms of behaviour that they felt they had used that were relevant to that section.

24. Men were asked about first, worst and most recent incidents of physical violence.

10. **Content and delivery of group work sessions**

Michael Paymar and Ellen Pence have published many of the tools they use in evaluation of group work with men. Paymar’s checklist for observing groups provides a clear framework for carrying out group observation (Paymar, 1999). It lists specific aspects of domestic violence intervention group work and recommends methods of assessing these. These tools reflect the lessons learnt in research about essential or important elements of group work with men. US Batterer programme standards often provide methods of assessing whether or not groups are running according to specified criteria. These also provide useful tools.

**Implications for this evaluation:**

25. All groups were asked for permission for the evaluation director to observe at least one session.
26. Paymar’s checklist was used in a slightly adapted format for all group observations.
27. Lessons from research were used as criteria for assessing programme content.
28. Facilitators were asked about their experiences of running groups.

11. Evaluation tools used:

1. Questionnaire for individual men joining or already on programmes – developed from ones used in similar evaluations, using checklists of abusive behaviour for emotional, mental, physical and sexual abuse as well as controlling behaviour and attitudes and looking specifically at the first, worst and most recent incidents of abuse. This questionnaire was also used to gather demographic data and information about what led to the men starting programmes. It was also used to verify some of the information provided by group representatives about the programme management.

2. Interview schedules for partners and ex-partners of men joining programmes or already on them – developed from ones used in similar evaluations and reflecting the questionnaires used with the men, in order to compare and to gain insight into the effects on the women and the ways they dealt with the abuse. It was also used to verify information provided by the programme representatives or partner support workers, about partner contact and/or support.

3. Interview schedules for men who attended programmes for more than 13 weeks.

4. Interview schedules for key representatives of each group, such as co-ordinators or facilitators, to gather information about the history and current structure of the group, the ways it works, links to other organisations, curriculum followed, partner contact, etc.

5. Interview schedule for facilitators of each group, to gather information about how they run groups, their skills, knowledge and experience, their views on the work with perpetrators and their links with partners or partner contact workers.

6. Interview schedule for anyone running partner contact or partner support services linked to programmes for men, in order to gather information about the activities they carry out with partners, the links with facilitators, links to other women’s services and their views on the effects of the programme on the women they work with.

7. Interview schedule for key representatives of women’s organisations in each of the areas where a programme is operating, to gather information about their experiences of links with the programmes, the effects of the programme on any women they have had contact with, the current context for domestic abuse work, including the effects of the current legal responses and their views on what should be included in a programme working with abusers.

8. Monitoring and evaluation form for group participants and facilitators to use each weekly session of the group.
9. Gathering any relevant documentation of policies and practices, and verifying these in the relevant interview or questionnaire, or by observation, or by discussing actual incidents or situations.

10. Checklist for observing groups for domestic abusers developed by a practitioner who has worked in programmes for domestic abusers for 20 years in the USA, in order to verify information from facilitators about how they work with the men, to observe the techniques they use and how they deal with challenges and opportunities in the sessions, to observe the curriculum and activities they deliver and the group working skills involved.

11. Specific questions on specific topics circulated to all groups via e-mail or post at the same time. These included the snap shot count of men on programmes during the first week in March, questions about dealing with threats or violence, questions about confidentiality.

12. **Data collection summary**

   Men's questionnaires: 72
   Men's follow up questionnaires: 8
   Telephone interviews with men: 8
   Telephone interviews with women: 25
   Face to face interviews with women: 9
   Focus group interview: 1 group, with five men
   Observations of group sessions: 5
   Interviews with programme facilitators: 21
   Interviews with programme co-ordinators: 3 co-ordinators interviewed several times
   Interviews with other representatives of organisations running/developing groups: 12
   Interviews with women running specific linked support services for women whose partners/ex-partners contacted programmes: 8
   Interviews with staff working in other women's organisations: 11
   Interviews with staff working in other agencies: 4
   Weekly session evaluation forms: 5 organisations returned completed session evaluation forms, some for the entire period of the evaluation for each man who attended and from facilitators for every session delivered
   Forms for providing information about numbers of men in contact with programmes during various stages of the evaluation: 8 organisations returned completed forms or completed these by phone.

**Notes:**

The total number of questionnaires collected during the evaluation was 72. All these men were attending a programme somewhere in Ireland during the year. The total estimated number of men participating in a programme during the year varied from approximately 45 to approximately 80 (numbers of men regularly attending tend to drop at particular times of year and many men drop out of fixed or rolling programmes after a few weeks). This sample therefore provides a comprehensive picture of the men, the routes by which
they came into the programmes, the forms of abuse they say they had used and other information.

The 72 men who completed questionnaires were a mixture of men who had just applied to a programme (20), some who had just started a programme (13), some who had been on for more than three months (25), some who had been on a programme for a year or more (14). One man who completed a questionnaire had been on a programme for six years.

26 women were interviewed, 8 of them on more than one occasion over several months. For two of these interviews there was no useful data, because the women concerned clearly needed something else from this contact that was more important than the evaluation’s need to gather data. On both of these occasions and in part of some of the other interviews, the interview schedule was set aside to deal with the woman’s more immediate needs.

The women and men were asked to give their partner’s date of birth and other information. This enabled the evaluation team to match men’s questionnaires to the relevant interviews with women, and from this to compare data given by the men with data given by their partners and ex-partners, in 14 cases.

Most organisations running programmes are reliant on time given voluntarily by the facilitators, steering group or board members, women’s support workers and others. Most individuals involved in data gathering were working full time for other employers and could not always respond to our questions or telephone calls easily. Many people involved in this evaluation gave a lot of voluntary time to take part in interviews, gather data, answer questions and so on. Where there was at least one part time paid member of staff or a key individual who could carry out programme work using time and resources from another employer and with that employer’s agreement and support to do this, the data was more regular, consistent and quickly returned.
APPENDIX B: checklists for programmes and women’s organisations to use to develop positive working relationships

Checklist for perpetrator programmes to take into account in their relationships with women’s organisations

Be able and prepared to demonstrate to women’s organisations how your policies and practices contribute to the aim of enhancing the safety and welfare of women and children, even if all the policies can do is show how you ensure that you as an organisation DO NO MORE HARM. This is a minimum standard for any organisation working with domestic violence, whether working with perpetrators, survivors or children.

Be able and prepared to demonstrate how your funding sources do not detract from the funding for primary services for women affected by domestic violence.

Be prepared to support funding applications for primary services for women affected by domestic violence.

Be prepared and able to demonstrate how far you are meeting the Task Force recommendations and any other good practice guidelines. If you cannot meet some of these, be able to say what you are doing about this.

Be prepared to show and discuss with women’s organisations your programme content, manuals and other materials, in order to demonstrate clearly how the programme challenges excuses and justifications for abuse and attempts to make abusers take responsibility for their own use of abusive behaviour (this does not imply that you can ever guarantee being able to achieve this – just that you must be able to show how you will try to do this).

Checklist for women’s organisations

Purpose of programme: the programme should have as its main purpose the enhancement of the safety and welfare of women and children. This does not imply that any programme can ensure that women and children are safer as a result of the work done with the men. However, it does mean that policies and practices of the intervention programme should all clearly be drawn from this aim and be guided by it. As a minimum level, all organisations working to respond to domestic violence, whether they work with the men, the women or the children, should always DO NO MORE HARM. Ideally they should be improving the situation.

Programme content: the programme should clearly demonstrate how the facilitators will challenge any excuses for domestic violence, specifically how they will show perpetrators that their justifications for the abuse are ways of denying, minimising, blaming someone else or something else. The programme should show clearly how the facilitators will try to move perpetrators from such excuses to taking responsibility for their own use of abusive behaviour.
Programme management: the organisation should be clearly and transparently able to demonstrate how they are meeting Task Force recommendations, and any other relevant standards. For example, MOVE groups should be able to demonstrate their ability to meet MOVE standards, SEDVIP groups their ability to meet SEDVIP standards and in future, any groups who are members of RESPECT should be able to demonstrate how they are meeting RESPECT standards. If the department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform brings into force any state standards for programmes, all groups should be able to demonstrate how they meet these standards.
APPENDIX C: TIME OUT

The MOVE programme introduces time out in this way

“The use of TIME OUT will form a very important part of your attempt to control domestic violence. You will decide to take a fixed period of time (usually 60 minutes) away from your partner, because YOU are becoming angry, and you feel that your anger is likely to get out of control. TIME OUT may seem to be an unusual way of behaving at first. It can seem artificial because it is an early (and for YOU untried) stage in the process of managing anger.

So you must get over the importance of this to your partner, perhaps making it part of your new contract. It is a really effective means of putting the brakes on the anger machine, of heading off trouble long before it is serious. She will probably find it odd that you start to withdraw like this, and she may feel deprived of a good argument and unsure what this new behaviour means. Thus, you and your partner must recognise that this is not just a cop out. Help her to recognise that this is for her benefit as well as yours, and a part of your attempt to change. Show her this sheet and discuss it with her. You need to negotiate much of this with her, to explain the logic behind it, and to develop the routine which you will both use. You must set up the rules for re-entry into the situation.”

Introduction to MOVE Step 3, Time Out; from the MOVE programme handout and website

The CHANGE programme introduces the technique in this way:

“A time out is a practical tool you can use to prevent you doing or saying abusive things which you know you’ll regret later. A time out is a plan of action for removing yourself from your partner, or from any situation which you can see is building up. It is an important way for you to show others, and yourself, that you can be in control of your behaviour and that you are capable of taking responsibility for yourself”.

Other guidelines from the CHANGE programme include

• “Explain what a time out is to your partner. It is about making yourself safe and taking responsibility for your actions.
• A time out is for self control only. Your partner does not have to stop talking or do anything else when you want a time out. It is not a way for you to control her behaviour.
• Return to the house in the agreed time. If there is still an issue to be resolved agree with your partner how best to do this. Only go ahead if your partner is willing. Maybe it will be better to talk it over with someone else present. If you decide to try and talk it out and you recognise your ‘early warning signals’ again, take another time out.”

Both programmes contain worksheets for the men to use as part of preparation for using time out and recommend practice time outs. The CHANGE programme also contains materials for facilitators to use when teaching the men this technique, including case studies to illustrate the difference between false time outs and real time outs. There are also guidelines about men for whom this technique is not appropriate and for how the facilitators can work with the group about this.
APPENDIX D: Summary of the MOVE programme – Men Overcoming Violence, from MOVE Ireland website, December 2003

MOVE 13 steps summarised, from information on MOVE Ireland website last updated November 2003. Each step has a handout and an exercise attached to it for men to complete as homework. These exercises can be used during group sessions.

Checklists of abusive behaviour, including physical, emotional, sexual and controlling behaviour. Men invited to complete checklists honestly.

Step 1: group rules; assumptions about violence: part of culture, caused by irrational beliefs, 100 % responsibility of abuser; characteristics of violent man including excuses, blame and denial of responsibility.

Step 2: WASP: Wait, Assess and Slowly Proceed. Asks men to consider signals leading to anger and consider alternatives to anger.

Step 3: Time out. Technique taught in relation to anger. Information about how to use it.

Step 4: Rebuilding relationships. Handout includes material on how to rebuild relationship, considering what each person might want or not want. Handout says that woman may not want to continue relationship and it’s not man’s right to force her to continue relationship.

Step 5: Slow motion picture of violence, using Peckinpah method to look at stages of escalation from anger to violence. Stages examined. Linked to use of WASP.

Step 6: Some roots of anger, Principal irrational beliefs. Consider shoulds, oughts and musts.

Step 7: challenging the anger making thoughts. 5 column challenge, to be used to consider event causing anger: antecedent event, belief, emotional consequence, disputing emotions, emotions now.

Step 8: some more ways of getting angry – inefficient thinking strategies.

Step 9: Becoming positively assertive. Comparison between being assertive and being passive. Basic rights and ways of asserting these rights. Use of I statements and broken record suggested for asserting rights.

Step 10: More about assertion. Dealing with anxieties about being assertive (compared to being passive).

Step 11: Alienation. Information about effects of jealousy, making unreasonable demands, setting up no win situations etc.


Step 13: The Path to Empathy. Information about developing empathy for partner, appreciating what she does for man, rules in the relationship.
APPENDIX E: Summary of CHANGE programme manual
Men who are violent to women: A groupwork practice manual, by David Morran and Monica Wilson, published by RHP, 1997

Part 1 – organisational and practice issues, including theoretical perspective, programme goals, setting up programme, referral and assessment, monitoring and review, contract and compliance, partner contact and programme practicalities.

Part 2 – the programme modules. Each module is laid out with an introduction, objectives and learning outcomes, estimated time required, commentary and tips, handouts and exercise sheets for participants to use or facilitators to write up on flip charts.

Module 1: introduction to programme
Module 2: defining violence and abuse
Module 3: introducing check-in, check-out and homework
Module 4: healthy relationships
Module 5: recognising and identifying emotions
Module 6: male socialisation/ growing up male
Module 7: demystifying violence 1: excuses and intent
Module 8: making myself safer 1 – early warning signals (of abuse)
Module 9: Making myself safer 2 – self talk
Module 10: making myself safer 3 – time out plans
Module 11: demystifying violence 2: violence patterns
Module 12: demystifying violence 3: case study 1
Module 13: demystifying violence 4: case study 2
Module 14: demystifying violence 5: men’s arrest events
Module 15: ‘power and control’ and ‘equality’ wheels
Module 16: case study 3
Module 17: Women’s experiences of violence and abuse
Module 18: Developing empathy
Module 19: skills for non-violence: case study 4
Module 20: negative/positive thinking
Module 21: communication
Module 22: fair arguing
Module 23: understanding jealousy
Module 24: recognising personal change
Module 25: assertiveness/aggression/passivity
Module 26: evaluation
Module 27: ending module
Module 28: holiday plans

The manual is in three volumes:

**Volume 1 is an overview and supplementary material.** It provides a clarification of terms, information about general, structural and procedural issues, sample policies, information about evaluation, interagency work and work with children.

**Volume 2 is about women’s services.** It includes descriptions and suggestions for areas of work and types of contact and a full programme of workshops to use for running a support group for women whose partners or ex-partners are on the programme, or for other women affected by domestic abuse.

**Volume 3 is about the perpetrator services.**
The first section of this pack includes: procedures and risk assessment tools, application and referral forms for other agencies; risk assessment for courts including family courts making decisions about custody and access; working with the criminal justice system.

**Group work issues:** this section includes guidance on the stages of the programme, how to run it as a rolling programme with staggered intake, timing, integrating new men, check-in guidance, men completing or moving on; check-out; role play and re-enactment (most of the activities make great use of this technique as well as other discussion techniques) and guidelines on gender and co-working.

**Activities:** For each activity in the topics listed below, there are aims and learning points, equipment needed, description of the activity/exercise, tips and advice on dealing with common traps, handouts or exercise sheets where appropriate. Many of the topics last for more than one weekly session, some will last for several.

The topics:
1. Timeouts and signals
2. Violence, power and control
3. Violence logs
4. Denial of Responsibility and minimisation
5. The effects of domestic violence
6. Sexual violence
7. Threats and intimidation
8. Emotional abuse
9. Accountability
10. Parenting and the effects of domestic violence on children
11. Gender and abusing male privilege
12. Women’s anger
13. Sexual abuse
14. Jealousy and isolation
15. Self-talk – winding up, winding down
16. Letting go
17. Negotiation
18. Keeping at it.
APPENDIX G: Excuses, Excuses: Domestic abuse is never acceptable, Running training courses on domestic abuse: Resource pack for trainers, by Thanghan Debbonaire, DVR 2004

Time: 15 minutes min., 30 minutes max.

Aims:
To establish clearly that domestic violence is never acceptable.
To explore the range of excuses and justifications there are for domestic violence and to identify these as ways of blaming others or other factors, or ways of minimising or denying the abuse, rather than placing responsibility for the abuse with the abuser.

Equipment needed:
Sticky notes, 76mm x 76 mm square, ideally different colour for each group.
Enough flip chart paper to provide one prepared sheet for each small group of about 5/6 people.
There is a transparency you can use to sum up or turn into a handout “perpetrators’ ways of justifying their behaviour”.

Flip chart headings:
You will need a piece of flip chart paper for each group, turned sideways so you can divide the page into six equal columns, with the following as headings at the top:

Ways of denying that the violence has taken place
Ways of minimising the extent of the abuse or the effects on the victim
Ways of blaming someone else for the abusive behaviour
Ways of blaming something else for the abusive behaviour
Genuine acceptable reason for being abusive to a partner / girlfriend / boyfriend /wife / husband / ex-partner / similar.
Other

Method and notes
First, without giving out the flip charts, ask the small groups to write on each sticky note, an excuse for using domestic violence that they may have heard or heard of on TV, film, other people etc. This may be something that a perpetrator might say (for example: “she wound me up”) or something a victim might say (“he was drunk”) or something someone else might say (“she is always nagging him” or ”it is part of their culture”). Tell them not to discuss these, simply to record them, one per sticky note.

When they have used up lots of sticky notes, give each small group their prepared flip chart and ask each small group to decide which column to put each sticky note in, according to their opinions, not anyone else’s, and stick it there.

Give them about five minutes and keep an eye on any group that seems to be putting sticky notes in column 5. If there is any group with a sticky note in that column, check that they have absolutely understood the question – sometimes people put things in there that they think the abuser would place there even though you have specifically asked them to put them where they think they belong! Do this by saying “I want you to look at where you have placed your sticky notes,
particularly any that are in the fifth column, and make sure that you think they are where you, as a
group, think they belong, not where you think someone like Phil (abuser in the video) or Louise
(survivor, his partner) or anyone else would put them – I want to know what you think”.

In whole group, with each small group together with their sheet, go through each column. Ask a
different group to start each time, or ask each group to give one at a time, or similar. If necessary,
ask the whole group to comment on the choice, or a specific group to explain why they have made
a particular choice.

When you get to the 5th column, this should ideally be empty. If there are still some there, don’t
argue, first ask them to explain why they have made that choice. If necessary summarise by asking
the following questions and using the answers to stimulate further discussion:

Do you think that anyone ever has the right to threaten or control or hurt their wife/husband,
boyfriend/girlfriend or partner or ex?

If you do, what situations do you think that it would be Ok to hurt or threaten someone you live with?
Which of you thinks that this [read out one of the sticky notes in the 5th column] is an acceptable reason
for abusing a partner or ex? Why do you think that? Why do some of you not agree?

Discuss the answers to each question with the whole group. Try to encourage a majority view that
there is no excuse for violence and that abuse is the sole responsibility of the person using it, not
the person being abused or threatened.

Presentation:
Even if someone thinks that they have that right, they don’t – it is against the law.

Notes:
The video referred to in this activity is a training video produced by the actors and director of
DVR Drama for Westminster Domestic Violence Forum Domestic Violence prevention project.
It was developed and scripted by DVR: contact Thangam Debbonaire, DVR for further details.