



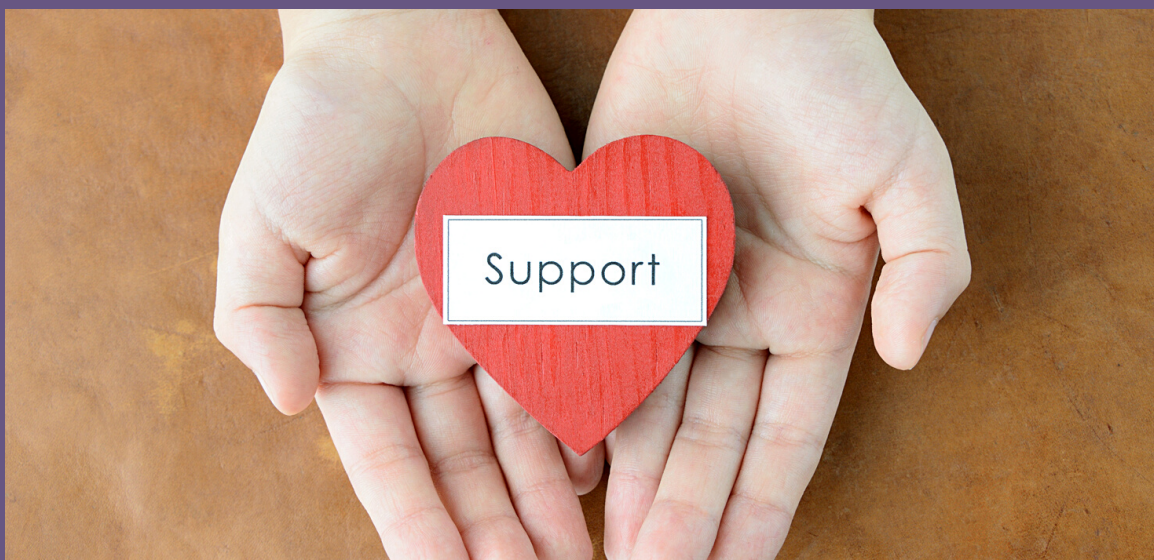
# DV-ACTION

Linked Support service



Information pack

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# THE LINKED SUPPORT SERVICE

The Linked Support Service (LSS) offers support, information and guidance to ex/partners of domestic abuse perpetrators who are attending the DV-ACTION perpetrator programme. This information booklet is to answer any questions you may have about this service and the perpetrator programme.

## What is the LSS for?

The linked support service aims to:

- Give you clear information about the perpetrator programme that your ex/partner is attending
- Keep you informed about your ex/partner's attendance on the programme
- Inform you if he drops out or is suspended from the programme and the reason for this if known
- Give information about what his attendance, completion or failure to complete the programme might mean for you
- Give you a clear understanding of a programme's ability to change your ex/partners behaviour and the likely success of the programme
- Raise with you as soon as possible, in some cases immediately, any safety concerns that arise from the programme workers' contact with him
- Provide reports from the programme about your ex/partner where necessary
- Respond to any requests for information from you about your ex/partner, within the constraints of the organisation's confidentiality policy.





## What support can DV-ACTION offer?

A linked support worker will contact you when your ex/partner is referred to us to complete a DAPP. This is to give you an opportunity to tell us about your expectations of the programme and to ask us any questions about it. We can provide the following ongoing support, guidance and information:

- Help with safety planning
- Ongoing telephone support once a month (please note that this is not a crisis/emergency service)
- Check-ins via email once a month
- General Information about domestic abuse and recovering from your experiences
- Signposting you to services that may be helpful for you in your current situation.

You can choose how often you want to hear from us and what level of support you want to receive, which you can change at any time. Support is available for up to 1 month after your partner finishes the programme.

## How will the service contact me?

It is very important that perpetrators take responsibility for their behaviour by telling us how to contact their ex/partners. We may have received your information from a solicitor, social worker or the person attending our programme. Following this information pack, we will arrange a time to call you.

If you are in a current relationship with someone on the programme we will arrange a time when they are not with you so that you can talk to us in confidence. In this first call, we will ask you how much contact you would prefer to receive from us and how often.

## Is the service confidential?

This service is confidential, however, if you tell us something which leads us to believe that there may be a risk of harm to yourself, others or that a crime is likely to be committed, this may need to be reported to the authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with you first.

Information from you will not be shared with your ex/partner and will only be shared with other professionals with your consent or through child protection procedures if we are concerned about the safety of a child.





## What happens if my ex/ partner is abusive while he is on the programme?

Anyone attending our programme must sign a contract of participation. In this contract they:

- Agree not to be violent towards any person (except in self-defence) while on the programme. This includes stopping any form of physical discipline towards children
- Understand that if their violence continues they may be asked to repeat part of the programme and/or be suspended from it
- Agree to leave (without argument) if their partner asks him to
- Agree not to interfere in any way with any efforts their partner wishes to leave
- Agree not to use the programme guidelines or rules against their (ex-)partner, for example not telling a partner to take time-outs, and they should understand that these rules apply only to men who are stopping their violent behaviour and that the programme focuses on his problems only.

It is important that you continue to keep yourself and your children safe and you should always seek help if your ex/partner is abusive even if this affects his position on the programme. If you disclose abuse to us our priority will always be to ensure your and your children's safety.



# THE DV-ACTION PERPETRATOR PROGRAMME

The DV-ACTION domestic abuse perpetrator programme (DAPP) is a challenging and focused course for parents who have used violence and abuse in their intimate relationships.

## What does the programme do?

The programme aims to reduce violence and/or abuse towards their intimate partners and improve the safety of their child/ren by:

- Encouraging them to **take responsibility** for their abusive behaviour
- **Teaching them strategies** to make positive steps towards **changing** that behaviour
- Increasing their **awareness and understanding** of domestic abuse
- Increasing their **understanding of the effects** that abusive behaviour can have on their partners and child/ren
- Helping them **not to use controlling behaviour** in their intimate relationships.



The DV-ACTION programme includes:

- a suitability assessment to see if the programme is the right intervention
- 18 sessions completed remotely with a trained domestic abuse programme facilitator
- a final session with a specialist risk assessor after the programme is completed
- a full final report that can be used in court if needed
- a linked support service to support and provide information to ex/partners.



## Why is there a suitability assessment?

DAPP's aim to change abusive behaviour and includes sessions that challenge past and current abusive behaviour. Therefore, there **must be an acknowledgement of abuse** from the perpetrator. Community programmes like DV-ACTION will only accept those that take responsibility for at least some of their behaviour and show a genuine willingness and motivation to change.

Many perpetrators will agree to treatment as a 'tick box exercise' to get contact with their child/ren, satisfy the courts or repair a relationship but the programme is unlikely to be successful if they attend solely for those reasons. A suitability assessment will examine a perpetrators willingness and motivation to change; those that deny their abusive behaviour will not be suitable for this intervention.

## What happens in sessions?

The programme is not the same as training, therapy, couples counselling, anger management or parenting programmes, although the programme will use elements of these types of interventions within it. Topics in a DAPP usually include:

- techniques for stopping violence
- understanding the cycle of violence and abuse
- emotional abuse
- building empathy
- examining past and current abusive behaviour
- attitudes to women
- respectful relationships
- sexual respect
- understanding the effects of abuse on children
- how to help repair the damage to children

The sessions will include examining incidents, using role plays, learning about the effects of abuse on others and applying this to their own situation. They will also be set homework and expected to really engage with the sessions and show progress. The programme is meant to involve working on change all through the week, not just during sessions.

As the sessions are delivered on a one to one basis so the programme worker can focus on the areas that the courts/local authority are most concerned about.





# CHANGE

# SAME

## What will my ex/partner have to do?

He will have to attend 18 sessions with a trained domestic abuse treatment worker, sessions are attended online, once a week. He may be suspended or expelled from the programme if he:

- misses 3 sessions without adequate reason
- is abusive during a session
- attends a session while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- does not allow his ex/partner access to support services
- continues to use abuse or violence.

His attendance on the programme depends upon good progress which will be continually reviewed by the programme facilitator. This means that if we feel that he is not making a genuine attempt to change he will be removed from the programme.

## How will I know if the programme has made a difference?

When he has finished the programme he will have an interview with a risk assessor who is independent of the programme facilitator. They will look closely at whether he has internalised what he has learned and whether he has genuinely made steps towards change. The assessor may also want to speak to you to check if there has been any further abuse.

A full final report will then be completed which will also be shared with you. This report will examine whether he has changed, re-visit the risk concerns and make recommendations as to whether any changes in contact can be safely made.



# CHALLENGE



# HOW EFFECTIVE ARE PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES?

Domestic abuse is different from other crimes, there are often many incidents of abuse against one victim, usually, abuse is ongoing and repeated again and again with the average victim living with abuse for three years. Research shows us that perpetrators continue to use violence with multiple partners, some having up to six different victims. It makes sense then that we focus on the perpetrator and press him to make changes so that he does not continue to be violent and abusive in his future relationships.

DAPP's in the UK usually base their work on the perpetrator taking responsibility for their behaviour. Using violence and abuse is a choice that perpetrators make so it is possible for them to choose differently and learn not to be violent and abusive.

You might have heard people talking about domestic abuse saying "why didn't she leave"? Maybe people even said it to you! Perpetrator programmes change the question and instead ask "why doesn't he stop?"



## Do DAPP's work?

The biggest investigation into the effectiveness of UK DAPP's was published in 2015. Project Mirabal took data from 12 different DAPP's over 5 years, including surveys and interviews with programme workers, male perpetrators, ex/partners and children.

The project did not just focus on whether physical violence stopped after a programme but also looked at whether partners gained more freedom, if communication was more respectful and if the lives of children improved.

Results for the impact of the programmes on physical and sexual violence were impressive. 12 months after the programme started positive changes were reported by partners in all 7 categories of physical and sexual violence including:

- those injured as a result of violence fell from 61% to 2%
- 2 forms of abuse, 'use of a weapon' and 'pressure to unwanted sexual activity' stopped completely
- potentially lethal behaviours (strangle, choke, drown, smother) dropped from 50% to 2%
- lower risk violence (punch, kick, burn, beaten) also dropped to 2% from 54%
- the effects of abuse on children were also reduced with those seeing or overhearing violence dropping from 80% to 8%
- over half, 51%, said that they felt very safe after 12 months compared to just 8% at the start.

Not all the results were positive though, harassment and other non-physically abusive acts continued for over a quarter of women.

The report also showed that in the areas where women most wanted to see change, including; financial control, sexual jealousy, positive parenting and restrictions on day-to-day activities, the behaviour did not change as much as women hoped for, with only small positive changes shown.

It should be noted though that although 12 programmes were studied the number of people who completed in-depth interviews was low (64 men and 48 partners). There was also high dropout rates recorded across all programmes and in the research project itself.

### So can a leopard change his spots?

Although recent research has shown some good results we would recommend that you approach your partner's attendance on a DAPP cautiously rather than assuming it will change him. Think of it as an opportunity for your ex/partner to show that they can **start** making changes in their behaviour and this is only **if** they approach it with goodwill and are motivated to make it succeed.

We would not recommend making any change to contact or living arrangements until the programme is finished, a final report is received which is positive and the courts/local authority have had the opportunity to review it.



# WHO ARE DV-ACTION?

DV-ACTION Programmes is a division of DV-ACT, a team of domestic abuse experts who have worked in the domestic abuse sector for many years.



## DV-ACT

DVACT's aim is to use our expertise to keep children safe from abuse. Our specialists have provided expert interventions for courts and local authorities nationwide. Our independence and decades of experience mean that we have the flexibility and breadth of knowledge to provide the best interventions for families in child protection measures/ court proceedings.



## Programme Team

Our treatment team members come from a variety of backgrounds but all have many years of experience in delivering intervention programmes to both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.



## Management Team

DV-ACT was founded by Tracey Boylan and Ruth Phillips, who manage and develop our clinical work and Claire Verney who ensures the day to day running of the business. Claire will be your first point of contact should you call or email us and is happy to answer any questions you may have.



# CONTACT US

You can contact us using these details

T: 0203 9678368

M: 07378423587

E: [programmes@dvact.org](mailto:programmes@dvact.org)

W: <https://www.dvactprogrammes.org>

Please note that we are not a crisis service. In an emergency **always call 999** and use the **silent solution** if you are unable to speak.

For 24-Hour support you can call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline free of charge on: **0808 2000 247**