

adva

against domestic violence and abuse
in Devon

Conference Report

A review of, and actions from, the Survivor
Conference on 25th November 2005

Raising the survivor voice in Devon

by

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for the ADVA Partnership

Hope

ADVA Partnership

Raising the Survivor Voice Conference 25th November 2005

Acknowledgements

ADVA wishes to thank all those that have contributed to the success of this conference. In particular we wish to thank:

- The survivors, who have made the conference relevant by sharing their experience so openly
- The agency representatives for their willingness to engage; their commitment and for implementing the conference results
- The workshop facilitators: Jo Morrish, Michael Miller, Michael Beechener, Dinah Mears, Roy Tomlinson, Andy Stapley, Peter Dale,
- The team responsible for organising this conference: Philippa Chapman, Chrissie Morris, Melody Floyd

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Background

In March 2005 the ADVA Partnership commissioned a study entitled 'Raising the Survivor Voice', which sought to gather the views of female survivors of domestic abuse about the services they received across Devon. The results of this work were to be presented at the annual conference in November 2005 which, for the first time, was to be focused entirely on agency representatives hearing survivors' views.

Copy of slides (produced by Philippa Chapman) attached as Appendix 2 and full report of 'Raising the Survivor Voice' available from Rachel Martin.

Attendees

Whilst previous ADVA conferences focused on raising the awareness of a wide range of practitioners, this conference represented a significant shift in putting the survivor at the centre of agencies' attention and highlighting the significant contribution that survivor's stories can make in the improvement of agency responses.

The survivors were invited via each of the three Women's Aid organisations in Devon, the Domestic Violence Police Officers and each of the local Domestic Abuse Forums.

Two representatives were invited from each of the following agencies, one directly involved in service delivery and the other with managerial responsibilities.

Criminal Justice (CPS, Courts, Probation)

Police

Education

Women's Aid

Social Services

GP/ Health Visitors

Housing

Unfortunately the terrible weather on the day of the conference prevented a coach of 20 women coming from North Devon as well as individual women living in West Devon. The North Devon group returned to North Devon Women's Aid and ran a session focusing on their views about services, these have been included as Appendix 1. In addition several agency representatives were unable to attend and sent their apologies, fortunately this did prevent most of the workshops from taking place as planned.

The Format of the Conference

After a general welcome, Councillor Jill Owen gave an introduction to the background of the conference. Rachel Martin reviewed the scope of ADVA's work over the last 3 years and highlighted where and how agencies need to improve their responses to meet the needs of survivors (copy of slides attached as Appendix 3). Michael Beechener ran a quiz based on the Survivors report and explored collective and individual roles and responsibilities of managers.

After this introduction to domestic violence as an issue that concerns all agencies, survivors and agency representatives split into two separate groups.

Michael Beechner worked with agency representatives on their role in bringing about change in Devon's approach to domestic violence, while Philippa Chapman discussed the outcomes of the Consultation report with the survivors. This allowed each group to be prepared for the mutual meeting and discussion that was to follow.

Survivor participants had a prolonged break in which it was possible to meet each other. Flip charts were distributed throughout the room with the name of each represented agency and survivors were asked to comment on their experience of each agency by sticking post-its on the respective flip chart. This allowed the survivors to make their voice heard without having to expose themselves.

Agency representatives then had the opportunity to meet with groups of survivors to discuss the issues raised on these flipcharts. Each agency had a separate room allocated. Survivors could choose 3 agencies that they had the strongest views about. Each agency then met with 3 separate groups of women during the day to discuss their experiences with the agency. The group discussions were facilitated by ADVA Partnership representatives.

Many of the agency representatives fed back how impacted and moved they felt by what they had heard. Their empathy and enthusiasm resulted in a list of concrete proposals for change. This agency commitment lies at the heart of Devon's future approach to domestic violence. The implementation of which will define the real outcome of this conference.

Conference Outcomes

Survivors gave consistently positive feedback when individual professionals were:

- **sensitive and non-judgemental**
- **informed about services and appropriate referrals were made**
- **aware of the impact of domestic abuse on children**

This was demonstrated when professionals asked about abuse; believed what they were told and acted appropriately with a relevant referral.

Unfortunately there were many examples given where key front line services had responded to initial concerns with a lack of understanding or indeed interest.

Although in part the concerns reflected a lack of resources and limited availability of services, criticisms were strongest when the attitude of staff had been unhelpful or insensitive or completely lacking in understanding about the nature of domestic violence.

The outcomes of the conference are listed for each agency with the following structure:

- I. General research findings on the respective agency, based on the report of 'Raising the Voice' (2005)
- II. Flipchart comments on each agency
- III. Agency Commitment

Issues Identified for Each Agency and Subsequent Action Outcomes from Each Workshop

Criminal Justice

I. Overall experiences with the Criminal Justice System in the Survivors' Consultation Report

One of the most significant findings from the survivors' consultation was the range of difficulties which women faced, not just in leaving an abusive relationship but in moving on to an independent and secure life. 61% of the women consulted in this Devon wide research had continued to be abused by the perpetrator after they had ended the relationship, resulting in deep rooted fear and anxiety and heightened vulnerability with regards to the children being caught up in a complex, manipulative relationship.

23% of the women in this study had experience of the family courts and 14% of women had experience of the criminal courts. It was clear from some of the comments that accompanied the ratings given that the levels of satisfaction related to the outcome and not to the service provided. Where women gave positive feedback this related to a sensitive approach being adopted by court staff. However concerns were expressed when:

- they did not feel listened to
- there appeared to be a lack in the understanding of domestic violence
- the perpetrator's needs were prioritised

In developing their understanding of domestic abuse it is vitally important that mainstream services recognise the ongoing pressures on women and children and do not assume that once they have left an abusive relationship, no further support is needed to guarantee their safety; if anything the opposite is the case.

II. Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

CAFCASS

- Charmed my abusive ex partner, ignored all other evidence. The judge listened to her
- Have behaved in a dishonest and unfair way
- Very dangerous – my children have been irreparably damaged directly by mis- information backed by an ignorant CAFCASS worker.
- My CAFCASS worker mis-quoted my family support worker and sided with the perpetrator, completely mis- representing me in a report which was put in front of the judge – who wonderfully did not prejudice against me
- Too interested in fathers' rights to listen to abused women and children

- CAFCASS officer when told of an ex partners' abuse said 'people behave strangely at the end of relationships'
- Afraid of my ex
- Broke confidentiality continually
- My CAFCASS officer threatened my barrister – needless to say I lost my court case
- My CAFCASS officer was overheard by myself, my solicitor and my barrister in court as we walked back in, advising my ex on what he should and shouldn't ask for. I thought they were supposed to be impartial. He was so obviously against me and for my ex from the very beginning
- In a meeting CAFCASS officer said ' The DVO told me it's not the worst case of DV she's seen.' I haven't had any contact with the DVO – how does she know the impact on me and my children and why should CAFCASS be allowed to be so unprofessional that this is now used against me. The DVO was not proactive and did not give me details of women's aid / outreach. How does she know the impact DV continues to have on my children and my life?
- Guardian doesn't want to know my view and made that point painfully clear.
- I was assigned a guardian whilst in the safe house, although she knew of my circumstances, her view is 'the women in the house have a skewed view of the world and men in particular'
- Criminal system – was told would cost me thousands if I wanted to take out harassment charge, was helpless and vulnerable.
- Lack of knowledge about Criminal Justice system and how different roles go together
- Criminal Justice System used by ex to harass and bully me by bringing spurious complaints.
- Everyone too 'pro' fathers rights without fathers responsibilities
- I've been told that there was nothing I could do to make myself and child safe until my ex came out of prison. All he needs is enough time to find me and then tell me I have to wait. Please tell my child why we are not safe – thanks
- The judge has said that what my ex partner had done in the past wasn't relevant it was only what he is like in the present that needs to be taken into account.
- Magistrates or judges – takes CAFCASS officers' word as gospel, seemed to ignore information /opinions of school / doctors or hospital reports.
- Judge has been personal, misogynistic and has no understanding of abuse, seriously unprofessional
- My ex husband got custody of children after he had sexually / physically abused me...they were 5 and 7 at the time. The 7 year old broke down in front of the teacher, after 9 months he returned them to me. Why can a judge decide this?

- Where to start – ignorant, unhelpful, biased. Judges and magistrates living in cloud cuckoo land- they need to come down to the real world!
- My solicitor worked with me for 2 years and knew my story and just before the final court date made a misunderstanding on my 'E' form and then refused to represent me – luckily I found an excellent solicitor who got an interpreter and fantastic female barrister who won my case. BUT my solicitors mistake and lack of knowledge about the impact of DV (despite being on the DV forum!) cost me £16000. My solicitors used my lack of knowledge and blamed me for her mistake, I felt very little down.

Action arising from workshop

Agency representatives:

<i>David Gentry</i>	<i>Area Director HM Courts Service</i>
<i>Susan Bahman</i>	<i>Plymouth District Magistrates Court</i>
<i>Mary Anne McFarlane</i>	<i>Chief Officer Devon & Cornwall Probation Area</i>

1. Want to hear more from survivors – would like a survivors panel to continue
2. Use new Witness Care Unit to capture information as each case is on-going
3. Build better links between civil and criminal courts, including CAFCASS
4. Review training scope for judiciary to include all prosecutors
5. Develop Witness Care Unit for single point of contact for criminal cases
6. Try to establish principle of 'one trauma interview'
7. Provide better feedback as information is gleaned, through police, witness care unit and court advocates

Education

Overall experiences with Housing Services in the Survivors' Consultation Report

The Survivors' Consultation focused on Children's Services in general and did not specifically ask for women's experiences with Education. Some women, however, commented that in several instances school staff had been particularly pro active.

The discrepancy between the proportion of women being offered help and those having to ask for help with their children, at a time when their lives are in turmoil, is a matter of real concern. Many women who were concerned about their children did not know who to ask and felt the process to be daunting and unclear, with some agencies being disinterested or failing to recognise the significance of living in abusive situations on the child(ren).

For services, like Education, Social Services or GPs to recognise that their children needed support and for these services to then be offered, without enormous emotional effort for the mother was greatly appreciated. In addition, timely and sensitive services for children ensured some of the presenting problems could be addressed immediately and not be kept on hold for months/ years when they may prove to be harder to deal with.

Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

- My daughter started college here from the refuge. We left with no ID and she is still not able to access the EMA fund without a bank account. There should be a way of accessing it for these kids.
- Bus passes take way too long to come through.
- I don't know if the situation has affected my child or what to look for. Education needed for parents as well to know how to help.
- School has broken confidentiality.
- School children need to get parental consent to talk to outside agencies in school. This may not be appropriate if parent/ carer is abuser.
- I have found my particular school to be sympathetic and supportive, not interested in malicious calls or letters received from perpetrator.
- Exwick Heights / St James Secondary Exeter – amazingly supportive.
- School very good at writing letters and supporting children and mother.
- Lady Modifords – Walkhampton – amazingly supportive.
- Schools brilliant :
 - Pre school – password to use if someone else picking up my son, photo of my ex kept there.
 - 1st school – class teacher and school aware, kept copy of injunction. Provide reports with name of school, my name and address etc not mentioned.
 - Secondary – supportive re risk from my ex

Action arising from workshop

Agency representative:

Phil Norrey *Director of Education, Arts & Libraries, Devon County Council*

Angie Mudge *Educational Psychologist, Devon Educational Psychology Service*

1. Letter from Phil Norrey to all Heads to report his experience of today 'personally shocked' and to urge schools to do risk assessment; have support numbers; do a 2 page synopsis of the conference report; engage all staff in training. Will send a second, follow up letter, asking for actions.
2. Review risk assessment and make sure Domestic Violence is clearly stated. Establish a protocol re perpetrators/ children and young people at risk.
3. Review travel and maintenance allowance red tape to make it easier for survivors to access support when it is needed.
4. Training – increase and follow up on its effectiveness.

HEALTH – GPs, Midwifery and Health Visitors

Overall experiences with the Health Service in the Survivors' Consultation Report

74% of the women consulted in the Survivors' report had been in contact with their GPs, with regard to their domestic abuse. Where services worked well, women valued: being listened to; ongoing concern and support; practical help and relevant signposting. In response to the lower scores many negative comments were made particularly in relation to lack of understanding about domestic abuse and a dismissive attitude.

Given the significance of GPs as a provider of services to women experiencing domestic abuse, Primary Care Trusts may wish to review the training and information provided to GPs and other Health Care practitioners in different parts of Devon.

Whilst appreciating the time pressures faced by GPs, their role in helping to identify domestic abuse, by providing a safe environment in which women might feel strong enough to disclose their situation, is absolutely critical. For many GPs this may just be a case of asking the question and then listening to and believing what is said and knowing who to refer her to for further specialist support. GPs do not need to be experts in domestic abuse, however further training to increase their awareness and confidence in how best to respond to situations of domestic abuse could make a significant difference for many of the women who are anxious about seeking help through their services.

Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

Health Visitor

- Very good, supportive and truly great

- Should train to help people as are working within homes, have access to services
- Very supportive – even rang social services to try to get some help – mind you social services were as un-cooperative with health visitor as they were with me.
- Not committing themselves- not wishing to take sides

GPs

- GP said 'What are we going to do about you?'
- My GP told me I was paranoid – I had just told him my story – he then said this in front of my abusive partner.
- Never seems to listen to me and what I'm feeling etc, just does a prescription for pills and out the door.
- Don't listen. Don't understand. Don't have enough time to listen.
- Exeter GPs – great non judgemental.
- GP was excellent, arranged counsellor for myself and child guidance for children. Very understanding, took action, did not ignore.
- Torridge GP – black eye and all I was told was to stop drinking. I knew nothing about help available and felt it was all me.
- Give poor thing more pills.
- Went to GP (with partner) to ask for help / counselling etc. Dr asked to speak to me alone – simply said 'get rid of him' – increased my partners paranoia and led to further attacks because I had persuaded him we might get support.
- My GP did try to help at the beginning but it became apparent that all she (and other services) were full of empty words that meant nothing.
- Told by a GP 'don't be so stupid, I know your mother'
- Foxhayes surgery – very supportive
- Do you have to end your life before they take notice!
- My GP knows the past DV issues and has never helped, never offered information or choices or outreach / women's aid – just anti depressants and sleeping pills. No emotional help.

Midwives

- I feel midwives need to be informed of how to see the signs to enable them to help women when most at risk.
- Midwives/ Health Visitors very supportive but feel it's a dead end as they tell me they cannot pass on what I have said for reasons of confidentiality.

Mental Health

- Depression and treatment of it can be used against you in the courts.
- Community Psychiatric services sent appointment letter to wrong address so husband got it.
- I have had a mental health problem for years. I needed my medication and support weekly. It took my new doctors 8 weeks to get my notes and I had to wait 4 months to see psychiatrist. I almost went back on several occasions.

General

- Workers- have coffee, chat and leave you – brushing over the problem.

Action arising from workshop

Agency Representatives

Dr Michelle Jones

GP Foxhayes Practice

Ian Tearle

Joint Acting Director of Public Health East Devon PCT

1. Train professionals from infancy ie part of their qualifying package
2. Routine screening (asking the question) needs to be introduced across the board. It is there in part with midwives and health visitors but not with GPs. Also if the question is asked it needs to be followed up with advice, signposting, safety plan etc. One survivor commented she had answered yes on a Health Visitor questionnaire and it had never been followed up.
3. Survivors requested that a regular health forum is set up to give them a chance to express their views on a regular basis (GPs, Health Visitors and Midwifery representatives to meet on a quarterly basis).

Housing

Overall experiences with Housing Services in the Survivors' Consultation Report

The Survivor Consultation Report (2005) highlights the fact that 73% of the women who responded to this questionnaire had had to leave the family home as a result of the abuse, of whom only 20% eventually returned. Over 50% of the women in this Devon wide study had to experience the trauma, for themselves and their children, of having to permanently move away from family and friends in search of safety. 57% of the consulted women had experience of housing services throughout Devon.

Housing services therefore play a vital role in both providing practical support but also understanding at a time of heightened vulnerability. It is recognised that housing stock is limited and there are parts of Devon where this causes particularly severe problems and puts housing services under considerable pressure, but, as with so many other services, an increased understanding and a sensitive attitude could significantly improve the experience for women and their children at a time of crisis.

Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

- Not enough short term places.
- Receptionist – the most important person – get the wrong person and the whole thing falls apart.
- Housing say we have no homes, don't leave your home, we certainly can't help you if you do that.
- No help, no understanding – you had a home no matter why you left!
- As soon as they found me a place (temporary) that's it – I've been told I'm no longer at risk anymore.
- Abysmal – don't care
- 16 and 17 year olds affected by DV have problems accessing housing, other than refuges.
- West Devon – appalling. Refusal to accept 'duty of care' and to do anything about my homeless status before my income support claim was processed. It took 7 weeks during which my 7 year old, my 10 month old baby and myself had nowhere to live, no money, no food, no clothing nothing.
- Exeter housing – amazingly supportive and compassionate.
- South Hams Council were excellent. After battling Torbay council they gave me hope and a house!
- Guinness Trust Housing – I was moved to Exeter from Kent. Housing officer put electric on my key meter as it was a long journey. She signposted me to agencies including lady down the road who ran the sheltered housing. In turn she got the community beat officer to call and see what he could do to help.
- Good practice from elsewhere – My council in the Midlands removed my ex partner after a few months for non payment of rent. They knew why I had had to leave so when they took the council house back they boxed up my personal possessions and arranged for me to get them. It was heaven to have them back.

Action arising from workshops

Agency Representative:

Graham Davey

Housing Needs & Enabling Manager Housing Services

Graham Davey, stated how amazed and appalled he was about the lack of consistency in the service delivery for survivors of domestic violence. He agreed to ensure that the following points will be addressed:

1. Achieving changes to make sure survivors are: believed; provided with the appropriate service and told the truth.
2. To provide county wide standards of service delivery and a 'Code of good Practice'.

Police

Overall experiences with the Police Service in the Survivors' Consultation Report

The police play a critical role in responding to domestic violence incidents. 58 % of women interviewed in the survivors' consultation had experience with the police services. Overall women's experiences had been positive, with 56% reporting high or very high satisfaction levels. Many officers have clearly developed a good understanding of the nature of domestic abuse and the appropriate method of response. However there is still scope to build on this and ensure this approach is consistent across the entire service.

Where women expressed dissatisfaction, it was mostly due to:

- being unhelpful
- lack of communication
- indifferent attitude

52% of the women had been in contact with the Domestic Violence Police Officers. The overall ratings, as would be expected for a specialist service, were high with 63 % reporting high or very high satisfaction ratings.

Some comments raised in relation to this service identify areas of concern which need to be considered. In particular the lack of personal contact was mentioned, either with messages not being returned or an absence of follow up (the most consistent reason for a low score). Although these numbers are relatively small, they raise questions which need to be considered. Women experiencing domestic abuse clearly regard the DVOs as a vital source of specialist support and look to them for expertise, sensitivity and appropriate referrals and follow up. Even though the pressures of relatively few staff covering large geographical areas is recognized, they still feel let down when this is not provided. It is also important to note here that with the changing DVO role to investigative officers there will be a decrease in the support available, which has been so positively commented on by survivors as part of their feedback.

Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

- After several attacks reported to the police whose attendance and support was generally good, phoned to report potential incident (ex partner came to house straight after court appearance) police officer laughed on the phone – undermined my confidence and increased sense of isolation and vulnerability.
- Useless in my situation sorry to say.
- Unhelpful and patronising, saw me as hysterical person and the abuser as the sane calm one.
- Very unhelpful. Actually my ex used the legal system and the police to continue abuse after he left.
- My ex and his mother tried to snatch my 14 month old son from me one Saturday morning. My sister helped me with the physical struggle. My ex arrived one hour later with his solicitor and 2

policemen. The police kept telling me I should hand my son over. I calmly explained why I was not going to. In the middle of my explaining one officer said to his partner 'come on it's time for the rugby'.

- If you leave the problem doesn't stay behind, you carry it in all aspects of your life, it affects you constantly.
- I felt bullied by a police officer after my husband reported me missing. He rang my mobile and insisted on seeing me there and then and asked me the address of the refuge on the phone when I was in the middle of town.
- If you don't want to enforce injunction for protection – they don't want to help!
- Community police officer asked to be informed of contact session days so could be aware of problems which might occur (as my ex is not allowed within 10 miles of city except for contact) Community beat officer also let colleagues on duty in area of contact centre know of situation.
- Police broke confidentiality to my neighbours who informed my abusive partner. Had to run with my 3 children. Thank god for the family resources team in Newbury and Exeter Women's Aid and refuge.
- After I met my ex to collect my son he became violent towards me and my son. I had to meet him next day (due to court order) to hand my son back over for another day when I rang the police, petrified after the incident and not sure about going back next day, the policeman on phone said 'it probably won't be as bad as you imagine'.
- It has been 6 weeks since I reported the harassment abuse I suffered. I am still none the wiser about any cautions or action that has been given to my ex partner – bad communication on progress.
- Police in Exeter saved us, thank you for keeping the phone line going so I could plug it in again after an attack by ex and you were still there! When they came round and removed him – great!
- If we cannot be moved, can you not come out to help us make our homes safe? I felt I was not taken seriously or listened to by 2 officers that came round. I felt I was interrupting their lunch or something. My report and concerns were mis-interpreted. I realised this after the event took place, I was so shocked.
- When police were called to street incident all attention was focused on the male – he was listened to – I told my story to an onlooker – she offered to be interviewed by police- not taken up.
- They must get better as they could not get any worse. They form an opinion without finding facts, they are easily biased.
- I feel I should have been the first told when my ex absconded from prison. Instead I had to get a phone call from someone who saw him. There by myself, also my child was put in danger, by the police.
- I am still receiving harassment, abuse and intimidation 2 years after the first report. I have informed the police 4 times, he continues to be abusive and he has not received any punishment.

- The police didn't understand me, my culture and my feelings. I had to make a 3 hour statement when my ex husband used my adult children to make a false statement (outside Devon). My husband fraudulently signed bank forms and withdrew my money and hid lots of our accounts – the police didn't seem to understand or do anything about the fraud.
- My husband tried to kill me – the local police were very supportive and visited regularly. The DVO phoned once but never gave me info about Women's Aid / Outreach – why?
- Emotional and mental abuse is worse than physical - why is nothing done about it?

Domestic Violence Police Officer

- Very good on initial visit – supportive, sensitive, fitted alarm. Thereafter poor follow up, difficult to contact, get response to messages (Teignbridge)
- Exeter DVOs are fantastic – they talk and support you.
- DVOs in Exeter are very understanding. They told me my partner had emotionally and mentally abused 10 women in 15 years but there is nothing they can do unless it is physical, why is this?
- DV Officer said didn't know what my problem was as she found my husband 'charming'
- DVO of Tavistock was an absolute angel . He listened to me, he sympathised and he supported me well after the incident. Please train your officers to his abilities.
- DVOs not believing, too much work to do, don't get back to you, when they do too late.

Action arising from workshops

Agency Representatives:

Richard Stowe

Assistant Chief Constable Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

Sally Kingdon

Domestic Violence Officer Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

Ian Fraser-Roe

Community Support Unit Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

1. Found experience very positive / beneficial; acknowledged lots of work has happened but that there is more to do:
Audit Training that has take place – what and who, and identify those who have not received training.
2. Firearms –rural access potential for increased danger to victims. They will do an audit of firearm and shotgun licenses and cross reference those with perpetrators on record, and remove their certificates

NB Mary Seaton (Chairman Central Devon Bench) was unable to attend due to the weather but sent in comments about progress and examples of good practice, in Central Devon, these have been included as Appendix 4.

Social Services

Overall experiences with Social Services in the Survivors' Consultation Report

One of the biggest concerns arising from the Consultation document has been the lack of support for children affected by domestic violence.

34% of the consulted women had had experiences of Social Services. There is considerable variation in the satisfaction ratings for Social Services, with the highest number of responses describing their experiences as highly unsatisfactory. The main reasons given for these ratings were:

- Contrasting expectations between the women's expectations about what Social Services might be able to do to support them (as opposed to just their children) and what Social Services themselves were actually able to deliver:
- Feeling that support was inadequate given the severity of the situation
- Lack of understanding of domestic violence
- Lack of communication
- Serious concerns about practice

Only 30 % of women had been offered support for their children without asking and in the vast majority of cases this was from Women's Aid services and not the statutory sector. By contrast 64% of women had asked for help with their children and received very mixed responses. Unless additional investment and commitment is made towards providing an effective response for these children, then levels of domestic abuse will continue to increase.

Social Services play a vital role in supporting both women and children in abusive situations and although in some cases this is working well, this study has identified areas which could be improved significantly. There is scope for further training to increase the understanding of the impact domestic abuse has on children.

Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

- Too much workload to want to get involved in DV Issues
- My child has taken on the role of my ex, abusive partner and can't get the help and support I need.
- Some women are not informed enough about the process of child protection and are scared of what's happening.
- The one and only time I went to Social Services (in sheer desperation) for help. I was told very patronisingly there were far worse cases they were busy with.
- I asked for some support for my children aged 3 and 4 as they were being forced to see their father by court, at contact centre. Was told it was a legal matter and Social Services would not get involved.

- Social Services have concerns about safety of my children but without firm proof, are powerless until it's too late.
- Social Services are a complete nightmare. If you don't fit 'their idea' – if for instance you have a disability or are older.
- Well intentioned and sympathetic but unable to actually do anything.
- Know what my ex husband is like but powerless to do anything, even though they were on the at risk register because a child/children can be on register and still be returned to the person they are believed to be at risk from.
- No support or counselling offered to my children.
- My experience of Torridge Social Services lead initially to my children and self returning fearfully back to be beaten and abused by their father. Only after I lost my first 2 children to him (having been made to believe I was not fit) and engaging in another abusive relationship and another child, they suggested I need some help.
- Slow to respond, if at all.
- I went for help and was told 'pull yourself together or think about long term fostering' No idea at all.
- No support offered unless children are close to being taken into care.
- No help ever given despite them knowing that the relationship was violent, as a result became depressed after 4years of abuse, my children taken from me and yet Social Services went and asked abuser (father of one of my children) about where his daughter should live. I find unacceptable and Social Services a disgrace. Refused travel warrant to protect me and the kids.
- Social Security / Benefits – My husband had dealt with our finances. English isn't my first language so I was never able to deal with making applications for benefits etc. My husband fraudulently signed my name on applications and my outreach worker had to spend a long time with me and benefits investigator trying to sort things out. My outreach worker enabled me to explain the impact of the DV and the benefits advisor believed me (!)and helped us sort the mess out. Without outreaches help I would not have been able to go through with it and would have fallen apart.

Action arising from workshops

Agency Representatives:

Anne Whiteley

Director of Children's Services, Devon County Council

Clara Keegan

Practice Manager, Social Services Department

1. Information – what SSD do and can't do. Need clarity, if SSD is unclear it leads to expectations which cannot be addressed.
2. Communications – now aware of the consequences of our letter, which might prevent a survivor contacting us further. Will look at letter sent out to survivors and review it and the information pack sent out.
3. Expectation – important to look at how SSD works alongside other agencies. Need to identify the skills and knowledge which might need to improve within SSD.
4. Contact- especially in civil arena. Not enough information or clear communication re perpetrator 'rights'
5. SSD and CAFCASS – staff to be better equipped on end of telephone – need to train all staff on telephone support to understand the impact of DV (inc level 2)

Women's Aid

Overall experiences with Women's Aid in the Survivors' Consultation Report

The refuges play a vital role in providing a safe house for women and children at a time of personal crisis. Their success in doing so effectively is evident in the survivors' consultation report, where 81% of women rated their satisfaction in the service provided as high or very high.

75% of the women consulted had experience of the Women's Aid out reach services with very high levels of satisfaction with the this service (although it should be noted that many of the respondents were accessed via this service and are therefore in contact with it, which we are aware may distort the responses). However it is also clear that for the 64 women, who rated their satisfaction with the Outreach service as high or very high, it provides invaluable support.

44% of the consulted women had participated in the 14 week Pattern Changing programme, run by Women's Aid, with overwhelmingly positive feedback to this course. 100% of the women rated the service on the two highest satisfaction scores.

Comments made by Survivors at the Devon Conference 'Survivors Raise Their Voice', November 2005:

- The best help and support I have ever had, it was a light for my dark times.
- Thank you for enabling us to carry on and be able to survive.

- Wouldn't be here now if it wasn't for the amazing support- thank you you're all amazing.
- Compassionate, stop making you feel stupid and recognise this is not acceptable behaviour. Pattern changing excellent.
- Excellent, great service, gave support group and individual one to one meetings which helped.
- I got no help at all, they never rang back, they left me on my own because ' I talked too much'.
- Couldn't have survived without help of Women's Aid.
- Help you with food, toiletries when you have nothing and think you can't go on even when you've been gone for months.
- Angels without wings – love you.
- Fantastic but not known enough within the system ie how to contact.
- Thank God for Women's Aid
- Thank you

Action arising from workshop

Agency representatives:

Chris Pearson

Manager, Exeter Women's Aid

1. Need for more support for children and parents – following on from Pattern Changing (as modelled in North Devon), potentially delivered through Women's Aid?
2. Better links with Education to improve understanding and awareness of the issues for children affected by domestic violence, this was both about more training and more liaison / inter agency working with those undertaking any work with children and parents/carers.
3. Pattern Changing highly valued – need to provide it at optimum time for survivors
4. Post pattern changing follow up needed
5. Need more outreach, pattern changing, publicity
6. Need for more resources!

Feedback on the Day

All participants were asked to identify :

- What the day had made you think about
- What the day had made you feel
- What you were taking away with you?
- What was a waste of time?

A summary of all responses is included at Appendix 5

Agenda

Time	Survivors	Agency Representatives
9.45 -10.15 am	Reception and Coffee	
10.15 – 10.30 am	Introduction to the Day – Philippa Chapman	Scene Setting – Councillor Jill Owen
10.30 – 11.15 am	Your research – your Evaluation – the findings in Devon	ADVA Partnership: Progress to date
11.15 – 12 noon	Coffee. Identification of the most important messages for the agencies and choosing groups for workshops	DV: the issues Agency Vision/ADVA strategy: the next 3 years
12 noon – 12.30 pm	First Workshop	
12.30 – 1.15 pm	Lunch	
1.15 – 1.30 pm	Home Office Presentation: John Dunworth	
1.30 – 2 pm	Second Workshop	
2 pm – 2.30 pm	Third Workshop	
2.30 – 3.15 pm	Feedback and Action Points from workshops and Next Steps – Philippa Chapman and Jill Owen	
3.15 – 3.30 pm	Evaluation of day, tea and good byes	

Appendix 1

Feedback from North Devon Women's Aid

(the coach of 20 women who were prevented from getting to the conference by the weather)

Changes we would like policy makers to focus on

- Policies need to be more victim-centred – focus on victims needs and that perpetrators are working the system.
 - More help for children
 - Counselling – specialised for DV
 - Women's Aid having children's worker for all children who need it
 - Services available before crisis
 - Training/Education for professionals (esp. GP's and Solicitors)
 - to look out for signs/symptoms
 - the dynamics of abuse
 - How it feels to be asked certain patronising questions
 - Awareness raising of DV issues amongst public including work in schools (built into the curriculum) about what is /isn't ok in relationships. (Pattern Changing / Assertiveness /Self-Esteem)
 - Project to work with Teenage Girls
 - Project to work with Teenage Boys to stop them offending/ getting into the court system
 - Challenge to the DV stereotypes
 - Gender Awareness
 - Perpetrators made to do programmes
 - Give money equally to Pattern Changing and Repair
 - Rehabilitation for Prisoners
- IPP's /life license for all perpetrators
 - Better support for women as parents
 - not blaming or being judgemental
 - parenting courses specifically for children who have witnessed DV
 - Not making women less safe because of the way children's services work and not prioritising need of fathers over safety
 - Qualified workers in contact centres doing handovers – long term like the Red House in Exeter

Comments about individual services

Housing

1. Can't fault housing – they moved me within a short space of time.
2. North Devon Homes didn't want to know when I lost my council house to my ex – I felt that I was being punished again
3. I was told to endure my circumstances and find a house via a private landlord or live in a B&B in Ilfracombe (a town I have to travel to by bus where I have no means of support) indefinitely
4. Didn't qualify as no children – which was because of the abuse – felt I wasn't part of the human race
5. Simply need many more – I felt North Devon Homes could have done more in assisting with ex-partners eviction (Usual don't get involved in domestic breakdown)

Police

1. Civilian staff need to be aware of sentences and how to explain it – not leave us in the dark
2. No-one could take my statement when I went in on Sunday morning – they sent me home and someone came around in half an hour
3. If the police station is closed you shouldn't be made to wait 20 min for an officer to come outside to find you
4. When in South Devon/Exmouth – not helpful at all (Barnstaple – Excellent)
5. The police can do more to help you now
6. Some good some bad – most of my involvement in East Sussex was very mixed, more recently in N Devon – some excellent responses (trained and up to date) but others come across as patronising with no insight
7. Filed an incident too late to be investigated but wanted it to be logged in case it happened again – told it would go no further - 3 weeks later I bumped into the perpetrator who said he had just come from being interviewed by the police about the incident. I was terrified and I felt I should have been informed they were going to do that
8. Only really interested if I would like to press charges – no referrals given but given a DV pamphlet
9. My perp mentioned in interview by the police that I had Mental Health probs the police attitude changed completely and they seemed to dismiss my situation as fantasy and said he obviously adores you and people do have misunderstandings
10. I was told I was being rather paranoid when I phoned the police to put in force injunction via third party wasn't covered by

the injunction and wasn't worth the paper it was written on

11. Police have kept me informed on all the up to date info on his bail and the next steps
12. Took days to contact me – eventually got a visit days later then came back to tell me what a nasty individual my partner was.
13. Police were very supportive – one officer was very apologetic about the shortage of alarms which are available in Somerset for women. Said she would keep me informed which she did
14. Police looked down at me when I was too scared to make an official complaint – then when I finally made a complaint, charges were dropped – not enough evidence – was laughed at by my abuser
15. When I contact the CPS for outcome of proceedings I was informed – positive outcome of not guilty. Then I was asked who I was. Whose side were they on?
16. IPP way forward. All men convicted of DV should be issued with one.

Domestic Violence Officer

1. Very good – she gets things done
2. Rang DVO to help to change locks – was told help was only available to the elderly
3. DVU was great on both occasions – for the sexual abuse from years ago and the domestic abuse now

Social Services

1. Low priority – no children
2. I felt as an adult I was seen to be able to handle all other adults
3. Didn't qualify due to no children

4. Because of the abuse – I didn't feel like I was part of the human race
5. No support no liaison – my son's SW just wants to climb up the ladder – no thought or consideration for people concerned
6. Told me to sort my problems out best I could and to contact them again if I thought I necessary.....i didn't bother
7. Needed help with an aggressive teenager, was told that she didn't need any help because when asked she told them she was ok. She is still aggressive

GP's

1. Really very supportive
2. GP didn't want to know
3. Put on Prozac in East Sussex – North Devon GP listened and referred – waiting list too long
4. Attitude seemed to be "talk to those whose job it is to deal with this – I don't want to know – here have some anti-deps" I have self harm to do depression – GP took my pulse from a wrist I had cut and mentioned nothing.
5. Gave me anti-deps and wanted to give me sleeping pills – I said no
6. GP very understanding and supportive and still is
7. Generally quite sympathetic but only referred to police no mention of WA
8. No complaint at all
9. Said that children who had witnessed DV should be on the at risk register – worried me that I would be though unfit mother

Perpetrator Programmes

1. He referred himself to Repair – really to try and get me back but once I reported him to the police, he quit saying he had been wrongly accused – why could he quit so easily
2. Would like to know the outcome of how many reoffend the money should go to WA to keep mother healthy to help family survive
3. It worked until he had no money for Alcohol then he turned violent

Family Court

1. I found this quite scary but got what I asked for mainly because he never turned up but when he did he still belittled me in front of the judge. It is intimidating being in the same room as him when you are asking for protection and space
2. No consideration about intimidation – just being near ex – also rather pompous barrister

Criminal Court

1. Justice should mean just that
2. He was allowed to have witnesses to his good Character but our witnesses weren't allowed by the judge
3. My daughter and I were made to feel like we were the accused not the abused when in the witness box
4. Waste of money – he got off lightly
5. Made to feel that I was exaggerating and that I should be more adult about things – silly me
6. When an abused woman is brave enough to go through the court system – there must be more/some justice. My experience of this was terrible it was frightening and to no avail as no justice received

Women's Aid

Refuge

1. Brilliant

Outreach

1. Is very good for you
2. Tremendous always here, a safe haven full of reassurance and positiveness, always supportive
3. I was referred to NDWA via Repair – I didn't think I needed anyone but I was wrong, it has been a wonderful experience coming here
4. Found outreach worker very good – got me to open up about a lot of issues – brilliant support
5. Is a warm comforting environment, I am so glad I am involved and can give something back as a way of saying thanks
6. Has made me look at myself differently, I feel like a member of the human race again
7. Lifeline – lifesaver

Pattern Changing Course

1. Without it I would not be here brilliant
2. PCC has enlightened me to a lot of things about myself and the people around me
3. Brilliant – only with I had discovered it sooner
4. On waiting list due to numbers
5. PCC – this is the best thing done in my life
6. It's a must, easier to leave if you can see a way to rebuild your life
7. PCC is good, everyone should do it

8. Has changed my life in all positive ways. Should be introduced in schools
9. Wonderful! Expand this service
10. WA is really helpful, kind and considerate helped my keep on the right track to freedom

Solicitors

1. Told a lot of women have worse injuries than me – didn't even get the divorce on grounds of unreasonable behaviour – he worked the system as he could afford it
2. should explain all your options not wait for more events to happen before saying well you could do this now
3. I found my solicitor very helpful – explained my rights and really empowered me.
4. I thought that he was working for my ex – I was just paying the bill
5. My solicitor has been brilliant with my divorce and accompanying me when we saw my ex and solicitor
6. Pretty on the ball – referred to me by WA
7. No complaints
8. Crap – wish I had a solicitor locally
9. Brilliant

Health Visitors/Midwives

1. Thanks to my health visitor I did find womens aid but this came after about 9 months
2. Useless and patronising – IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT THE KIDS

Mental Health

1. GP referred me to the CMH and the counsellor I got was very good and helped me a lot

2. Many walk the fine line between nice and patronising – assumption made that someone with problems must be making it up, confused or attention seeking
3. Excellent – but I feel I only accessed the service because of being in hospital – I would have waited much longer
4. GP referred me to Riverside for DV counselling – personally I didn't get much from it – saw a male counsellor couldn't really open up made to feel a bit of a fraud
5. Too long delays but worthwhile when you get into the programme
6. Waiting list too long as help needed when referred
8. Claims for benefit needs to be sped up
9. No support for children – unless they offend. Waited for family therapy for 3 years. You need help straight away, why should your child have to offend to get help. Parents need help, I had my son arrested from the home. Why does it have to go this way. This is the next generation – put the help in now.

General

1. I am glad things are moving forward – long may this continue
2. Surely the cry for help from so many mothers should say it all – more services are needed
3. When children are known to be from an abusive relationship – they should be offered some kind of support because they rarely open up to their own parents as they feel in the middle
4. Awareness needs spreading of verbal, mental emotional abuse. Seen as just simple disagreements/clashes of personality. Not the spirit breaking method of control they really are
5. Really very variable, often good meaning but ill informed.
6. Raising more awareness so more services could be on the ball
7. Had a job claiming benefits – was like they didn't want to know because he was claiming also

Appendix 2

Raising the Survivor Voice in Devon - Introduction

Why did ADVA fund this work?

- Links with SEEDS (South Somerset Evaluation)
- Empowering Domestic Abuse Survivors)

Aims

- Increase understanding of survivors experiences
- Identify changes required and gaps in services
- Empower women taking part and encourage attendance at Survivors Conference
- Establish ongoing survivors group in Devon

How did we do it?

- April – November 2005
- Links with Women's Aid (and others)
- Groups set up in Exeter, West Devon, North Devon and South Devon
- Questionnaire design/ distribution/ analysis (89 returned questionnaires)
- Training in presentation skills
- Draft report

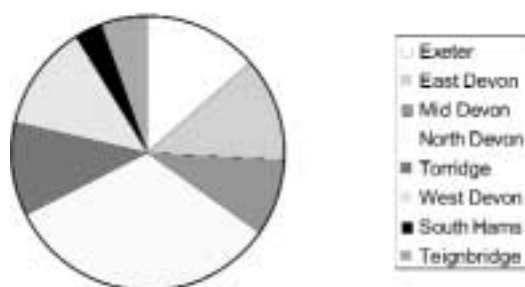
Who we heard from

89 Women of whom :

- Majority 26 -40 years
- 85 were white British
- 37 had lived in a refuge/ safe house
- 75 had children under 18 years (158 children of whom 151 lived with their mothers)

Where Women Lived

% of women from Devon Districts



Perpetrator Occupation

Wide range of jobs held

- 10 unemployed
- 9 builders and 11 drivers (taxi/ school buses/ delivery etc)
- 8 skilled manual(e.g electrician)
- 14 'professional' e.g pilot; engineer; surveyor; doctor; teachers etc
- 8 from 'caring' professions e.g doctor, social worker, clergyman etc

Initial Contact

'It takes a lot to tell someone else what is happening'

Positive feedback when services :

- Recognised domestic abuse and would listen
 - Understood impact of domestic abuse on woman and children
 - Were aware of services to refer onto
- Concerns expressed where services were :
- Disinterested
 - Ignorant
 - Unprofessional i.e broke confidences

What would help women come forward earlier ?

'Difficult to say as each case is so unique but I would imagine most women are too fearful'

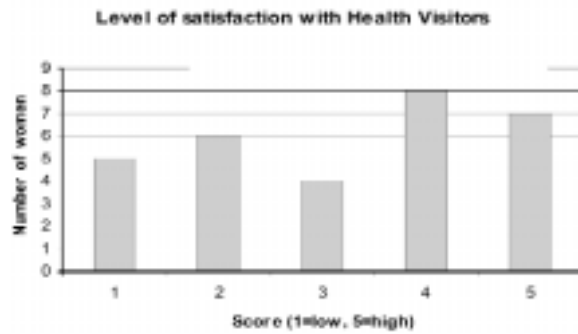
- Knowing what help is available
- Being asked and believed
- Knowing they will be treated sensitively and not judged
- Support from other women

Overall Experiences with Health Visitors

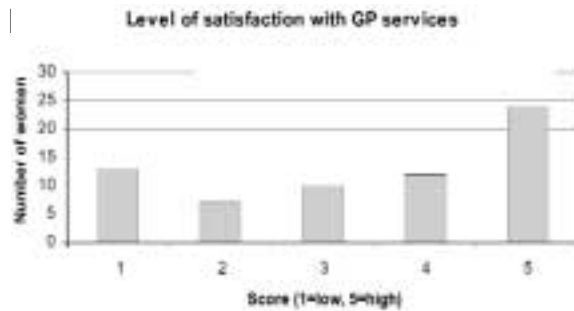
Women responded positively to :

- Support, particularly with children
- Sensitive approach

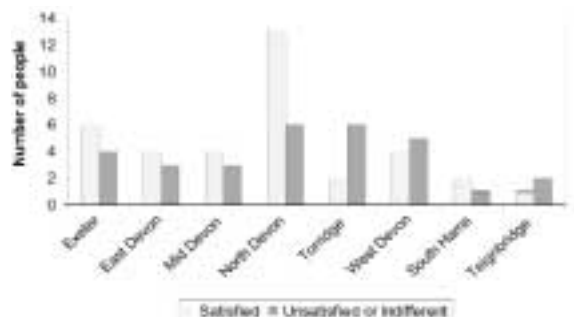
- Good advice and expertise
 - Appropriate referrals
- Concerns were expressed when:
- No knowledge of domestic abuse and impact
 - Only concerned with children
 - Not proactive



Overall Experiences with GPs



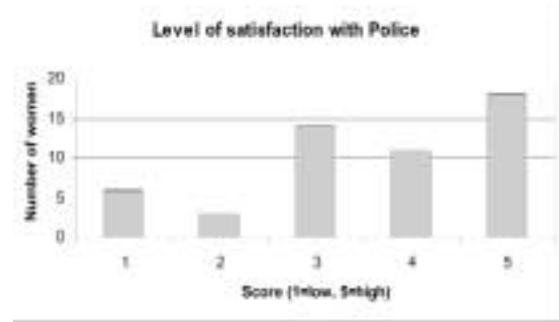
Satisfaction ratings with GPs



Overall experiences with the Police

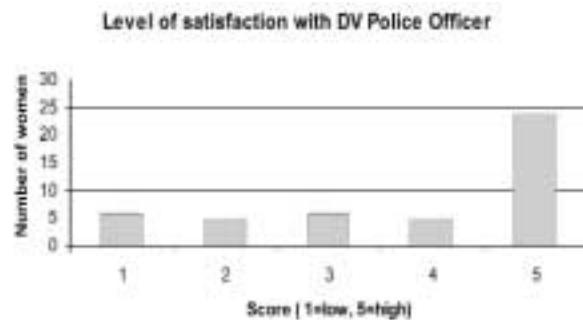
- Women valued:
- Sympathetic, non judgemental attitude
 - Relevant, helpful, sensitive advice
 - Practical help
- Concerns expressed when:
- Unhelpful

- Lack of understanding about domestic abuse
- Indifferent attitude



Overall Experiences with DV Police Officers

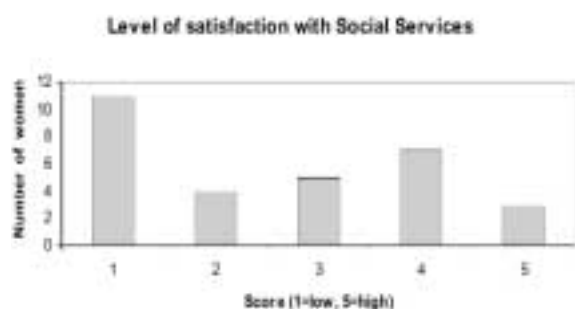
- Women valued:
- friendly, supportive, understanding attitude
 - Being taken seriously
 - Being informed about other services
- Concerns expressed when:
- unable to provide sufficient personal contact
 - lack of follow up and keeping survivor informed
 - insensitive



Overall Experiences with Women's Aid services

- Refuges/ Safe Houses – 81 % rated as high or very high levels of satisfaction
 - Outreach – 96 % rated as high or very high levels of satisfaction
 - Pattern Changing – 100% women rated as high or very high levels of satisfaction
- What survivors valued about Women's Aid services
- Kind, friendly, sensitive and empathetic attitude
 - Being listened to and ongoing support
 - Good advice and practical help

- Companionship
- Approachable and non judgemental
- Provided a sense of direction



Overall experiences with Social Services

Low ratings were given due to:

- contrasting expectations
- inadequate support given severity of situation
- lack of understanding of domestic violence
- lack of communication
- serious concerns about professional practice

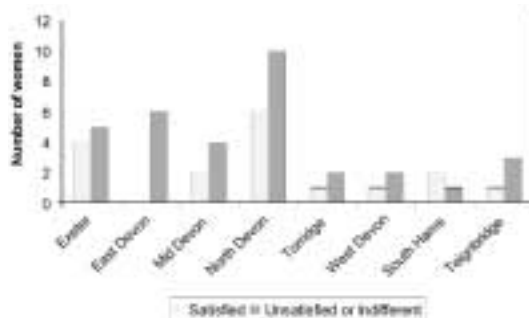
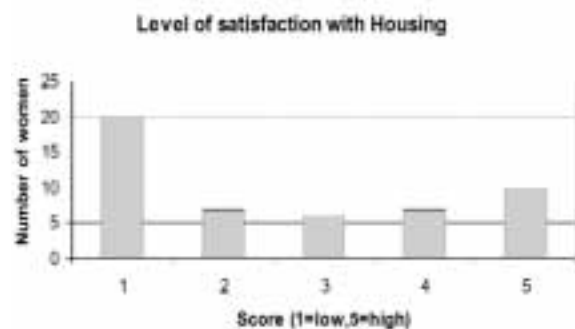
Overall Experiences of Housing

Women valued

- Practical help in finding accommodation in reasonable time scale
- Good communication
- Knowledgeable and sensitive attitude

Concerns expressed when

- Accommodation was unavailable
 - Unhelpful attitude
 - Lack of understanding about domestic violence
- 47 (53%) women who responded to this survey had to leave the family home permanently as a result of the abuse*

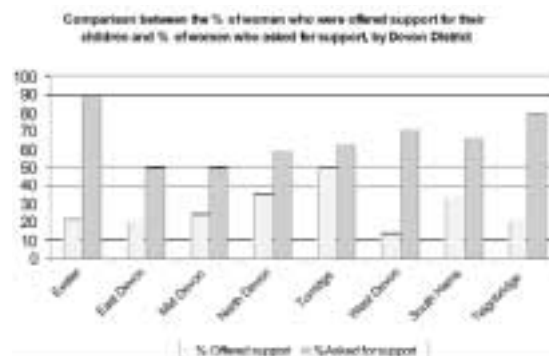


Legal Issues

- Experiences with solicitors mostly positive
- Family and Criminal Courts – serious concerns expressed when women did not feel listened to ; apparent lack of understanding about domestic violence and felt needs of perpetrator prioritised

Support for Children

- 30% of women were offered support for children – without asking
- (21% if excluding NDWA)
- 63% of women asked for support for their children – got a very mixed and unreliable response

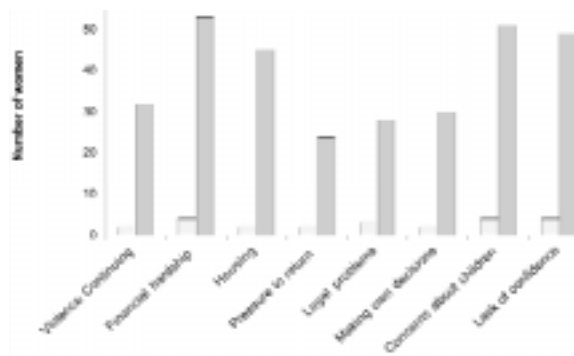


Support for Children : Issues raised

'The children are my biggest concern...'

- Living with disruption and isolated, vulnerable mothers – increases children's insecurity
- Children often still in contact with father, potentially abusive situations and often encouraged to be abusive to mother – deep concern about long term impact and fear of children becoming abusers themselves
- Very limited specialist support services for children

- Assumption by mainstream services that once children leave abusive situation everything is okay



Moving On Issues

- Abuse ongoing for many years (61 % had experienced abuse after leaving)
- Mental state very fragile / very fearful
- Perpetrator always in background
- Pressure to return by society
- Ex encouraging children to be abusive towards mother
- Lack of confidence / concern about making right decisions
- Loneliness and problems with trusting another man

Suggested improvements in services - survivors

- Single point of contact / complete service
- More practical support
- Greater protection from perpetrator
- More help to speak up / more understanding
- More support after leaving relationships
- More pattern changing and parenting courses

Suggested improvements in services - children

- More stability / security
- Someone to talk to - in schools / counselling / therapy
- Chance to take part in activities, meet other children
- Schools and nurseries to be more aware of safety
- Pattern changing for children
- Advice for parents on how to support children

Suggested improvements in services – for perpetrators

- Support to deal with anger management
- Compulsory counselling/ therapy (and no access to children until completed)
- Education about emotional and not just physical abuse
- Post course counselling for survivor and perpetrator

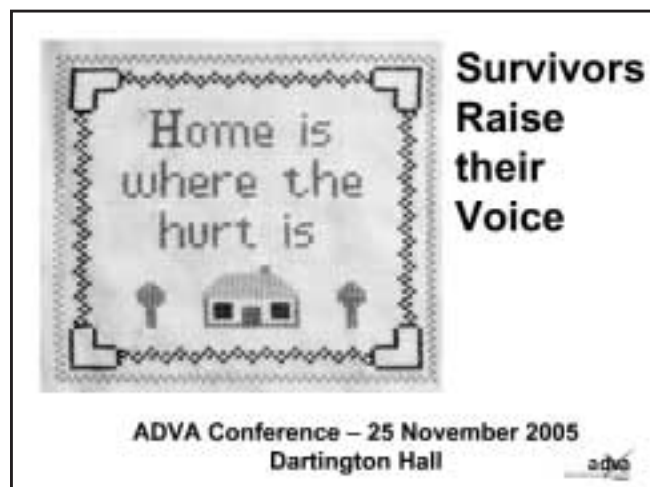
Conclusions

- Some of the main services are providing good support but there is real scope for improvement
- Improvements need not always be resource dependent – greater understanding and sensitive approach would make big impact
- Women's Aid play a vital role offering invaluable support, pattern changing feedback excellent
- Needs of children not being recognised and insufficient services to support them
- All agencies need to recognise that emotional and practical support is still vital once woman has left abusive relationship

Recommendations

1. Increase knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse amongst all agencies, particularly:
 - Understanding the critical importance of the first contact and the need to ASK
 - Believing what is said
 - Understanding the 'moving on' issues and need for ongoing support
2. Increase knowledge and awareness amongst all professionals about the impact of domestic abuse on children, both in short and long term.
3. Review range of services to support children across Devon
4. Explore areas of significant variation across Devon to identify good practice and tackle problem areas.
5. Develop work with survivors to : inform planning and development of new services; act as a source for consultation; participate as trainers

Appendix 3



Today is an opportunity for Chief Officers to

- hear the views of users of their services
- find out about progress of the ADVA Partnership's work in Devon
- learn a bit more about domestic violence and their agencies' roles within it
- agree their commitment and place within the delivery of the next three years of the ADVA strategy

Our Achievements

Achievements	Users Views	Agency Messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach for women & men: • 8 + DevonMALE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very positive • Confidence building • Able to get back to work/look after CYP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change their support services to survivors: through funding or policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern Changing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-changing • Cost effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be available to all women • Reduces dependency on agencies

Achievements	Users Views	Agency Messages
MARAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early days – await police evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First key cross-agency initiative • Wider agency risk-assm • Data logging • Efficient information sharing to increase safety & improve action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police changes • Risk assessment • Centrex • Co-location • MARAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased reliability of recording • Increased safety-graduated approach to risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDVC – opportunity 2nd cross-agency initiative • Funding MARAC/SDVC • All agency risk-assessment training

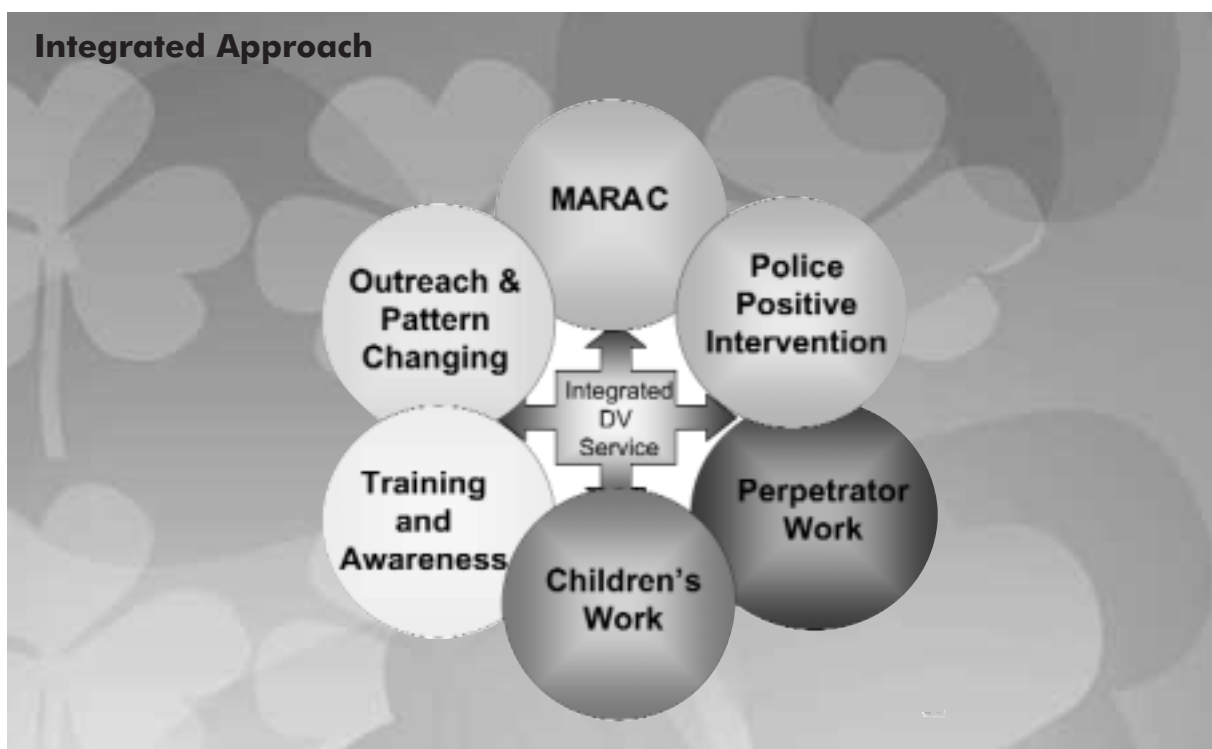
Achievements	Users Views	Agency Messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perpetrator Work ISB: holistic integrated, county-wide work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivors concern is SAFETY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost/benefit analysis Different 'set' of perps Opening 'employer' role issues Log DV data Protocols for information sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Work: Consultation; Home Ground; Twilight; peer-mentoring; materials; website; specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's voice beginning to be heard & heard by 'trained' staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient take-up of issue from within wider cyp services Identify key workers Log DV on client files

Achievements	Users Views	Agency Messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training: 4000 practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent high praise: content & impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify training needs; prioritise staff to attend over next 3 years Inconsistent agency take-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness Raising: bus tickets (620,000); flyers; posters ; wristbands; ribbons; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reporting & new cases to services Funding into refuges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency role Policy (staff & clients) inc training

Domestic Violence and Abuse - The Future

What is our collective role as Senior Managers?

What is my individual role?



Appendix 4

Comments from Mary Seaton : Chairman Central Devon Family Panel

I wanted to re-assure delegates that things have definitely changed for the better in the Courts System at least as far as the Central Devon Bench is concerned. All Family Court members and all court chair takers have now attended Domestic Violence Training within the past 18 months. All found it very illuminating and helpful. As Family Court Chairman and chair-elect of the Bench I am confident that we now have in place Witness support at all Domestic Violence courts and that parties in the case will be kept away from one another. We also have the use of Video and close circuit television. Magistrates promise, on appointment to hear every case "without fear or favour,affection or ill will "always remembering that Magistrates can only judge each case on what is presented to them.

We now have a dedicated time when Domestic Violence cases are heard and ensure that a Family Court Magistrate sits on that particular day.

The Family Court Magistrates are only too aware of the situations in which parents in particular find themselves. They are aware of the difficulties that violence of all kinds creates in the home and their aim is to do their very best for the children in such difficulties.

Domestic Violence Police Officers are invited to attend the bi-annual Family Court User Group so we are kept up to date with the incidence of abuse regularly.

Appendix 5

Raising the Survivor Voice Conference 25.11.05 Evaluation Feedback

What has today made you think about?	What has today made you feel?	What are you taking away with you?	What was a waste of time?
How complex the current situation is	Energised- glad to meet so many strong intelligent women	I can make a difference to services in the future	Workshops should have been longer
The complexity of DV and its impact on lives	Sitting in a circle very helpful – avoided a them and us – felt all together, Michael facilitation hearing first and then comments - brilliant	That hopefully this process will carry on	Nothing – I learnt lots
I think it was a good opportunity for women to get their voices out – we're not helpless women	We're all humans together and we can support each other	Have to do more for survivors	Nothing
We need to listen more to people	It's nice to be heard – let's all work together	Lots of knowledge – your rights and my voice can be heard – lovely enjoyable day	Children attending workshops, clearly not appropriate
Children need more support services and better protection via court over contact issues	I felt that I have been heard and this has made me feel so good. I wish there was more for other women all over	I will take away hope	The reduction in time we could have done with more
Inter agency communication Pro active support Funding for more outreach Help for children	The pain and courage of survivors	Good to hear survivors voice – should be repeated	Timing at times confusing
Think it was a great experience for women to get together and share experiences. Hope agencies have listened and will use this information	I feel there is a point in speaking out loud and it can do good.	Things that we can improve	Inter agency working
Thoughts – bad memories, lack of information in the past and help available –	I feel welcome – I learnt lots of things and was help meeting other women with similar	Find the links with civil justice and criminal justice	The only thing for the bin is to say lets get a move on – we're going too slow to make radical

What has today made you think about?	What has today made you feel?	What are you taking away with you?	What was a waste of time?
glad things are changing re DV. Thought about how much I have moved on since then. How glad I am to have moved here and have my freedom back- one of the hardest but best things I have done.	issues		changes
Why aren't we spending more on children and adolescents in this country?	Empowered	Good net working expected a wider range of agencies	Not waste of time but needed more time in small groups
How lucky I am and how amazingly brave all the survivors are – I will think carefully how I can make life better through my professional role for all concerned.	We have the right to send our children to school and know if there is something wrong there is someone they can talk to. I believe things will move onto this	Follow up action via Social Services and Safeguarding Board	Absolutely nothing
The reality of the survivors situations	Made me feel like I was worth listening to – also feel something may be done at last – Yes!	Good food excellent venue	Nothing was a waste of time – it was a great day despite the weather
Made me think how frightening it is to hear how many women other women are going or have been through domestic abuse.	Very upset, painful but good to be able to access these feelings alongside others who have been there	Housing – just because a person has been given housing should not mean they are not at risk – don't stop asking if they feel safe	None of this day can possibly be considered to be a waste of time. Its small steps working towards improvement and making changes in services used by survivors which are much needed
How many people want to help improve things and make a difference	At first the different services came across as defensive and not willing to listen compared to Torbay's conference where they were very interested in survivors experiences and made us feel valued. But at the end of the day I was surprised to hear some HAD listened	I'm taking away the hope that positive changes are starting to be made and that I am part of these small steps that will bring about vast and much needed change in the bigger picture of domestic abuse	Not exactly but no child care due to weather

What has today made you think about?	What has today made you feel?	What are you taking away with you?	What was a waste of time?
I am not alone	Sometimes sad but fantastically positive day	Doctors – please don't always throw a pill at women who say they can't cope. Listen to them and hear their voice, they may be asking for more help than a pill	Not a waste at all
I think now that there is more help out there than I thought. I think it is progressing positively.	Feel empowered and encouraged and proud of women's aid – thanks Philippa it's been a fantastic piece of work	Need for professionals to meet survivors to understand better support	Child care
I think it has been a fantastic day, empowering and supportive	My heart was reawakened to the fact that I was once a survivor of domestic abuse – as a result made a career working with victims in the community. Hearing the voices of survivors reminded me of why I am doing this job and want to do so much more.	Resolve to involve survivors more in probation feedback and CAFCASS links to LCJB	None of it was a waste of time. Could have been longer for the women to talk about their personal experiences (ie a lot longer!)
Survivors voices have more impact	Feel like I want to speak out for other women!	Knowing people in professional positions can and will help and can and will do more. Can't see it but know it's going on in some office!	More time would have been good but weather is beautiful
Need to understand more and make our services more responsive	Pain of past but hope of future happiness now moved away from fear. Thankful for help from women's aid and council for helping me and my children start a new life	The clear messages of the day and share them with my colleagues in the hope of improving our services to all survivors	Nothing
The lack of communication that has prevailed for so long throughout different agencies only now being observed and reformed	Sad that it has taken this long to bring all the various agencies together – but now that we are let's move forward	Knowledge things are improving / better and we're being listened to and things being done to help women and children who need it – from various agencies.	The day should have been longer

What has today made you think about?	What has today made you feel?	What are you taking away with you?	What was a waste of time?
		No more women being made victims time and time again	
Great to be able to voice how I feel to the people it concerns most	Heart warming to know that so many want to improve services	Renewed enthusiasm. Determined to get survivors voices heard.	Communication barrier with CPS
I am not alone and that these experiences endured in a violent relationships can be healed, not only at a personal level but also at a wider level, where so many agencies are prepared to make efforts to change the bigger picture. This is one of the reasons to live – proof that survivors can find a way forward	Humble	Police- not sure what to say I think that they need to pull something out of the hat fast. Most of all listening to the woman and seeing there is a much bigger picture!	
It made me think something might actually change now	Personal accounts	An enthusiasm for further dialogue	
Hopefully we will see some positive changes within stat agencies now	Criminal Justice agencies – our voice was heard and I feel like it was a good thing on both sides	I will take away renewed confidence	
I thought a lot about my rights and experiences (personal)	Optimism for future of domestic violence victims	Some hope for others in same situation	
Better understanding of how survivors think	Need much more of these sessions to bring us together	Overall lack of prioritising (nationally) of services for children. Need to break cycles by intervening early	
	Feel listened to	A survivors group needs to be formed	
That things might change	Hopeful	A sense of where I can help	
	I feel justified in being here – I feel sad for the injustice we suffer as	The knowledge that people are willing to work in harness to bring	

What has today made you think about?	What has today made you feel?	What are you taking away with you?	What was a waste of time?
	women. Quickly may it change!	justice to a system that have previously been difficult to achieve	
	Listened to / heard / some of the pain of mistakes by past professionals healed by positive examples of the professionals today	I'm taking away a sense of changes being made which is comforting	
	Philippa – really believe you believe things can get better and aren't hopeless and what we've all learned can be shared and change things. Positiveness and gumption (?) – inspiring . Thankyou	Work – efforts to work on improving children's services	
	I feel that there are more compassionate people prepared to help in whatever capacity they can than I had realised.	Reinforced the need to involve survivors in identifying the issues and the solutions	
	Never ceases to amaze me how incredibly strong survivors are and how much they have to give	Action not words from today	
	I feel empowered and supported by today	Positive actions	
	Hope for the future	I will take away some questions for my solicitor and hope	
	Guilt, pain – awareness of the 'unbelievableness of other people's lives'		
	I feel I didn't really get a chance to say what I wanted to		

Appendix 6

Survivors who Attended

Beverley	SOUTH DEVON
Buffy	SOUTH DEVON
Catherine	SOUTH DEVON
Charmaine	EXETER
Dawn	SOUTH DEVON
Hayley	EXETER
Jackie	MID DEVON
Jackie	SOUTH DEVON
Jennie	SOUTH DEVON
Jenny	SOUTH DEVON
Jodie	EXETER
Julia	EXETER
Julie	
Julie	NORTH DEVON
Karen	EXETER
Katherine	SOUTH DEVON
Laura	SOUTH DEVON
Linda	NORTH DEVON
Nicola	EXETER
Nila	EAST DEVON
Rose	EXETER
Saffron	SOUTH DEVON
Suzanne	EXETER
Suzie	

Survivors who Sent Apologies

Alex	SOUTH DEVON
Amy	NORTH DEVON
Angie	NORTH DEVON
Anne	TORRIDGE
Avril	NORTH DEVON
Caroline	NORTH DEVON
Carolyn	
Clare	
Colleen	NORTH DEVON
Debbie	TORRIDGE
Edwina	NORTH DEVON
France	TORRIDGE
Gwen	TORRIDGE
Helen	EAST DEVON
Jackie	NORTH DEVON
Jamie	EXETER
Jill	NORTH DEVON
Jill	
Julie	TORQUAY
Justine	TORRIDGE
Karen	EXETER
Karen	WEST DEVON
Karen	TORRIDGE
Karen	WEST DEVON
Maureen	NORTH DEVON
Melanie	NORTH DEVON
Mia	EXETER
Nadine	NORTH DEVON
Natasha	NORTH DEVON
Nikki	TORRIDGE
Rita	NORTH DEVON
Sam	NORTH DEVON
Sue	NORTH DEVON
Tracy	WEST DEVON
Vicky	NORTH DEVON
Zara	EXETER

Agency Representatives who Attended

First Name	Surname	Job Title	Organisation
Susan	Bahman		Plymouth District Magistrates Court
Michael	Beechener	ADVA Trainer	Devon County Council
Chris	Bennett		Crown Prosecution Service
Katrina	Calcutt	Management Accountant	Devon County Council
Philippa	Chapman		SEEDS Project
Sharon	Clayborough	Community Branch Manager	Victim Support Devon
Lucy	Cottell		LCJB
Maria	Cox		Safe Project
Andrew	Cresswell	Chief Crown Prosecutor	Crown Prosecution Service
Peter	Dale	Community Safety Officer	South Hams District Council
Graham	Davey	Housing Needs & Enabling Manager	Housing Services
John	Dunworth	Domestic Violence Lead	Home Office
Melody	Floyde	Project Support Officer	Devon County Council
Ian	Fraser-Roe	Community Support Unit	Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
David	Gentry	Area Director	HM Courts Service
Vickie	Gould		Little House Contact Centre
Antje	Jaeger		Little House Contact Centre
Michelle	Jones	GP	Foxhayes Practice
Clara	Keegan	Practice Manager Department	Social Services
Sally	Kingdon	Domestic Violence Officer	Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Barbara	Lyne		Sexual Abuse Line
Rachel	Martin	ADVA Manager	Devon County Council
Mary Anne Area	McFarlane	Chief Officer	Devon & Cornwall Probation
Dinah	Mears	ADVA Trainer	ADVA
Michael	Miller	Community Safety Officer	Exeter City Council
Chrissie	Morris	Facilitator	ADVA
Alice	Mortimer	Children's Worker	Exeter Women's Aid
Angie	Mudge	Educational Psychologist	Devon Educational Psychology Service

Phil	Norrey	Director of Education Arts & Libraries	Devon County Council
Jill	Owen	County Councillor	Devon County Council
Chris	Pearson	Manager	Exeter Women's Aid
Vicky	Plastow	East Devon Outreach Worker	Exeter Women's Aid
Andy	Stapley	Senior Manager	PPSA
Richard	Stowe	Assistant Chief Constable	Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Ian	Tearle	Joint Acting Director of Public Health	East Devon PCT
Roy	Tomlinson	County Community	Devon County Council Strategy Officer
Jane	Wheal		Sexual Abuse Line
Anne	Whiteley	Director of Children's Services	Devon County Council

Agency Representatives Who Sent Apologies

Alison	Allen	Child & Family Protection Adviser	North Devon PCT
Gillian	Champion	Nurse	Foxhayes Practice
Debra	Coleiro	Manager	Witness Service
Janice	Goodwin		West Devon Women's Aid
Helen	Hyland	Health Visitor Adviser	Mid Devon PCT
Philip	Jenkinson	Chief Executive	Devon County Council
Mary	Mitchell	Assistant Chief Officer	Devon & Cornwall Probation Area
Ellen	Mitchell	Housing Advice & Homelessness	Prevention Officer Torrige District Council
Jo	Morrish	Outreach Manager Women'sAid	North Devon
Pete	Rosser	Programme Manager	REPAIR North Devon
Mary	Seaton	Magistrate	
Nicky	Storey	Mid Devon Outreach Worker	Exeter Women's Aid
Sue	Tancock	Health Visitor Manager	Exeter PCT
Liz	Trevelyan	Senior Midwifery Manager	Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital
Maria	Wilson	Outreach Worker	North Devon Women's Aid

adva

against domestic violence and abuse
in Devon

'Thank you for my voice - please use it'