



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

**A thematic inspection of work undertaken,  
and progress made, by the Probation  
Service to reduce the incidence of  
domestic abuse and protect victims**

**Launch event – Wednesday 12 July 2023**

**Today's speakers  
will present on the  
following aspects  
of the report:**

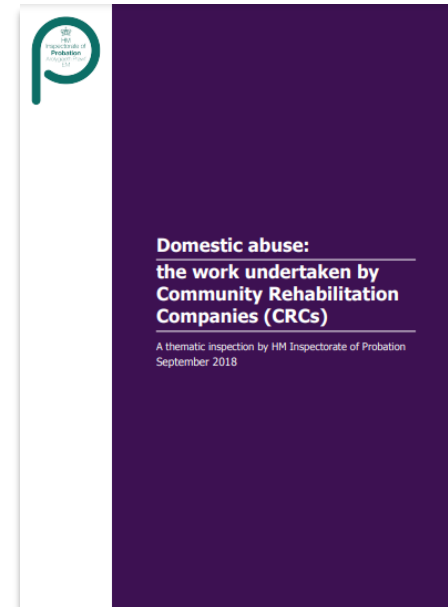




# Background

Our last inspection in 2018 made **eight recommendations**, including:

- The need to focus on the quality of domestic abuse work and ensure service users complete appropriate interventions in a timely way
- HMPPS should identify an integrated pathway for working with domestic abuse



1.5 million police recorded domestic abuse related incidents and crimes, England and Wales year ending March 2022

49/73 SFO reviews quality assured by HM Inspectorate of Probation involved someone with a known domestic abuse risk

134 domestic homicides in year ending March 2022

Independent Review of the case of Damien Bendall



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# Contextual facts: probation service

240,674 people  
managed by the  
probation service

74,996 people  
managed by the  
probation service  
identified as  
perpetrators of  
domestic abuse  
(31 per cent)

Can involve  
multiple victims  
over many years  
and other family  
members not just  
partners

Prioritisation framework for sentence management continues to adjust practice expectations to manage demand.



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Analysis of existing core  
inspection data

Sample 1: 60 cases with DA  
registration (history or  
perpetrator)

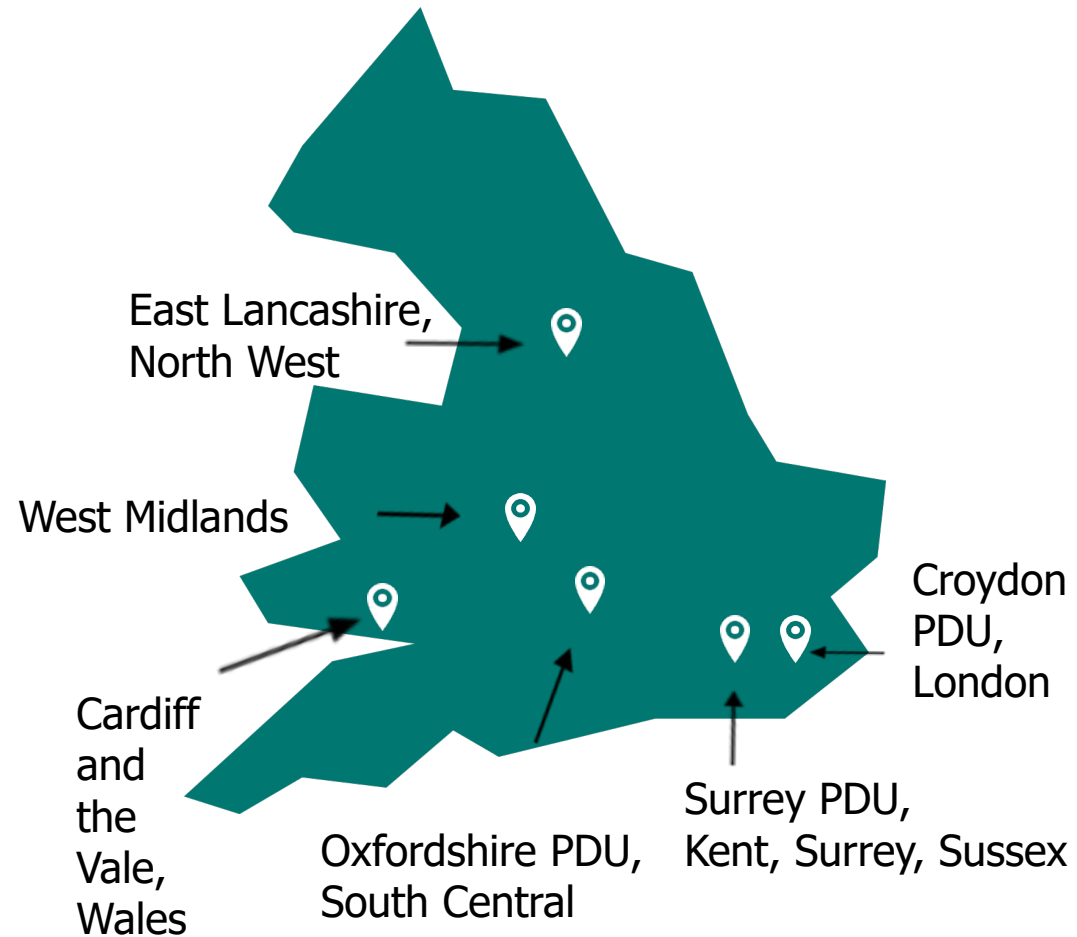
Sample 2: 83 cases with  
commenced DA intervention

45 probation practitioners  
interviewed

Meetings and focus groups  
probation staff, sentencers,  
operational and strategic  
partners

User Voice gathered views from  
55 people on probation

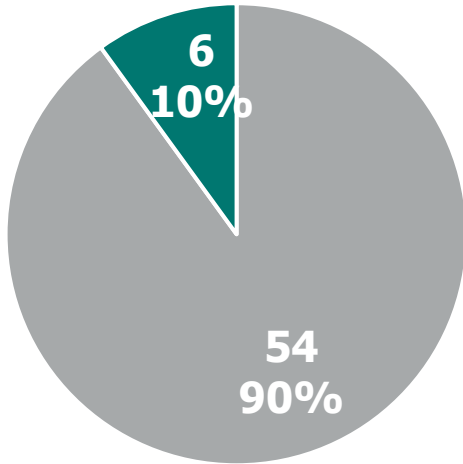
# Methodology





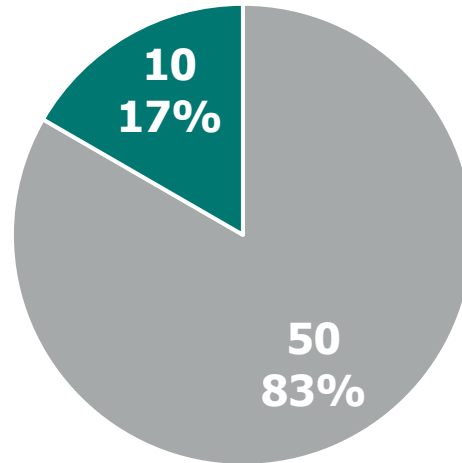
# Sample 1 Characteristics

Sex



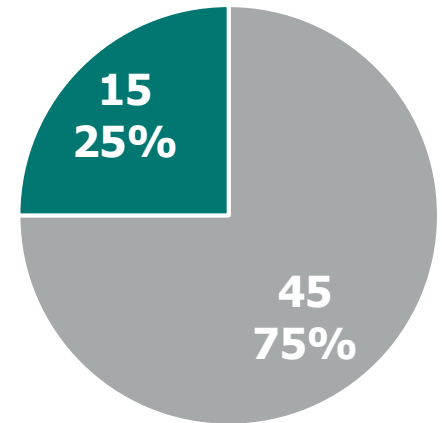
■ Male ■ Female

Race and ethnic category



■ White ■ Black & Minority Ethnic

Index offence of domestic abuse



■ Yes ■ No

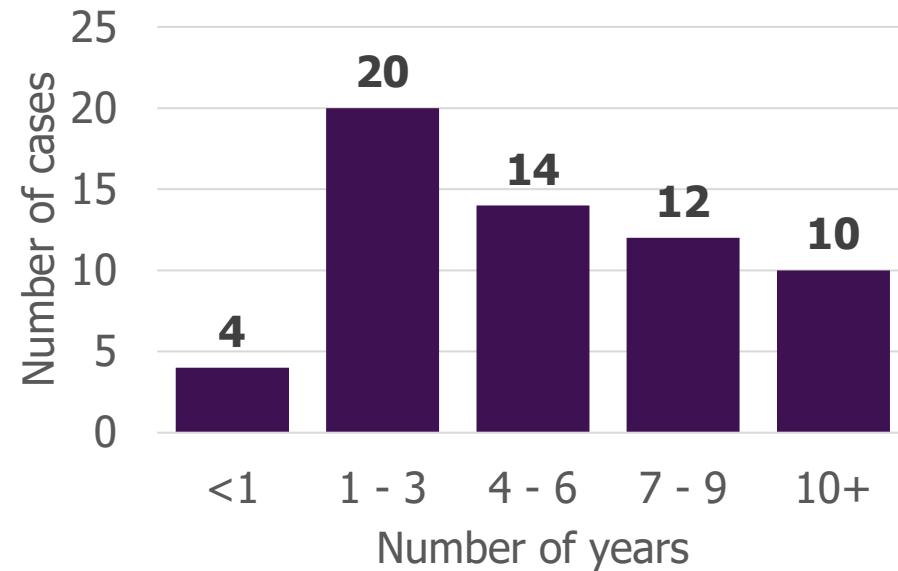


# Sample 1 Characteristics

### Number of Victims



### Years of recorded DA





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# Policy, Strategy and Leadership



Domestic Abuse Policy Framework is comprehensive, but not widely used in practice

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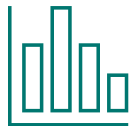
National domestic abuse reference group (NDARG) making progress but no clear strategy for the probation service

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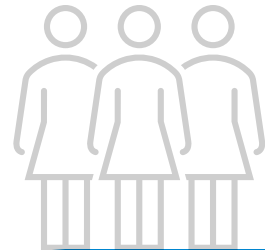
Information sharing agreement (ISA)

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Flexible range of interventions but insufficient oversight nationally of the proportion of completions

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# Staffing



19 out of 45 practitioners had workloads over 131 per cent on the workload management tool



Practitioners generally felt they had sufficient domestic abuse training, however casework showed gaps in knowledge and confidence



Practitioners had heard of Domestic Abuse Act 2021, but few had been briefed or were aware of impact on practice, including recognition of children of victims even where they have not directly witnessed abuse



38/45 practitioners said they had sufficient management oversight and support with DA cases although some felt supervision was too process driven

*"It doesn't make me feel safe; I always feel like I have missed something."*

**A practitioner's view of supervision**



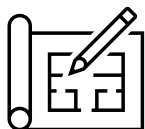
# Casework



28 per cent of cases had sufficient assessment of domestic abuse



27 per cent of the cases had effective sentence delivery to address domestic abuse



Planning addressed the risks of domestic abuse sufficiently in 37 per cent of inspected cases



23 per cent had adequate reviewing to address domestic abuse issues

*“I’ve had about 10 to 12 probation officers in a year. When I turn up there I just say ‘hello’ and I’m out of there within six minutes. I got to travel eight miles to go and say ‘hello’ and then go.”*

**Person on probation**



# Information sharing



In 61 per cent of cases where there had been some police involvement, the practitioner was aware, in 10 per cent they were not, and in 29 per cent it was unclear from the case file whether they knew about it or not.



Relationships with children's social care services were problematic.

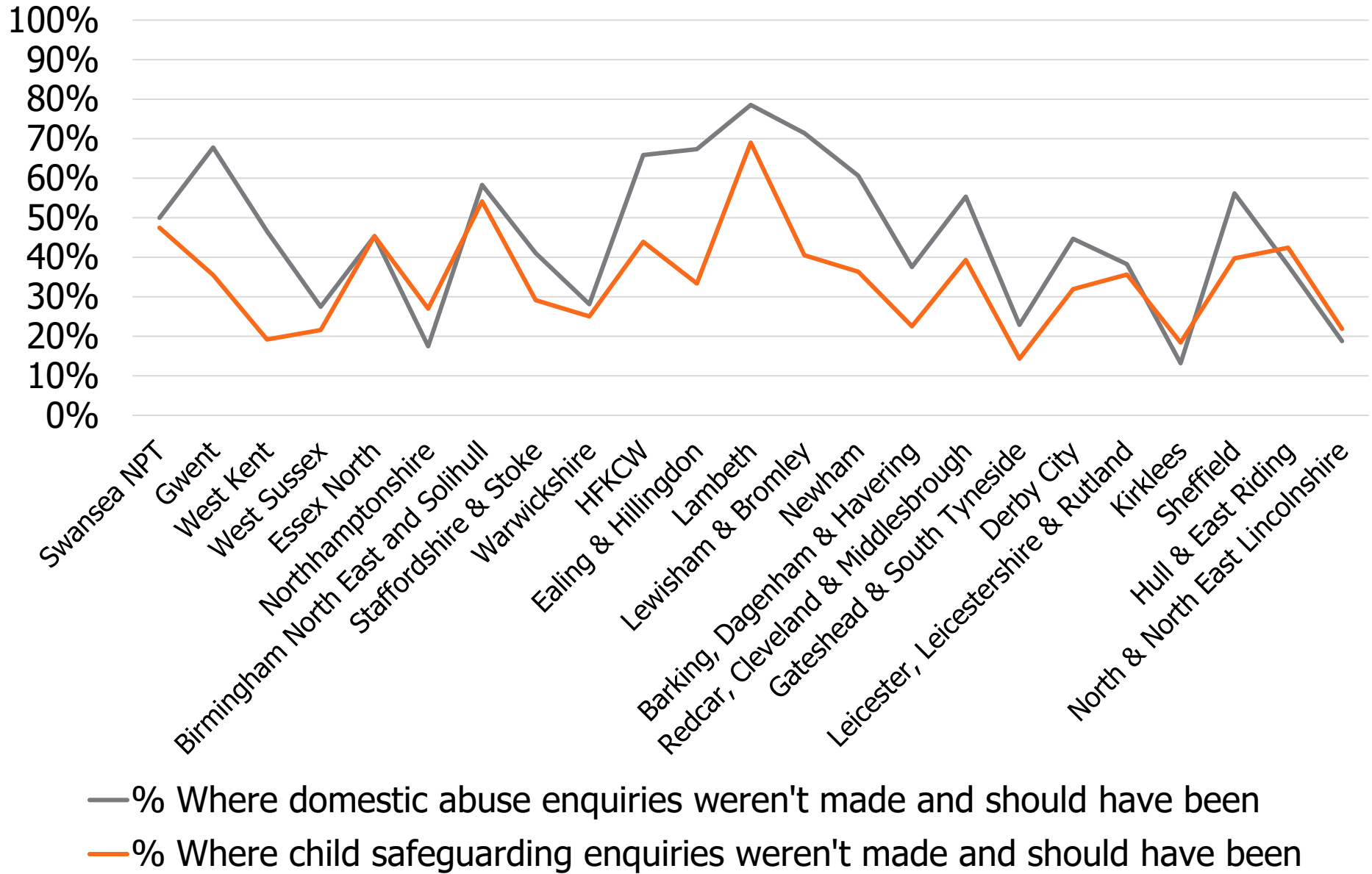


Information was not always shared with services working with victims of domestic abuse.

*“Information is only exchanged after a battle, especially if it is historical information. Possibly, they do not understand the Probation Service’s role, but it hinders their, and our, ability to manage risk.”*

**An SPO description of their experiences with CSC**

# Gaps in information sharing





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# Interventions

Accredited  
programmes - BBR

June 21 to 30 September 2022 6,723 BBR requirements. As of November 2022, less than half were recorded as commenced/ongoing. Of the remaining waiting list, 18 per cent had already waited over 52 weeks to start. By November 2022, 594 BBR requirements which had started had been terminated; only 187 (31 per cent) successfully completed.

Structured  
interventions

Three domestic abuse **structured interventions**: 2,155 referred, only 277 completed since April 2022.

Skills for  
relationships toolkit

3,724 toolkits started (Sept 21-Sept 22) only 149 marked as completed – but 26 had no sessions recorded, 22 had only 1.



# Intervention delivery

## Main sample

45 per cent of cases should have had an intervention but had not

Generally where attending a programme there was sufficient contact between the practitioner and programme team

## Sample 2 – 83 cases known to have started an intervention

Just over half had sufficient domestic interventions delivered

21 people (25 per cent) had waited over a year to start an intervention

*“The way my tutor explained things was brilliant. The way he talked to the group was very clear. The coping mechanisms were spot on. Had I learnt this sooner I wouldn’t have been in this position. He also let me speak and have an opinion, which is important. He was brilliant.”*

**BBR  
participant**

*“We are not supposed to deliver the toolkit due to workloads, but I do. I’m worried how it would look if there was an SFO and I had not done anything.”*

**Probation Practitioner**



# Probation support for victims

## Domestic Abuse Safety Officer

- Sufficient contact between practitioner and DASO in six out of 14 cases.

## Victim Liaison Officer

- Sufficient contact between practitioner in eight of nine cases open to the scheme.

## Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor

- Insufficient contact in 12 out of 15 cases where an IDVA was allocated.

## Disclosure

- Lack of a systematic approach to disclosure and poor consideration to wraparound support for those receiving information



# Summary of recommendations

Publish a Domestic Abuse strategy

Ensure intervention delivery is monitored nationally

Accurately identify victims

Ensure staff use Domestic Abuse Policy Framework

Ensure demand management decisions maintain partnership working

Improve disclosure practice

Review Police information sharing agreement to close loopholes

Improve domestic abuse safety officer training

Develop multi-agency training and awareness

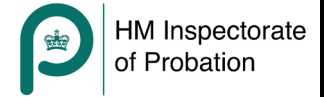
Improve information sharing arrangements with police and CSCs

Improve quality of domestic abuse assessments and use of specialist tools

Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities between programme teams and probation practitioners



**USER VOICE**  
ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING



**THE VOICE OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION  
FOR THE INSPECTION INTO DOMESTIC ABUSE  
LAUNCH EVENT**

## APPROACH

User Voice conducted remote semi-structured interviews with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

55

PEOPLE HAD  
THEIR SAY

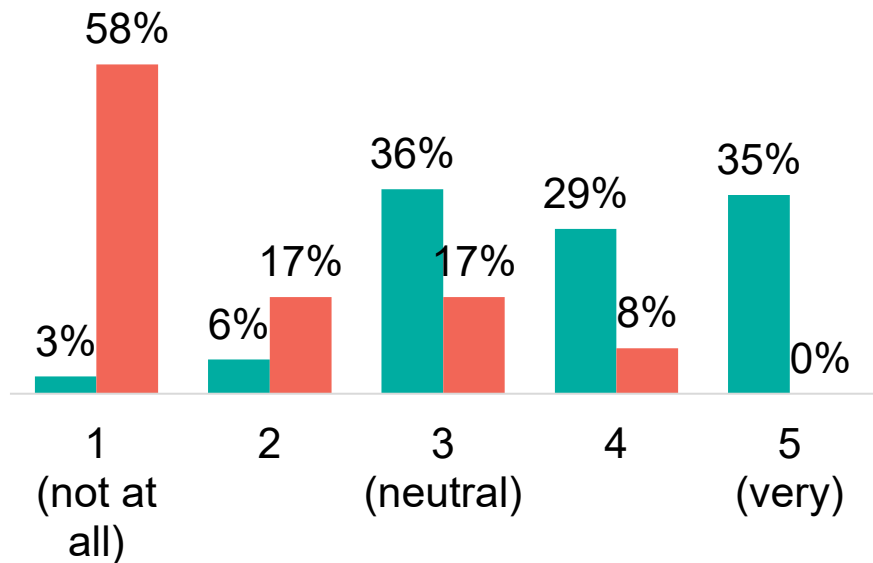
## OBJECTIVES

The overall objective was to better understand how Probation Services are supporting perpetrators of domestic abuse and how or if the service meets their needs. Furthermore, our objectives were:

- To understand the experience of people on probation and what support they have (or haven't) had both in general and in relation to their offence.
- To understand the effectiveness of intervention programmes in reducing reoffending and helping rehabilitate participants.
- To collate people on probation's views on what probation needs to do to better help perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- To highlight any good practices that could be built upon by the service.

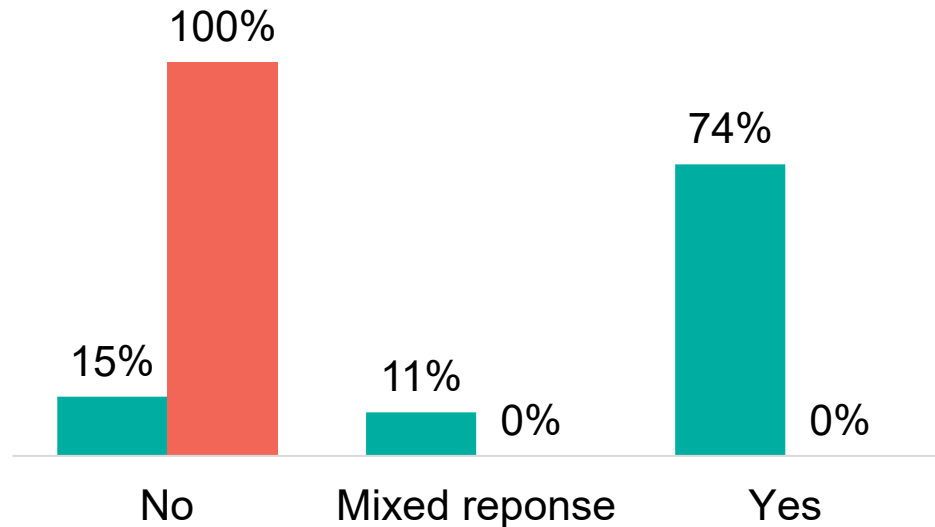
# ALL AREAS OF PROBATION EXPERIENCE ARE AFFECTED GREATLY BY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PROBATION PRACTITIONER

**Q:** Please state on a scale of one (not at all) to five (very) how well you feel supported by probation in helping you to avoid further domestic abuse incidences:



- Those that have an effective and trusting relationship with probation staff
- Those that do not have an effective and trusting relationship with probation staff

**Q:** Do you get what you need out of appointments?



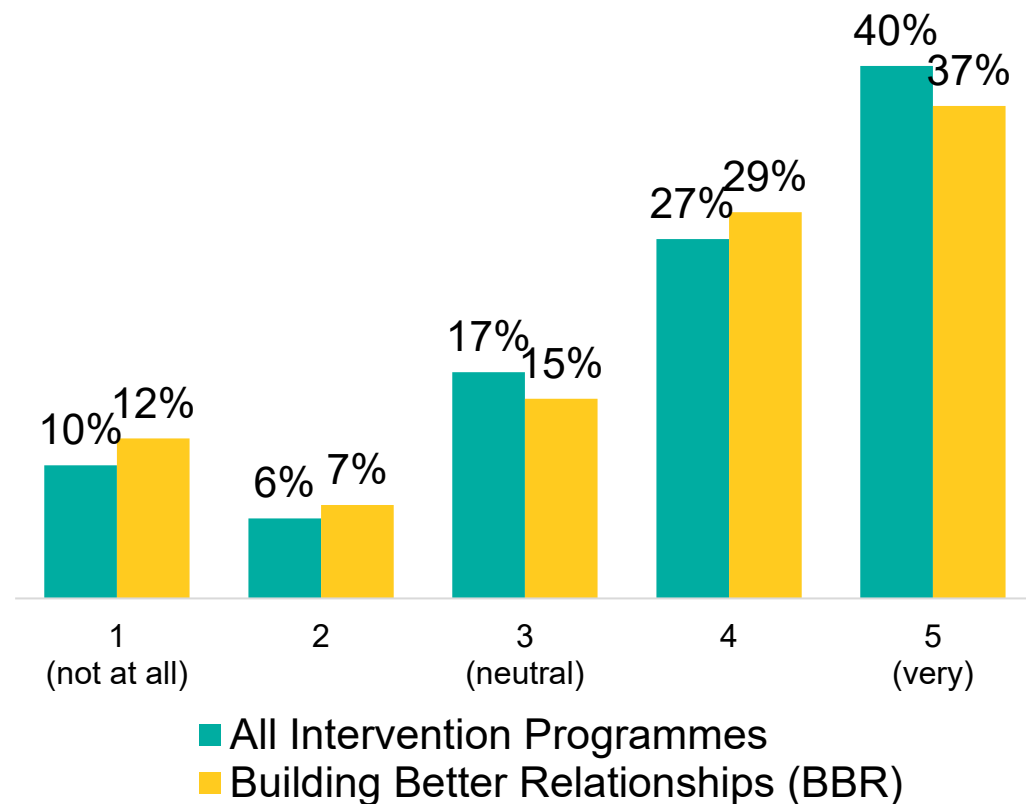
- Those that have an effective and trusting relationship with probation staff
- Those that do not have an effective and trusting relationship with probation staff

# OVERALL, PEOPLE HAVE HAD A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

There were 5 key themes in the data:

- 1) Intervention programmes can be an “eye-opener” and a catalyst for change
- 2) People are able to develop vital coping mechanisms through intervention programmes
- 3) Insightful and caring tutors foster understanding and improve desistance
- 4) A positive group environment leads to an improved intervention programme experience
- 5) Self-motivation is as important as the programme to avoid re-offending

**Q:** Please state on a scale of one (not at all) to five (very) how impactful the intervention programme has been in helping you to avoid further domestic abuse incidences:



# KEY PARTICIPANT LED SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES THEY HAVE FACED

1

In depth training that involves both people with lived experience and those staff that are noted by people on probation as getting it right.

3

Many stated that the intervention programme needed improvement and was the biggest contributor to them not being involved in further incidences of domestic abuse.

2

Review the methodology and modules via consultation with people that have completed the course to see what could be improved.

4

Bring the language and the learning from the courses into the probation experience and appointments. Therefore, continuing the support.



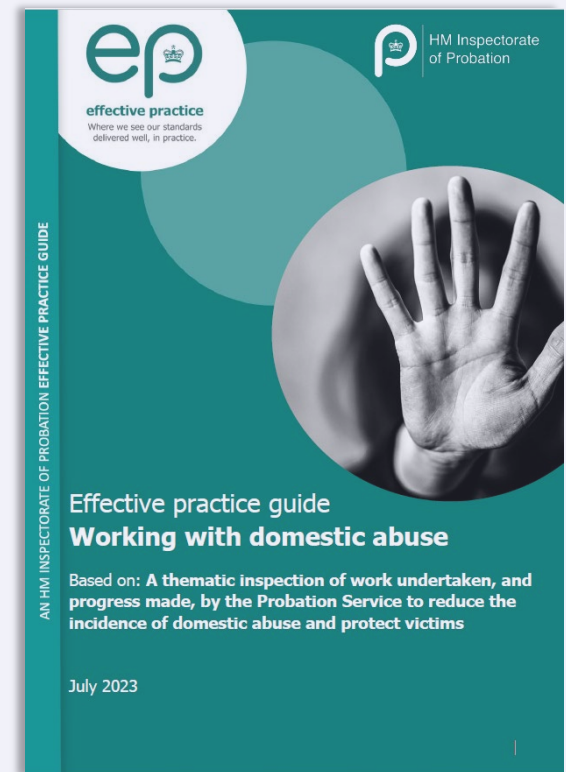
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# Effective practice guide

“ where we see our standards delivered well, in practice. ”

## Guide contents:

- **Introduction**
- **Background**
- **Our standards:** what we looked for and our expectations
- **Examples of effectiveness** including
  - Leadership
  - Information sharing
  - Multi-agency work
- **Case management themes** including:
  - pre-release work
  - Victim safety measures
  - Holistic assessment
  - Contingency planning





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# Effective practice guide

## Finding your way



Tools for practitioners



HM Inspectorate of Probation  
recorded interview



Useful links



External video



## Reflection questions



**What is a relationship?**



**Who are victims of domestic abuse?**

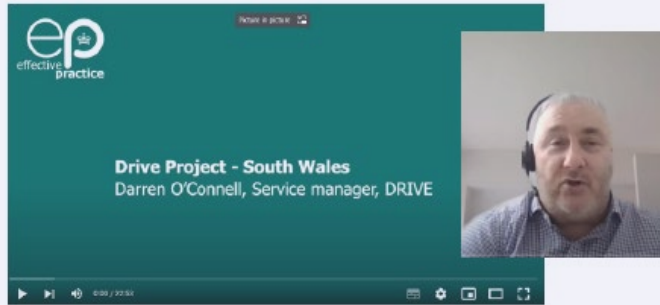




# Spotlight on Cardiff

**Example of effectiveness:** Reportable incidents, Wales Probation Service

**Example of effectiveness:** Drive, Cardiff



**WE NEED TO STOP ASKING  
"WHY DOESN'T SHE LEAVE?"  
AND START ASKING  
"WHY DOESN'T HE STOP"**

**Example of effectiveness:** Learning in  
Cardiff



**Example of effectiveness:** Wales  
Integrated Serious and Dangerous Offender  
Management (WISDOM)







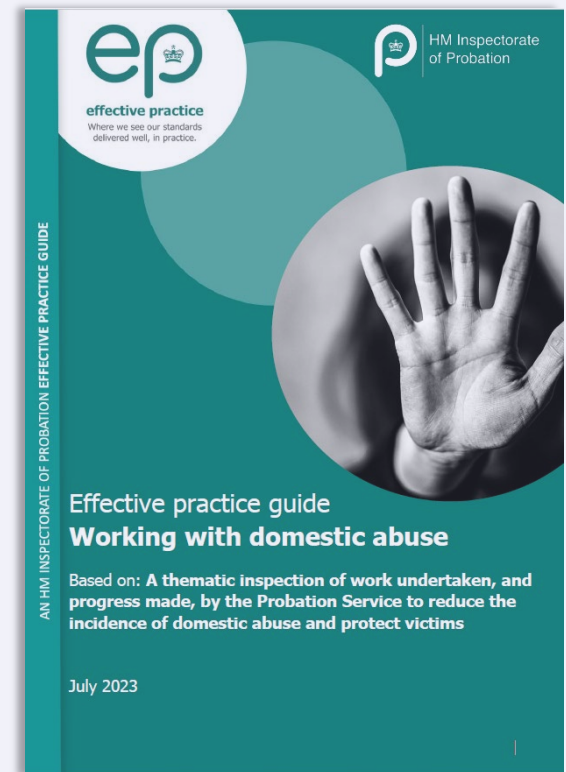
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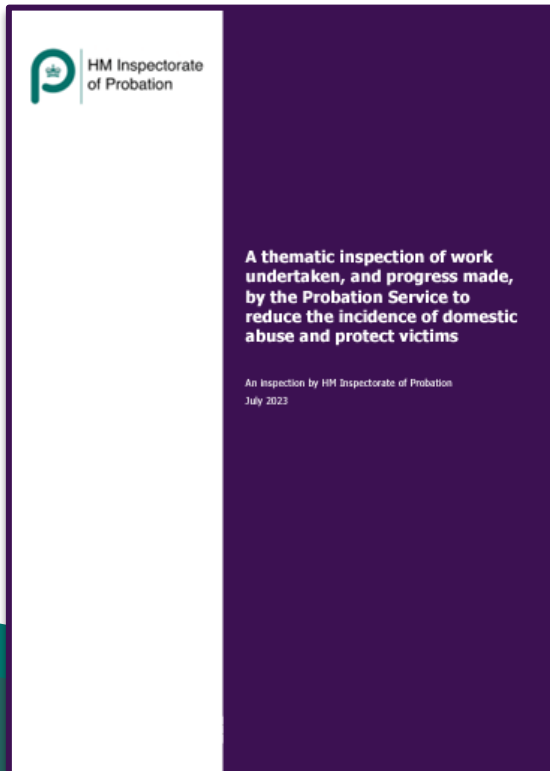


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<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/domestic-abuse-2023/>

# Now read the full report

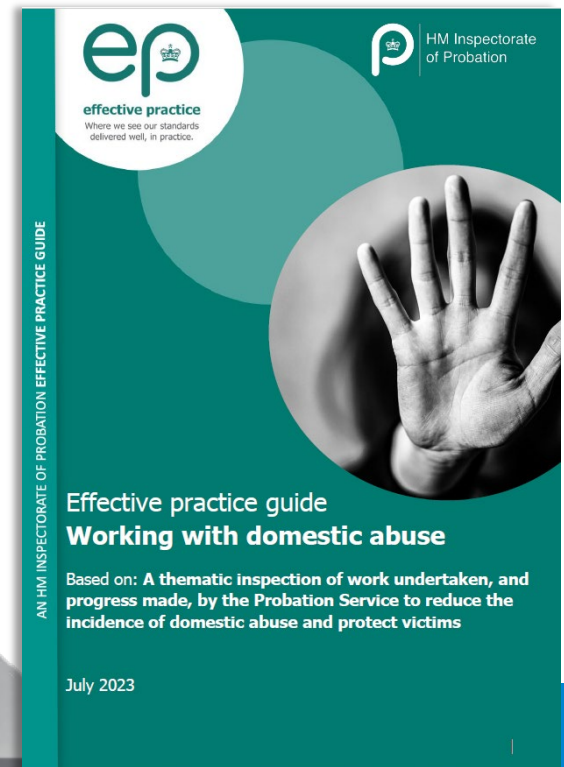
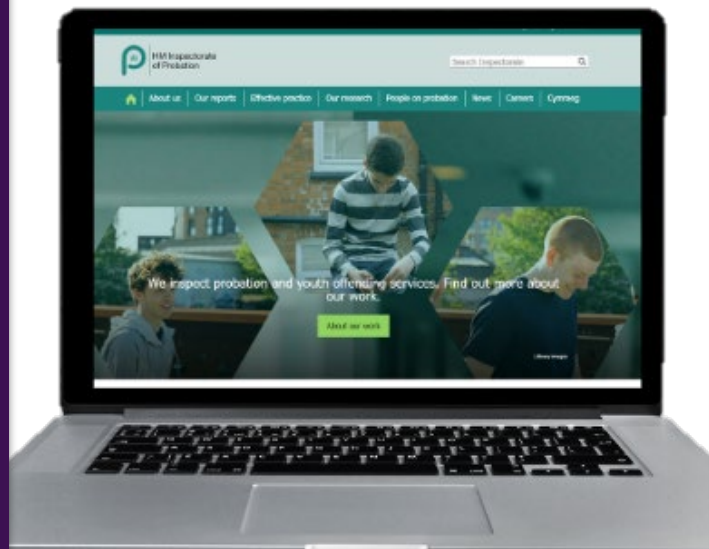
 [You can read the full report and accompanying effective practice guide here](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/domestic-abuse-2023/)



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**A thematic inspection of work undertaken, and progress made, by the Probation Service to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse and protect victims**

An inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation  
July 2023



ep  
effective practice  
Where we see our standards delivered well, in practice.

HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

AN HM INSPECTORATE OF PROBATION EFFECTIVE PRACTICE GUIDE

**Effective practice guide**  
**Working with domestic abuse**

Based on: **A thematic inspection of work undertaken, and progress made, by the Probation Service to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse and protect victims**

July 2023



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# Contact us



- Civil Justice Centre, Manchester, M3 3FX



- [HMIP.enquiries@hmiprobation.gov.uk](mailto:HMIP.enquiries@hmiprobation.gov.uk)



- 0161 240 5336



- [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation)



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