



Men who experience domestic abuse: a service perspective

Journal:	<i>Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research</i>
Manuscript ID	JACPR-03-2018-0353.R2
Manuscript Type:	Empirical Paper
Keywords:	Domestic abuse, Domestic violence, male victims, provision, support, men

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4

Men who experience domestic abuse: a service perspective



1
2
3 **1 Abstract**

4 **2 Purpose** – The paper explores the needs of men experiencing domestic abuse from the
5 perspective of the professionals supporting them.
6

7 **4 Design/methodology/approach** – An all Wales qualitative study, 20 semi-structured
8 interviews were completed with managers and practitioners of domestic abuse services
9 supporting men. Interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.
10

11 **7 Findings** – Analysis identified six themes: *against the tide of recognition, a need to*
12 *recognise and accept domestic abuse, knowledge of provision, low numbers of men,*
13 *resources (time & funding) and rebuilding.* However, *against the tide of recognition* was
14 central. Domestic abuse is understood as a heteronormative and gendered experience; abused
15 men defy these notions.
16
17

18 **12 Research limitations** – Findings cannot be generalised across the UK. This study offers a
19 valuable base on which to build future knowledge. Future research might consider recruiting
20 larger samples or follow up qualitative findings with a larger quantitative survey.
21

22 **15 Practical implications** – This paper presents the manager and practitioner views of the
23 service needs and solutions for men. They perceive that abused men need to recognise and
24 accept victimisation, have knowledge of provision and know it is acceptable to seek help, and
25 receive practical support.
26

27 **19 Societal implications** – Increasing recognition cannot be achieved in isolation. A **shared**
28 commitment is required from policy, practice and research to raise the agenda for abused
29 men.
30

31 **22 Originality/value** – This is an under researched area. This paper is the first to explore the
32 needs of men through the lens of domestic abuse professionals.
33

34 **24 Keywords** – Domestic abuse, domestic violence, male victims, provision, support, men.
35

36 **25 Paper type** – Research paper.
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Introduction

2 Domestic abuse a serious social problem and has become a priority for police and authorities
3 across the world (Mooney, 2000). Second-wave feminism situated the victimization of
4 women within the wider social and political context of gendered power imbalances (Laing
5 and Humphreys, 2013). Thus, men perpetrate abuse towards women to maintain control
6 within a patriarchal society. Also referred to as the gender paradigm (Dutton and Nicholls,
7 2005), this perspective has been the leading perspective throughout America and Western
8 Europe (Dutton, 2010). In the United Kingdom (UK), intervention, support and policies have
9 been informed and developed using a gendered perspective of domestic abuse (Dobash and
10 Dobash, 2004; Bates *et al.* 2017).

11 The economic and health costs attached to domestic abuse are extensive. Individuals,
12 communities and societies experience serious impact on health outcomes (Krug *et al.* 2002).
13 Lifetime experience of domestic abuse has been significantly associated with poor health
14 amongst men and women (Coker *et al.* 2002). Witnessing and experiencing domestic abuse
15 in childhood has been associated with depression, numerous disorders (anxiety, eating,
16 personality, post-traumatic stress), and suicidal behaviour (Norman *et al.*, 2012). In the
17 United Kingdom (UK), domestic abuse is a substantial issue. The Crime Survey England and
18 Wales (CSEW) indicates there are approximately 1.2 million female and 700,000 male
19 victims (ONS, 2013). Within England and Wales, the economic, service and human cost is
20 estimated at approximately 16 billion per annum (Walby, 2009). Yet, much of what is known
21 about domestic abuse (its costs, impact, types of abuse experienced and service needs) refers
22 to heterosexual women. The issue of male victimisation has been described as a '*greatly*
23 *overlooked*' and '*critical issue*' (Zverina *et al.* 2011).

24

1 The subject of men who experience domestic abuse is a growing momentum and
2
3
4
5 2 research is expanding. However, in terms of understanding their service needs, the area is
6
7 3 underdeveloped. Literature exploring men's help-seeking experiences is limited (Morgan *et*
8
9 4 *al.* 2014), so too is research that focuses on the provision of services for abused men. The
10
11 5 detrimental impact of abuse requires appropriate interventions that support all
12
13 6 victim/survivors to overcome their experiences and prevent future abuse. Further research is
14
15 7 required to understand men's experiences (Ansara and Hindin, 2010) and help inform the
16
17 8 development of support and policies that addresses men's needs. These are dependent on
18
19 9 having a clear understanding of the abused experiences (Ansara and Hindin, 2010).

10 In the UK, domestic abuse services (DASs) working with men have described the
11
12 11 sector as a '*female domain*' that does not recognise men and the stigma associated with male
13
14 12 victimisation (Hester *et al.* 2012). For over thirty years in Wales, DASs have been designed
15
16 13 and tailored to meet the needs of women and children (Welsh Women's Aid (WWA), 2010).
17
18 14 Many existing DASs have extended the support they offer women to men. Yet, organisations
19
20 15 working with men should establish the needs and nature of services required for this
21
22 16 population (Men's Advice Line, 2012). Across Wales, Robinson and Rowlands (2006) noted
23
24 17 a distinct lack of services to support abused men. In 2012, the Welsh Government (WG)
25
26 18 published its White Paper Consultation on legislation to end violence against women,
27
28 19 domestic abuse and sexual violence (Wales). The paper outlined the need to ensure that
29
30 20 irrespective of gender, '*appropriate and proportionate level of service is made available to*
31
32 21 *all victims within local areas*' (WG, 2012, p.3). However, an independent review of DASs in
33
34 22 Wales highlighted a failure to match provision to need for specific groups that included male
35
36 23 victims (Berry *et al.* 2014).

1 The study sought to explore the question ‘*What do services understand are the needs*
2 *of men experiencing domestic abuse?*’¹ Using a qualitative approach, needs were identified
3 from the perspectives of professionals supporting abused men. Knowledge of what abused
4 men need is important if services are to respond appropriately and be inclusive to all. This
5 study adds knowledge to a neglected area of research and offers future practice
6 considerations to support male victims/survivors.

7 **Method**

8 *Procedure*

9 Ethical approval and permissions were gained from the University of South Wales, and all 22
10 local authorities (LAs) in Wales (requested by the Association for Directors of Social
11 Services). **Given the doctoral nature of this research, the recruitment and data collection**
12 **timeframe was restricted from October 2015 to January 2016.** Participants were purposefully
13 selected (Merriam, 2009), requiring the researcher to critically consider the parameters of the
14 study population and choose the sample size on this basis (Silverman, 2010). Participants
15 had to be employed within a management or practitioner role in a DAS in Wales. Managers
16 roles broadly included running the service (staff management, supervision, finance, funding
17 applications), multi-agency working (criminal justice, social services, housing), and
18 providing some direct support. Practitioners’ offer direct support, advocating for service
19 users, multi-agency working, delivering support programmes, and updating case files.

20 The semi-structured interview guide included four broad headings; *perception of*
21 *need, service provision, male assessment and data collection.* Prompts encouraged
22 participants to provide detailed responses (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Interviews sought a
23 general shared understanding of the issue of domestic abuse from the context of supporting
24 men.

¹ Findings from this article belong to the first authors’ PhD study ‘*An investigation into the needs of men experiencing domestic abuse and current service provision (Wales)*’.

1 Interviews were conducted at the DASs where participants worked, ensuring a safe
2 and familiar setting for both parties (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), lasted between 45-
3 120 minutes, and were transcribed verbatim. All identifiable data was anonymised (DAS,
4 participant and service user names, LA's, towns and regions of Wales).

5 *Data analysis*

6 Interviews were analysed by the first author (SW) using thematic analysis (TA). Qualitative
7 researchers use this method to identify, analyse, and report patterns/themes (Braun and
8 Clarke, 2006). A six-phase guide (Braun and Clarke, 2006) informed the basis of analyses.
9 A useful framework to support consistency, the guide was not used rigidly; a flexible
10 approach was adopted to fit the research question and data (Patton, 1990). The first author
11 (SW) used peer validation via team supervision to discuss emerging themes, and kept all
12 notes, key abstracts and themes from analysis (Shaw, 2010). Doing so demonstrates
13 reliability, while providing an audit trail from raw data to interpreted results (Shaw, 2010).

14 **Results**

15 At the time of this study, 43 identified DASs were providing support to men in Wales. All
16 but one was a not-for-profit organisation. All 43 were invited to participate and no DAS
17 directly declined. Within the recruitment timeframe, 12 DASs (all not-for-profit) participated
18 and 20 interviews were completed across 10 LAs. Of 12 DASs, six included interviews with
19 a manager and practitioner, one with a dual role of manager/practitioner, four included six
20 practitioner only interviews and one had one manager only interview. Analysis generated six
21 overarching themes: *against the tide of recognition, a need to recognise and accept domestic*
22 *abuse, knowledge of provision, low numbers of men, resources (time & funding) and*
23 *rebuilding*. Of these six, *against the tide of recognition* was central and impacted on all
24 subsequent themes. Figure 1 provides a map of overarching and subthemes.

25
26 (Insert Figure 1)

2 **Against the tide of recognition**

3 Participants made repeated reference to wider society's lack of recognition towards abused
4 men. The lack of recognition is sustained through the perception that domestic abuse is a
5 heteronormative and gendered experience. Consequently, abused men are improbable
6 victims who defy ingrained perceptions and face a battle *against the tide of recognition*.

7
8 *They are up against this tide of well it doesn't really happen to men [...]. In the main,*
9 *its women who are victims, so they got that tide of well, you're a man you shouldn't*
10 *really be a victim (Manager).*

11 *As a society we promote it as a women's problem, a women's issue not a man's issue*
12 *and everything, all the publications, you know, violence against women and girls*
13 *(Manager).*

14 *Domestic abuse is more in the newspapers for women and, you know, it's on the news*
15 *and it's brought basically to everybody's knowledge [...]. I think it's just women*
16 *(Practitioner).*

17
18 The lack of recognition towards male victims/survivors of domestic abuse was
19 acknowledged as a barrier preventing men from seeking help and disclosing abuse.

20 *It's almost like "oh they don't exist, men don't exist". It's violence against women, it's*
21 *a bigger problem so let's not identify them that males are victims as well. Then how do*
22 *you expect men to come forward? (Practitioner).*

25 **A need to recognise and accept domestic abuse**

26 There was a consensus amongst participants of men's inability to accept and recognise their
27 experience as domestic abuse. Men who had accessed their support needed recognition and

1 validation to name and begin to accept their experience as abuse. Men's inability to do so
2
3
4
5 without support was attributed to the lack of recognition:
6

7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
*If all the research and if all the sort of campaigns are aimed at that [VAW], I don't
think they're [men] gonna recognise themselves as victims of domestic abuse
(Manager).*

*I've had a couple of men of come in and they've sort of questioned me "So is it
domestic abuse"? I think its, they need the validation almost that (sighs), that they are
suffering the way women are often perceived as suffering domestic abuse (Practitioner).*

*Shame of victimisation and gender expectations were supporting subthemes identified
as additional barriers to preventing men from recognising and accepting their experience.*

*For a man how do you go and begin to say what is happening? [...]. Men are told
aren't they "be brave, don't cry get on with it". So how can you come and say "Oh
she's doing this to me, or she's doing that to me"? (Manager).*

*Men that we talk to say it's very difficult for a man to actually stand up and say "I'm
being abused by my wife". Shame, ridicule, fear of not being believed, they have to
overcome those things (Practitioner).*

Prior to contemplating help seeking, abused men were perceived by participants as
having to overcome obstacles including a lack of recognition, the perception they are
perpetrators, not victims, defy embedded notions of gender expectations and overcome their
own internal shame of victimisation. At this stage, abused men can begin to consider where
they might be able to access help.

Knowledge of provision

1 This theme draws attention to a lack of knowledge and misconception regarding service
2 provision amongst abused men. Referred to as a *priority* by one manager, this theme
3 indicates a need to quell misconceptions and raise expectations and knowledge of available
4 support.

5 *I think the still the priority for men experiencing domestic abuse is to know where to go*
6 *to if they want somebody to help* (Manager).

7 *There needs to be something a bit more obvious [...]. Something that's more specific so*
8 *men know that it's the service for them if they need it* (Practitioner).

9
10 Practitioners referred to men's gratitude for the support (however minimal) they had
11 received. Gratitude suggests low expectations of what help is available and depicts the felt
12 isolation by men, exacerbated by the belief that they are the only victim:

13
14 *To open up and actually disclose that you are living in a hell, that you feel totally alone*
15 *and totally secluded thinking you're the only man in the world ever going through that.*

16 *To open up to somebody and for them to listen, I think it's just amazing for them [...].*

17 *They say it to me "Oh thanks so much for what you've done" [...]. "I'm really grateful*
18 *for what you've done". Even if it's only been like maybe three calls by phone [...]. "I*
19 *don't know where I would have what I would have done without you"* (Practitioner).

20 21 22 23 **Low numbers of men**

24 This theme highlights the low number of men accessing domestic abuse provision either via
25 self or agency referral:
26

1
2
3 1 *Yeah it [self-referral] is much lower. Even the agency referrals are very low, um, but*
4
5 2 *yes, self-referrals are very low, really low especially in comparison to female referrals*
6
7 3 *(Manager).*

8
9 4 *The majority of males are quite small in comparison to the females that access that*
10
11 5 *service [drop-in support]. The other one we have is a floating support, and that again*
12
13 6 *is open to males but very few referrals really come into that (Manager).*

14
15
16 7
17 8 *However, low numbers of men was with the exception of four services who had*
18
19 9 *frequent referrals, calls of enquiry and engagement with male victims/survivors. These*
20
21 10 *services had a dedicated, visible and well-established provision for men. Yet, a higher*
22
23 11 *number of male referrals brought problems in terms of capacity. One participant recalled*
24
25 12 *having to turn men away, whilst another exceeded their maximum caseload capacity:*

26
27
28 13
29 14 *Just on a weekly basis we get eight to ten referrals [...]. Of people trying to access the*
30
31 15 *service, yeah, but we obviously haven't got room for them (Practitioner).*

32
33 16
34 17 *My caseload is 25, that's my maximum caseload, I can't take any more than that. I*
35
36 18 *have had as many as 32 on a caseload because they needed that support (Practitioner).*

37
38
39 19
40 20 *With the exception of the four services, low numbers of men seeking help was the*
41
42 21 *norm. Low numbers of men is influenced by the lack of recognition, an inability to*
43
44 22 *recognise/accept abusive experiences and limited knowledge of provision. In turn, low*
45
46 23 *numbers of men impacts the overarching themes resources (time & funding) and rebuilding.*
47
48 24 *It affects the evidence of need required to apply for funding to develop new or additional*
49
50 25 *services for men:*

51
52
53 26
54 27 *I don't think there's you know, we couldn't say evidence there's enough demand coz we*
55
56 28 *haven't got the statistics to say there's enough (Manager/Practitioner).*

1
2
3 1
4 2 An unsubstantiated need for additional funding results in limited provision and feeds
5
6 3 back into *against the tide of recognition*.

7
8 4 (Insert Figure 2)

9
10 5
11 6 **Resources (time and funding)**

12
13
14 7 Participants drew attention to decreasing budgets. Limited time and funding restricts service
15
16 8 development and promotion. A lack of funding creates uncertainty of the longevity of future
17
18 9 services and places pressure on existing provision:

19
20
21 10
22 11 *We've had 25% cut in three years. We're expecting 10-20% cut next year, you know,*
23
24 12 *where, what do we do? What do we do? Where do you cut? (Manager).*

25
26 13
27 14 *I'm finding it difficult there's only one of me for [name of LA] [...]. I don't feel that I'm*
28
29 15 *offering a full service to these people because I'm trying to juggle everyone else.*
30
31 16 (Practitioner).

32
33
34 17
35 18 For one manager, potential funding cuts could lead to a decision of withdrawing
36
37 19 support to men in favour of supporting women:

38
39 20 *I God forbid the day ever comes where they say "Right you've only got enough, we're*
40
41 21 *only going to provide you with enough to provide one service or one refuge". It would*
42
43 22 *have to be the women. It would have to be coz the numbers stack that up (Manager).*

44
45
46 23 Participants believed a lack of provision existed for abused men. Limited availability
47
48 24 of support hinders rebuilding, reinforces the lack of recognition and fuels the low numbers of
49
50 25 men coming forward.

51
52
53 26
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 1 *If you look across the country it's appalling. Some people are doing sort of bits of*
4
5 2 *service aren't they? I mean they're doing sort of fairly low level stuff or they're mostly*
6
7 3 *doing the signposting, but to actually provide a service, there are huge gaps (Manager).*
8
9 4
10 5 *There's just not enough of it and there's definitely not enough places for male victims*
11
12 6 *to go [...]. A lot of male victims end up on the street or with drug and alcohol problems*
13
14 7 *as a result of not having anywhere to go or anyone to support them (Practitioner).*
15
16
17

18 9 **Rebuilding**

19
20
21 10 *Rebuilding* denotes the need for men to move on from their abusive experiences. Participants
22
23 11 raised the adverse effects of domestic abuse including mental health, substance abuse and
24
25 12 financial issues.

26
27
28 13 *There's two [men] suffering with PTSD as a direct result of the abuse [...]. The other*
29
30 14 *three are all on some sort of antidepressant medication (pause) [...]. I'd say there's*
31
32 15 *(pause) four of them have got substance misuse (Practitioner).*
33

34 16 *The financial abuse it's actually caused him [male victim] to be bankrupt [...]. He owes*
35
36 17 *over like £25,000 [...]. So we've been helping him with accessing bankruptcy and*
37
38 18 *getting his benefits and that sorted (Practitioner).*
39
40

41 19
42 20 There are problems to accessing additional support services (mental health, counselling).

43
44 21 Waiting lists ranging from twelve weeks to two years were common and hindered
45
46 22 recovery:

47
48 23
49 24 *I've tried counselling services and there's a massive waiting list there especially in GP*
50
51 25 *surgeries, you know, coz GP surgeries now offer a counselling service for lots of*
52
53 26 *different kinds of support. But for around like emotional support, post-traumatic stress*
54
55 27 *the waiting lists they're horrendous, absolutely horrendous (Practitioner).*
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 1
4 2 The types of support being sought by abused men was highlighted by practitioners.

5
6 3 They included housing, financial, legal and child contact advice.

7
8 4
9 5 *Nobody's taken into account that their [male victim] funds are limited. You might earn*
10
11 6 *two thousand pound but you might be paying fifteen hundred pound into the family*
12
13 7 *home. So what you're left with is, you know, it's not sufficient to live and I think that's*
14
15 8 *a big thing that isn't being recognised (Manager).*

16
17
18 9
19 10 *Their [men] needs are around might be child contact. Housing is really big issue for*
20
21 11 *men coz they're the ones that normally leave the family home [...]. Child contacts a*
22
23 12 *really big issue (Practitioner).*

24
25 13
26 14 Participants noted the majority of abused men they came into contact with were
27
28 15 employed. This presented barriers to accessing the DAS and support such as
29
30 16 legal aid, housing benefit and refuge provision.

31
32
33 17
34 18 *We're open till six on Mondays and Tuesdays even if we said come in then it would be*
35
36 19 *difficult coz perhaps they finish at five or later, so it would only literally leave you*
37
38 20 *twenty minutes straight after they've come from work and it doesn't, it doesn't work*
39
40 21 *really (Practitioner).*

41
42 22 *It's about legal aid, so if they're working and they don't have access to that then*
43
44 23 *there's no way for them to access support legally then, unless they can pay for it so it's*
45
46 24 *like a catch 22 (Manager).*

49 **Discussion**

50
51 26 This study sought to explore the needs of men experiencing domestic abuse from the
52
53 27 perspectives of the professionals supporting them. The overarching theme was the lack of
54
55 28 recognition, which creates and sustains the perpetuating cycle (Figure 2).

1
2
3 1 Managers and practitioners referred to men's inability to recognise and accept their
4
5 2 victimisation. For the men they had supported, believing and validating their experiences
6
7 3 was important. Previous research has highlighted the need for men to be taken seriously by
8
9 4 victim and law enforcement agencies (Machado *et al.* 2016). Furthermore, men need to
10
11 5 know that help is available and how to access it. A lack of recognition, an inability to accept
12
13 6 and recognise domestic abuse, and limited knowledge of support leads to low numbers of
14
15 7 men coming forward. Low numbers of men was the norm, with the exception of four
16
17 8 services that had dedicated male support provision. These services were advocating a visible
18
19 9 recognition of abused men, which appears to have had a positive impact. In contrast to other
20
21 10 participants, these services recalled frequent referrals, calls of inquiry and an increased
22
23 11 awareness of abused men amongst local agencies and the wider community. Nonetheless,
24
25 12 frequent male referrals were not without its problems; participants faced high caseloads,
26
27 13 overstretched capacity and decreasing budgets. For services reporting low numbers of men,
28
29 14 this translated to unsubstantiated need and hindered funding applications to develop provision
30
31 15 (Figure 2).

32
33
34
35 16 Reduced funding and the threat to service provision was a very real concern amongst
36
37 17 participants. It led to some practitioners feeling they were not providing a full service to the
38
39 18 men they supported. Limited resources can mean agencies having to narrow their perception
40
41 19 of who constitutes a victim and who the most appropriate victims are (Donnelly *et al.*, 1999).
42
43 20 This concept was echoed by one manager advising that if faced with a choice of funding
44
45 21 services for women or men that it "*would have to be the women*". Fears of female services
46
47 22 being lost or reduced to fund male provision has been raised by WWA. They maintained that
48
49 23 in a time of public spending cuts, funding should not be directed away from women's
50
51 24 services simply to meet a '*projected need*' for men (WWA, 2010).

52
53
54
55 25
56 26 *Implications of results*

1
2
3
4 1 The service needs of men and how they might be addressed are presented and discussed
5
6 2 below.

7
8 3
9 4 ***Recognise and accept domestic abuse***

10 5 The framing of domestic abuse as an issue faced by women and not men, negatively
11 6 influences men's ability to understand and label their experience as abuse (Donovan *et al.*
12 7 2006; Hines and Douglas, 2011). The *public story of domestic violence and abuse* (Donovan
13 8 and Hester, 2011; 2014) characterises the issue as a heteronormative and gendered
14 9 experience; the stronger male perpetrates (predominantly) physical violence towards the
15 10 smaller weaker female. This presentation can prevent men from recognising and accepting
16 11 their victimisation. Thus, when victim status is confined to women, the experiences of
17 12 abused men can be overlooked (Zverina *et al.* 2011).

18 13 Support should focus on helping men to understand, recognise and accept the range of
19 14 abusive behaviours, and seriousness of the abuse. Experiences should be believed and
20 15 validated; failing to do so can lead to increased social isolation (Morgan and Wells, 2016).
21 16 Knowing they are believed affords men feelings of psychological strength (McCarrick *et al.*
22 17 2016). Additionally, services should address the internal conflict of masculinity and
23 18 victimisation (Tsui *et al.* 2010) and adopt a gender sensitive approach (Zverina *et al.* 2011).

24 19
25 20
26 21 ***Knowledge of provision (know that help is available and where to go) and to know it is***
27 22 ***acceptable to seek help***

28 23 Men need knowledge of available support and information on how to access it. Participants
29 24 referred to men's gratitude for the support received, however minimal. Limited knowledge
30 25 of support suggests low expectations or preconceived ideas and might account for the
31 26 gratitude expressed when help was provided. Yet, knowing that support is available is not

1
2
3 1 enough. Abused men require assurance that as a victim it is acceptable to seek support, that
4
5 2 their experiences are serious and important enough to do so, and that seeking help will not
6
7 3 threaten their male identity. The reluctance or inability to identify as a victim for reasons of
8
9 4 shame and gender expectations are barriers to help seeking (Tsui *et al.* 2010; Machado *et al.*
10
11 5 2016). These barriers coupled with limited knowledge of provision can result in prolonged
12
13 6 periods of abuse.

14
15
16 7 DASs supporting men should ensure promotion materials/events directly target men.
17
18 8 Male victimisation requires “normalising”; for men to know it is acceptable to seek help, it
19
20 9 has to *become* acceptable. Thus, a male victim/survivor seeking help becomes an ordinary
21
22 10 assumption not influenced by gender or domestic abuse assumptions.

23 11 **Practical support**

24
25
26 12 Participants highlighted several practical issues that could influence men’s decision to access
27
28 13 support to leave an abusive relationship. Financial obligations to joint mortgages or tenancies
29
30 14 can make accessing alternative accommodation and the means to support daily living
31
32 15 difficult. Child contact was described as a ‘*really big issue*’ and employment was identified
33
34 16 as a barrier to accessing DASs and additional support (housing benefit and legal aid).
35
36 17 Providing detailed and accurate information that can support men to leave is essential.
37
38 18 Demonstrating understanding and an awareness of practical issues is important and affords
39
40 19 men the confidence to know they and their experiences matter. DASs might consider
41
42 20 partnership working with local legal services and organisations like the Citizens Advice
43
44 21 Bureau to offer free surgeries.

45
46
47
48
49 22 Employment can present barriers to accessing “nine-to-five” services. DASs should
50
51 23 be creative and consider how they can be accessible outside standard working hours.
52
53 24 Financial restrictions, staffing (numbers and availability), or health and safety might hinder
54
55 25 flexibility. Nonetheless, the availability of support should reflect the needs of all
56
57
58
59
60

1 victims/survivors. Options might include dedicated or pre-arranged weekday evenings and/or
2 alternate weekend access, online and/or email support, or text messaging (where appropriate
3 and safe).

4 *Study limitations*

5 The study reported is part of a larger completed PhD study. It contributes to an under-
6 developed area of research, adds to a limited qualitative knowledge base and offers future
7 practice considerations. Findings from a sample of 20 participants cannot be generalised,
8 nonetheless, it is a rich source of data and offers a valuable base on which to build (Procter,
9 Allan, and Lacey, 2010). Future studies might recruit larger samples or follow-up qualitative
10 findings with a larger quantitative survey.

11 *Conclusion*

12 *Against the tide of recognition*, highlights the lack of recognition for abused men. The
13 perpetuating cycle (Figure 2) is persistent and entrenched, but not irreversible. Government
14 policy has the power to shape socioeconomic conditions and cultural beliefs (Perryman and
15 Appleton, 2016). Those at the helm of decision making, funding and policy development are
16 in a position to initiate real change and advocate equal recognition for all. Researchers and
17 practitioners also need to raise questions and challenge practice and policy (Perryman and
18 Appleton, 2016).

19 However, with ongoing austerity measures, DASs face competing priorities. For
20 managers, funding cuts translate to fears of future provision and a choice of providing services
21 for women or men. For practitioners, it leads to increasing caseloads, frustration at the long
22 wait for referrals to additional support and a sense of '*not offering a full service*'. To ensure
23 equal recognition for all victims/survivors in any future debate and decision-making, a **shared**
24 strategic commitment is required from government policy, practice and research to raise the
25 agenda for abused men in all devolved countries in the UK. In Wales, to support this work,

1 future research should quantify the magnitude of the problem, and identify unmet needs and
2 gaps in services. This would help identify appropriate group and individual interventions,
3 and inform future planning and policy development. Doing so will afford men the
4 confidence and ability to accept and recognise their victimisation and seek help. Men
5 experiencing domestic abuse need to have their expectations of support raised and be assured
6 that specialist help is available. They require accessible, targeted provision that recognises
7 their needs. Above all, men need to know their experiences are important and that as
8 victims/survivors, they are recognised and accepted.

References

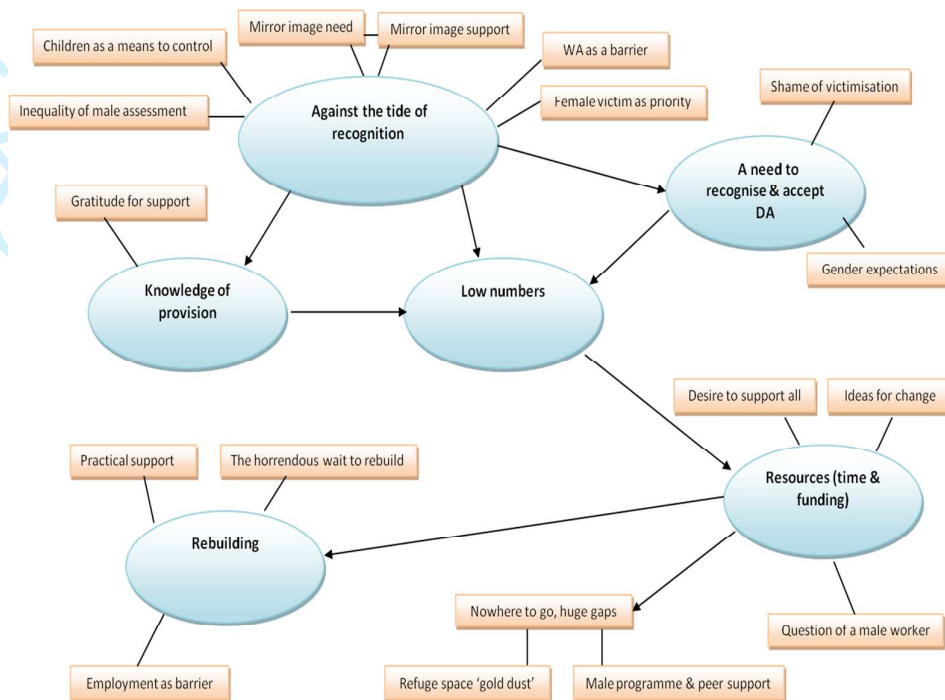
- 21 Ansara, D.L. and Hindin, M.J. (2010), "Formal and informal help seeking associated with
22 women's and men's experiences of intimate partner violence in Canada", *Social
23 Science and Medicine*, Vol. 70 No. 8, pp. 1011-1081.
- 24 Bates, E.A., Graham-Kevan, N., Bolam, L.T. and Thornton, A.J.V. (2017), "A review of
25 domestic violence perpetrator programs in the United Kingdom", *Partner Abuse*, Vol.
26 8 No. 1, pp. 3-46.
- 28 Berry, V., Stanley, N., Radford, L., McCarry, M. and Larkins, C. (2014), *Building effective
29 responses. An independent review of violence against women, domestic abuse and
30 sexual violence services in Wales*. University of Central Lancashire, Welsh

- 1
2
3 1 Government, available at: [http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/2014/140430-](http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/2014/140430-violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-sexual-violence-services-en.pdf)
4 2 [violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-sexual-violence-services-en.pdf](http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/2014/140430-violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-sexual-violence-services-en.pdf).
5
6 3 Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006), "Using thematic analysis in psychology", *Qualitative*
7 4 *Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3 No 2, pp. 77-101.
8
9 5 Coker, A. L., Davis, K. E., Arias, I., Desai, S., Sanderson, M., Brandt, H. M. and Smith, P. H.
10 6 (2002), "Physical and mental health effects of intimate partner violence for men and
11 7 women", *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, Vol 23 No 4, pp. 260-268.
12 8
13 9 Dobash, R. P. and Dobash, R. E. (2004), "Women's violence to men in intimate
14 10 relationships: Working on a puzzle", *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol 44 No 3, pp.
15 11 324-349.
16 12
17 13 Donnelly, D.A., Cook, K.J. and Wilson, L.A. (1999), "Provision and exclusion: The dual face
18 14 of services to battered women in three deep south states", *Violence Against Women*,
19 15 Vol 5 No 7, pp. 710-741.
20 16
21 17 Donovan, C. and Hester, M. (2014), *Domestic violence and sexuality: What's love got to do*
22 18 *with it?*, Polity Press: Bristol, England.
23 19
24 20 Donovan, C. and Hester, M. (2011), "Seeking help from the enemy: Help seeking strategies
25 21 of those in same-sex relationships who have experienced domestic abuse", *Child and*
26 22 *Family Law Quarterly*, Vol 23 No 1, pp. 26-40.
27 23
28 24 Donovan, C., Hester, M., Holmes, J. and McCarry, M. (2006), *Comparing domestic abuse in*
29 25 *same sex and heterosexual relationships*. University of Sunderland, University of
30 26 Bristol, available at:
31 27 [http://www.bris.ac.uk/sps/research/projects/completed/2006/rc1307/rc1307finalreport.](http://www.bris.ac.uk/sps/research/projects/completed/2006/rc1307/rc1307finalreport.pdf)
32 28 [pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/sps/research/projects/completed/2006/rc1307/rc1307finalreport.pdf)
33 29
34 30 Dutton, D.G. (2010), "The gender paradigm and the architecture of anti-science", *Partner*
35 31 *Abuse*, Vol 1 No 1, pp. 5-25.
36 32 Dutton, D. G. and Nicholls, T. L. (2005), "The gender paradigm in domestic violence
37 33 research and theory: Part 1 – The conflict of theory and data", *Aggression and Violent*
38 34 *Behaviour*, Vol 10 No 6, pp. 680-714.
39 35
40 36 Hester, M., Williamson, E., Regan, L., Coulter, M., Chantler, K., Gangoli, G., Davenport, R.
41 37 and Green, L. (2012), *Exploring the service and support needs of male, lesbian, gay,*
42 38 *bi-sexual and transgendered and black and other minority ethnic victims of domestic*
43 39 *and sexual violence*. Home Office, University of Bristol, available at:
44 40 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/research/projects/current/rk6812/domesticsexualviolence>
45 41 [supportneeds.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/research/projects/current/rk6812/domesticsexualviolence).
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 1 Hines, D. A. and Douglas, E. M. (2011), "The reported availability of U.S. domestic violence
4 2 services to victims who vary by age, sexual orientation, and gender", *Partner Abuse*,
5 3 Vol 2 No 1, pp. 3-30.
6
- 7 4 Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A., Zwi, A. B. and Lozano, R. (2002), *World report*
8 5 *on violence & health*. World Health Organisation, available at:
9 6 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/.
10
- 11 7 Laing, L. and Humphreys, C. (2013), *Social work and domestic violence: developing critical*
12 8 *reflective practice*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, England.
13 9
- 14 10 Machado, A.G., Hines, D.A. and Matos, M. (2016), "Help-seeking and needs of male victims
15 11 of intimate partner violence in Portugal", *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, Vol 17
16 12 No 3, pp. 255-264.
17
- 18 13 McCarrick, J., Davis-McCabe, C. and Hirst-Winthrop, S. (2016), "Men's experiences of the
19 14 criminal justice system following female perpetrated intimate partner violence",
20 15 *Journal of Family Violence*, Vol 31 No 2, pp. 203-213.
21
- 22 16 Men's Advice Line. (2012), *Scope of work with male victims of domestic violence*. Available
23 17 at: [http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/scope-of-work-with-male-victims-of-](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/scope-of-work-with-male-victims-of-domestic-violence.html)
24 18 [domestic-violence.html](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/pages/scope-of-work-with-male-victims-of-domestic-violence.html).
25 19
- 26 20 Merriam, S. (2009), *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*, Jon Wiley
27 21 and Sons, San Francisco.
28 22
- 29 23 Mooney, J. (2000), *Gender, violence and the social order*, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke,
30 24 England.
31 25
- 32 26 Morgan, W. and Wells, M. (2016), "It's deemed unmanly': men's experiences of intimate
33 27 partner violence (IPV)", *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, Vol 23
34 28 No 3, pp. 404-418.
35
- 36 29 Morgan, K., Williamson, E., Hester, M., Jones, S. and Feder, G. (2014), "Asking men about
37 30 domestic violence and abuse in a family medicine context: Help seeking and views on
38 31 the general practitioner role", *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, Vol 19 No 6, pp.
39 32 637-642.
40 33
- 41 34 Norman, R.E., Byamba, M., De, R., Butchart, A., Scott, J. and Vos, T. (2012), "The long-
42 35 term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect: A
43 36 systematic review and meta-analysis", *PLoS Medicine*, Vol 9 No 11, pp. 1-31.
44 37
- 45 38 Office for National Statistics. (2013), *Focus on violent crime and sexual offences 2012/13 –*
46 39 *Chapter 4: Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse*, available at:
47 40 http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_352362.pdf.
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4 1
5 2 Perryman, S. M. and Appleton, J. (2016), “Male victims of domestic abuse: Implications for
6 3 health visiting practice”, *Journal of Research in Nursing*, Vol 21 No 6, pp. 386-414.
7
8 4 Patton, M.Q. (1990), *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. 2nd edn. Sage Publications
9 5 Ltd, California.
10
11 6 Robinson, A. and Rowlands, J. (2006), *The Dyn Project: Supporting men experiencing*
12 7 *domestic abuse: Final evaluation report*. Cardiff University and The Dyn Project,
13 8 available at:
14 9 http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/resources/Dyn_Final_Evaluation_Report.pdf.
15
16 10 Rubin, H.J. and Rubin I.S. (2005), *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. 2nd edn.
17 11 Sage Publications Ltd, London.
18
19 12
20 13 Tsui, V., Cheung, M. and Leung, P. (2010), “Help-seeking among male victims of partner
21 14 abuse: Men's hard times”, *Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol 38 No 6, pp. 769-
22 15 780.
23
24 16 Shaw, R. (2010), “Interpretive phenomenological analysis”, in Forrester, M.A. (Ed), *Doing*
25 17 *qualitative research in psychology: A practical guide*, Sage Publications Ltd, London,
26 18 pp. 177-201.
27
28 19 Silverman, D. (2010), *Doing qualitative research*. 3rd edn. Sage Publications Ltd, London,
29 20 England.
30 21
31 22 Smith, J. A, Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009), *Interpretive phenomenological analysis:*
32 23 *theory, method and research*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, England.
33 24
34 25 Walby, S. (2009). *The cost of domestic violence – Up-date 2009*, Lancaster University,
35 26 England.
36 27
37 28 Welsh Government. (2012), *White paper: Consultation on legislation to end violence against*
38 29 *women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Wales)*, available at:
39 30 <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/consultation/121126evawdaconsultationen.pdf>.
40
41 31 Welsh Women’s Aid. (2010), *Male victims of domestic abuse: Welsh Women’s Aid briefing,*
42 32 *March 2010*, available at:
43 33 [http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&i](http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=359&Itemid=349)
44 34 [d=359&Itemid=349](http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=359&Itemid=349)
45 35
46 36 Zverina, M., Stam, H. and Babins-Wagner, R. (2011), “Managing victim status in group
47 37 therapy for men: A discourse analysis”, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol 26,
48 38 No 14, pp. 2834-2855.
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56 39
57
58
59
60

1 **Figure 1: Map of overarching and subthemes - Managers and practitioners**

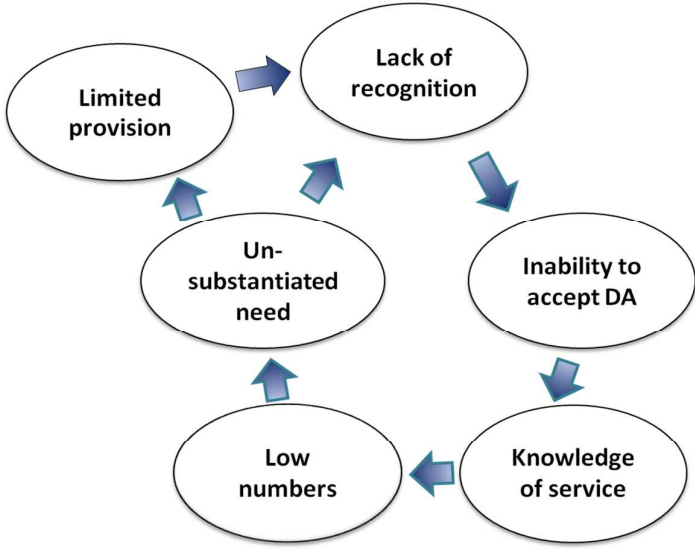


3

4

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 **Figure 2: The perpetuating cycle of a lack of recognition and provision**



3