

DV-ACTION Bespoke Domestic Abuse Programme for Mothers



DVACT-PAI are an independent organisation providing expert domestic and sexual abuse, psychological and cognitive assessments and treatment programmes for children's services and the family courts.

All of our programmes are delivered on a 1:1 basis across the UK and are designed specifically to meet the needs of parents who are in court proceedings or who have children in child protection measures. Programmes include a full final report by an expert risk assessor, ensuring that all parties are fully informed of the progress made.

Domestic Abuse Programme for Vulnerable Mothers

This programme is designed to work with mothers where the family court or local authority has concerns regarding ongoing vulnerability to domestic abuse. The work is demanding and matched to the needs of the mother and the child protection plan.

The programme is in a blended learning format including one-to-one sessions with a specialist treatment worker and ongoing online learning using our tailored learning platform. Online learning reinforces the topics completed in the treatment sessions with content that matches the learning style of the mother including interactive exercises, videos, audio clips and simplified language so that those without an academic background can still access the material.

The programme includes:

- an initial session to devise and agree a bespoke programme of work to cover the concerns of the court, the mothers ownand/or to take into account different learning styles and abilities,
- 10 one-to-one sessions delivered remotely via zoom or similar ,
- sessions delivered by a trained experienced facilitator,
- sessions delivered remotely using zoom or similar,
- client access to DV-ACTs online learning platform with independent learning tasks to complete between sessions,
- access to technology to complete sessions,
- a final risk assessment report that can give recommendations regarding ongoing risks and the suitability of child contact arrangements. The report can be used in court proceedings and filed with all parties.

Benefits of the DV-ACT programme

- **Focus on child protection** - The programme has safeguarding children as its primary focus. While the primary source of danger is always the abusive partner, mothers will learn how their decisions and actions have contributed to the risks and how to act protectively in the future.
- **Accessible** - Highly focused one to one sessions with a treatment specialist is supported by an array of online learning. Work is matched to the woman's learning style and ability. Tablets are provided along with lifelong access to our learning portal.
- **Bespoke** - Sessions are individually tailored to the needs of each family. The mother participates in creating and timetabling her own programme of work, which means that each programme is unique and helps to encourage a sense of agency and collaboration.
- **Suitable for court** - The programme is designed for families in child protection measures with the work recorded accurately and assessed upon completion to help inform the decisions of the court/local authority.

Session content

While each programme of work is unique and tailored to the needs of the case, sessions can include the following:

- **Domestic abuse knowledge** - covering subjects such as power and control, sexual abuse and coercive control.
- **Attachment** - exploring reasons why the mother remained in the relationship, understanding the emotional attachment to the abuser and pressures to reconcile.
- **Children** - with a focus on understanding the effects of abuse on the child and reparative parenting.
- **Safety planning** - focusing on prioritising children's safety, crisis management and early warning signals.
- **Personal insight** - discussing the impact of the abuse, exploring childhood experiences and reasons for vulnerability.
- **Moving forward** - building self-esteem, how to work collaboratively with professionals and what to do when starting a new relationship.
- **Additional needs** - this will cover specific needs not included in the above areas such as alcohol abuse, grieving and loss, the use of violent resistance and immigration concerns.

Programme suitability

The programme is particularly suitable for mothers where:

- there is an enduring emotional attachment to the abuser,
- the abuse has impacted their ability to make safe decisions,
- they have a history of difficulties in permanently escaping the relationship.

Please note that this programme of work is designed for mothers who are separated from an abusive partner and where suitability for an intervention has already been assessed. Alternative programmes would be required

Final report

A detailed final report is provided following the conclusion of the work. For the preservation of objectivity, all reports are completed by assessors independent from the practitioner completing the work. This report will advise what the programme covered, whether the mother has met the targets outlined at the beginning of the work and recommendations for further work and a practical risk management plan. As this report is completed by an expert assessor it can be used with confidence in court proceedings – all DV-ACT assessors are experienced expert witnesses.

Costs and timescales

Sessions are usually attended weekly so the programme can be completed in approximately 12 weeks with the assessment report filed within 4 weeks of programme completion. If there are time pressures due to ongoing proceedings and it is felt appropriate for the case the programme sessions can sometimes be delivered twice weekly.

The cost of the treatment programme will need to be met by the local authority, however, the costs of a vulnerability assessment (if required) or final report can be split between the local authority and the legally aided parties when arranged in advance.

The costs of the programme is £2950 +VAT However there is a reduced fee for cases that already have a DV-ACT report which is £2750 +VAT. When delivered alongside a family safety assessment the cost (including full assessment and programme) is £4700.

Please note that translation fees and court attendance fees are not included and will need to be met in addition to the fees given above.

Referral process

This programme can only be referred to by social workers or solicitors in care proceedings to start the programme we require

- mothers contact details
- the full court bundle of documents if in care proceedings or if not in care proceedings we require the social work chronology, any assessments completed, and minutes from CP conferences or meetings,
- confirmation that the fees will be met by the local authority.