



**An evaluation of  
The Freedom Programme for Professionals  
2 day training course  
'Understanding Coercive Control'**

**Undertaken by the University of Worcester  
Commissioned by Supportworks Foundation**

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## **Abstract**

This evaluation has been requested by SupportWorks Foundation – a Worcestershire based charity who commission domestic violence training. Since 2013, SupportWorks have commissioned KMC Training to deliver a two day Freedom Programme for Professionals training course. The training has been delivered to over 1500 professionals across Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire. This evaluation ultimately seeks to understand how professionals who attended the course feel the training has impacted on their understanding and approach to domestic violence. As will be seen, the training is rated extremely highly by those who attend, and not only does the training meet the learning outcomes set by KMC Training, but it also contributes to the strategic aims relating to domestic abuse in the counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire.

## **About the Author**

### ***Dr Holly Taylor-Dunn***

Holly has been working in the field of Gender Based Violence for the last 15 years – she initially worked as a Domestic Abuse Officer in the Police, before managing a number of community based services for a large Women's Aid organisation. Holly has a particular interest in service provision and advocacy. Her PhD evaluated a team of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) based in a Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) to determine the impact they had on prosecution rates. Holly's research interests include criminal justice responses to Gender Based violence, the role of housing in supporting victim-survivors of abuse and the development of IDVAs, ISVAs, MARACs and SDVCs.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank SupportWorks for commissioning this evaluation and Kay Clarke of KMC Training for managing the completion of questionnaires and ensuring they arrived at the University of Worcester.

I would also like to thank my colleague Beverley Gilbert for her role in designing the evaluation form and securing ethical approval, and for her support in reviewing the evaluation findings.

Finally, I would like to thank the professionals who attended the training for their honest and considered responses.

## **A note on terminology**

There is debate both in the academic literature and professional practice as to whether the term 'domestic violence' or 'domestic abuse' is most appropriate, with the former being seen as too focussed on physical violence while the latter is more encompassing of the range of abusive behaviours that exist within such relationships. The Home Office now use the term 'domestic violence and abuse', however, both terms will be used interchangeably throughout this report to reflect the diversity of language used in practice.

Similarly, there is debate regarding the term 'victim' or 'survivor' with the term 'victim' being seen as disempowering whereas 'survivor' identifies the individual's strength and resilience (Marie, 2009). In the absence of a consensus in the literature or practice, the term victim-survivor will be used throughout this report.

## **Acronyms**

CAADA – Coordinated Action against Domestic Abuse

CPN – Community Psychiatric Nurse

CPS – Crown Prosecution Service

DV – Domestic violence

GP – General Practitioner

MARAC – Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference

NICE – National Institute for Clinical Excellence

ONS – Office for National Statistics

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## Chapter One - Introduction

Societies understanding of domestic violence has progressed considerably since the issue reached public consciousness in the 1970s. Initially, the focus was on physical violence, however, this has now moved on to incorporate the range of controlling and coercive behaviours that exist within abusive relationships. The current definition used by the Home Office (2013) is as follows:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

In December 2015, the Serious Crime Act came into force which criminalised coercive control. This is the first piece of criminal legislation specifically designed to recognise the abuse of power and control within the context of domestic violence.

While the vast majority of domestic violence goes unreported, statistics suggest it is pervasive. For example, the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales suggested that 1.3 million women and 600,000 men had been victims of domestic abuse in the previous year (ONS, 2016). These figures are collected from self-completions surveys and are therefore more reliable than police recorded data, yet are still likely to under-represent the reality. Furthermore, these figures do not distinguish between domestic abuse committed by a partner/ex-partner, and that committed by a family member, nor do they distinguish between the sexuality of those in intimate relationships.

In terms of gender, the ONS data suggest that women are twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 (compared to men) and are nearly four times more likely to have experienced sexual abuse (ONS, 2016). It is also the case that in 2014/15, 44% of women who were murdered were killed by a current or former partner – compared to 6% of men (ONS, 2016). These figures highlight that domestic violence is still a gendered crime disproportionately affecting women.

In seeking to respond to the nature and extent of domestic abuse perpetrated by men against women, Pat Craven (then a probation officer) developed a 12 week group programme called the Freedom Programme. The programme was designed to help women who have suffered domestic violence to make sense of their experiences. It is fundamentally based on the concept of 'power and control' and therefore adopts a feminist understanding of domestic abuse.

The Freedom Programme for Professionals was developed by Kay Clarke in 2009. This two day course was initially designed to inform professionals of how the Freedom Programme was delivered so that they could better inform women, however, since setting up her own business 2013 (KMC Training), the course has been developed to give a comprehensive understanding of domestic abuse which takes participants on a journey of reflection and experiential learning.

The two day training course has been commissioned by SupportWorks foundation since 2013 and has been delivered to over 1500 professionals to date. The course is offered in the counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire, and funding is largely sourced from the Local Authority.

This evaluation has been commissioned by SupportWorks foundation with the aim of determining how professionals who attended the course feel the training has impacted on their understanding and approach to domestic violence. The evaluation had a tight budget and so the methods used to evaluate the course were designed accordingly. The researcher has met with Kay Clarke of KMC Training to discuss how the sessions are delivered and to have sight of the training materials.

## **Chapter Two - The Freedom Programme for Professionals and SupportWorks Foundation**

In order to put this evaluation into context, it is important to discuss the Freedom Programme, how the Freedom Programme for Professionals developed, and the relationship with SupportWorks Foundation.

### **The Freedom Programme**

The Freedom Programme for women was developed by Pat Craven in the late 1990s – then a probation officer working directly with men convicted of abusing their partners. Using her experience of working with male perpetrators, she developed a programme for women to help them make sense of their abuse. In 1999 the first Freedom Programme was delivered to women who were on probation for offences related to their experience of abuse (Craven, 2008). Upon leaving the probation service in 2002 Pat Craven set up as a self-employed trainer and over the last 14 years has developed the training significantly. Initially, licenses were sold so that trained individuals had the authority to train others to deliver the course, however, in 2010/11, this was stopped in order to preserve the programme's integrity.

The aim of the course, as described on the Freedom Programme website is as follows:

*“The Freedom Programme examines the roles played by attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors. The aim is to help them to make sense of and understand what has happened to them, instead of the whole experience just feeling like a horrible mess. The Freedom Programme also describes in detail how children are affected by being exposed to this kind of abuse and very importantly how their lives are improved when the abuse is removed”.*

The theoretical framework upon which the Freedom Programme is based is a feminist understanding of domestic abuse which explains it as the abuse of power by men over women. The power and control wheel, developed as part of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth the 1980's is central to the programme (Appendix 1).

There is very little academic evaluation of the Freedom Programme available, however, one study that does exist, suggests there are potential risks associated with the course when delivered in a prison setting. This research sought to determine whether the programme was achieving its aim of helping women to develop ways of thinking and behaving that protect them, their children and others from harm (Watkins and Dunn, 2010). The authors found that while the facilitators were well-intentioned, the course was not being delivered safely or in line with the stated aims of the Freedom Programme. In this particular case, the facilitators were prison staff who had received training to deliver the course, however, in Worcestershire, there are Best Practice Guidelines issued by the Local Authority which recommend that facilitators are based within specialist domestic violence organisations. Ultimately, while the integrity of how the Freedom Programme is delivered cannot be assured in every setting, it is still a very popular choice for women and professionals.

### **The Freedom Programme for Professionals**

Kay Clarke, who is the key trainer and creator of the Freedom Programme for Professionals, has been working in the field of domestic abuse since 2004. Kay worked in both refuge and outreach services before moving into group work and training. Kay had been delivering the Freedom Programme to women in the Worcestershire area for a number of years when in 2009, the manager of a Children's Centre asked her what the programme was about and how it was delivered. As a result, Kay realised there was a need for professionals to know more about the programme so that they could speak to women about it and refer them with confidence.

In 2013 Kay set up her own company called KMC training. Since then, she has developed the course significantly, and it is now a comprehensive two day training programme on the subject of domestic abuse, which uses the structure of the Freedom Programme to help explain what living with domestic abuse is like. Kay uses her experience of delivering the Freedom Programme to women, to inform her training for professionals with the aim of 'putting them in the survivors' shoes'. In addition, the training has a unique approach in that it does not follow traditional training techniques – as Kay describes:

*'The content challenges the attendees' previously held beliefs about domestic abuse and the delivery style is intended to offer all delegates a cognitive shift and emotional experience. There is no note taking and we do not include any PowerPoints'.*

Furthermore, every session is co-delivered with a victim-survivor who shares their experience of abuse with the delegates and answers questions. Kay Clarke is clear that any victim-survivors who wish to be part of the training have to be at a certain point in their recovery and she is very careful not to include women who may suffer further trauma.

It is important to identify that the training delivered by Kay is based on a gendered understanding of domestic abuse. Kay is clear with delegates, that whilst domestic abuse exists in range of contexts and relationships, this training is focussed on male perpetrators and female victim-survivors. The rationale for taking a gendered approach is underlined by both the prevalence and impact of male to female violence. For example:

- Women are twice as likely to experience partner violence than men (ONS, 2016)
- Women are 4 times more likely to be murdered by a partner/ex-partner (ONS, 2016)
- Women 5 times more likely to suffer sexual abuse by a partner/ex-partner (ONS, 2016)
- Men's abuse creates a context of fear and control, which is not the case for women (Hester et al, 2009)
- Women more likely to experience repeated incidents of violence and abuse (Walby, 2014)

In addition, Kay explores the work of Johnson (2008) who suggests there are different types of domestic abuse, including intimate terrorism (which is primarily perpetrated by men and related to gender roles), violent resistance (primarily perpetrated by women in response to intimate terrorism) and situational couple violence (perpetrated by both men and women and not related to gender roles). Kay

explains that her training is focussed on the dynamic of intimate terrorism which carries the greatest risk. For example, nearly half of all women murdered in England and Wales are killed by a current or former partner, whereas only 6% of men are murdered by a current or former partner (ONS, 2016).

It is important to note here, that Kay receives external supervision every 8 weeks to ensure her practice remains current and that she receives support. Kay's supervisor is Anne Haynes (BA, MSocSci, CQSW) who in 2006 was presented with an International Criminal Justice award for her work.

Anne has extensive experience as a Probation officer and senior manager and is a founder member of 4 charities, all associated with reducing violence against women. Early in her career in Probation (1980's), Anne was instrumental in the development of treatment programmes for men who sexually abuse children and adults. Anne also played a major role nationally and internationally, in the development and roll out of training for the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP). This was the nationally accredited perpetrator programme for domestic abuse offenders until 2013/2014 and according to a 2015 report from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), it was successful in reducing reoffending with small but significant effects (Bloomfield and Dixon, 2015). Anne provides a national consultancy service that helps staff to keep up to date with current methods for working with perpetrators of violence and abuse and also helps staff to deal with the impact of the work they do. Anne promotes a co-ordinated community approach which means running concurrent work and contact with the victim, children and the community in which they live.

### **SupportWorks Foundation**

The SupportWorks Foundation is a Worcestershire based charity and works to create a world where everyone feels valued and safe. The charity began with a group of women who had attended the Freedom Programme due to their experience of abuse, and following this they wanted to help other women with similar experiences. The charity state that 'by providing education and training, the SupportWorks foundation helps prevent domestic abuse and foster sustainable change by promoting individual transformation, building community ownership and

fundamentally challenging the social norms that support and condone violence against women and girls'.

The charity commissions KMC Training to deliver the two day Freedom Programme for Professionals in Warwickshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire, the funding for which has primarily been sourced from the Local Authority and the Police. To date, the training has been delivered to over 1500 professionals across the three counties.

## Chapter Three – Methodology

This small scale evaluation has been requested by SupportWorks Foundation who commission KMC Training to deliver the two day Freedom Programme for Professionals in Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire.

The overall aim of the proposed research is to establish the extent and nature of the impact the two day training on professionals.

The Freedom Programme for Professionals aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse and of the structure and content of the Freedom Programme in order that professionals can feel confident to refer/signpost clients to the Freedom Programme and feel better able to support them whilst they attend the programme.

The stated learning outcomes of the two day training course are as follows:

- Greater ability to identify the range and pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member.
- Deeper understanding of the victim's level of fear and the impact this has on them, their children, family, social and work life.
- Greater understanding of perpetrator tactics thereby reducing the risk of unwittingly colluding with a perpetrator.
- Greater awareness of the tactics used by a perpetrator to control a partner through the use of the children -particularly post separation.

In addition to these learning outcomes, the course also contributes to the strategic aims set by the counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire (the counties in which the course is delivered).



### **Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Plan 2011-2014**

- Prevention of Violence - Challenging attitudes and behaviours which foster domestic abuse and sexual violence and intervening early where possible to prevent it
- Provision of Services - Providing adequate levels of support where abuse occurs
- Partnership Working - Working in partnership to obtain the best outcomes for victims and their families
- Justice Outcomes & Risk Reduction - Taking action to reduce the risk to victims and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice

### **Warwickshire's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2015-2018**

- Preventing violence against women and girls from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it
- Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims where violence does occur
- Taking action to reduce the risk of women and girls who are victims of violence and ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety
- Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families

### **Safer Shropshire Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy (2015 – 2017)**

- To improve services and support for all victims of domestic violence and abuse
- To develop and deliver a high-quality, coordinated multiagency response to domestic violence and abuse
- To further increase and develop awareness generally about domestic violence and abuse and the measures in place to help the victims

- To educate children and young people, and the wider general public, that domestic violence and abuse is wrong and is unacceptable, and to enable them to make informed choices
- To hold perpetrators/abusers accountable and provide effective interventions for their behaviour.

The extent to which the training contributes to these strategic aims and the learning outcomes of the course will be explored throughout the evaluation.

### **Evaluation Methods**

The evaluation consisted of the design of a pre and a post questionnaire (Appendix 2) for training participants. The evaluation questionnaire was based on the current SupportWorks evaluation form and was designed to determine where participants felt their knowledge and understanding was at the start of, and following, the 2 day training course (according to key aspects of the course content).

The questionnaire was distributed at the beginning of the first day, and again at the end of the second day and collated by the trainers who forwarded them to the University of Worcester. The questionnaire included the date and location of the session together with the professional role of the training participant. The name of the training delegate was not requested.

Evaluation forms from 15 training sessions were returned to the University, however, only 11 sessions were included in the final evaluation as each session required a complete set of pre and post evaluation forms. The 11 sessions were held from September 2015 until May 2016 and a total of 178 participants were included. Each evaluation form was transferred onto Excel so that the data could be analysed.

The questions asked in the evaluation forms included both quantitative and qualitative responses. Participants were asked to rate their knowledge/understanding/confidence of certain issues before and after the training on a scale from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent). The responses to each question were then transferred into a bar chart to show how participants rated the change in their knowledge/understanding/confidence.

In relation to the qualitative responses, the data was analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Comments were coded according to particular themes and these were then grouped into more general themes. The results of the thematic analysis are presented in pie charts to visually represent the frequency with which each theme emerged.

All of the data has been critically analysed by the researcher and considered in the current context of domestic abuse. Potential issues have been highlighted and recommendations for practice have been made. The researcher met with Kay Clarke of KMC Training to discuss how the training is delivered and reviewed the training materials.

### **Ethics**

Any research involving human participants requires ethical approval. The principles of ethical research at the University of Worcester are that:

- Research must be justified
- Informed consent must be given by participants
- Participation in research must be voluntary
- Confidentiality must be ensured
- Participants and the researcher(s) should not come to any harm during the research

(University of Worcester, 2015)

Research involving issues such as domestic abuse are particularly sensitive, and have the potential to cause harm to those involved. As a result, this evaluation sought ethical approval from the University of Worcester, Institute of Health and Society Ethics Committee. Before the project was agreed, a slight modification to the questionnaires was made. In the initial request, we had asked for both the job title of the participant, and the organisation they worked for, however, the Ethics Committee felt that in order to confidently preserve the anonymity of those attending, we should only ask for their job role.

As the researcher did not meet any of the participants (as questionnaires were distributed and collected by the trainers), a participant information sheet was provided so that training delegates were aware of the evaluation and who it was

being conducted by. This form also explained how confidentiality was to be maintained, the fact they did not have to participate, and provided the researchers details.

## Chapter Four - Evaluation Findings

### Training participants

There were a total of 178 participants who completed both the pre and post evaluation forms over 11 sessions of the training. The number of participants on each session ranged from 10 to 19 with an average of 16. In order to preserve the confidentiality of those completing the questionnaires, we asked for participants' job title, but not which organisation they worked for. While the exact nature of each job role cannot be determined from the evaluation forms, the majority (80%) can be assigned to a relevant group.

**Table 1 - Participants Job Role and Sector**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Job Role</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Local Authority Housing	Benefits/Revenues Officer	14
	Housing	22
Criminal Justice	Police	13
	CPS	3
	Youth Justice	4
Health	Counsellors	7
	GP	3
	CPN	1
	Health Visitor	16
	Nurse	6
	Occupational Therapist	2
Children's Services	Children's Centre/Family Support	28
	Social worker	14
Adult Services	Project/support worker	10
Education	Head Teacher	1

The remaining participants who do not appear in this table had a job title which cannot be confidently assigned to a particular sector. Despite this, it is clear that a wide range of participants are attending the training, and as a result, there is greater

opportunity for good practice to be disseminated more widely. This is particularly encouraging considering the training in all three areas (Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire) is primarily funded by the Local Authority and advertised through them. The fact that the training is multi-professional also links to the strategic aims of all three counties, where multi-agency partnership working is identified as a key priority.

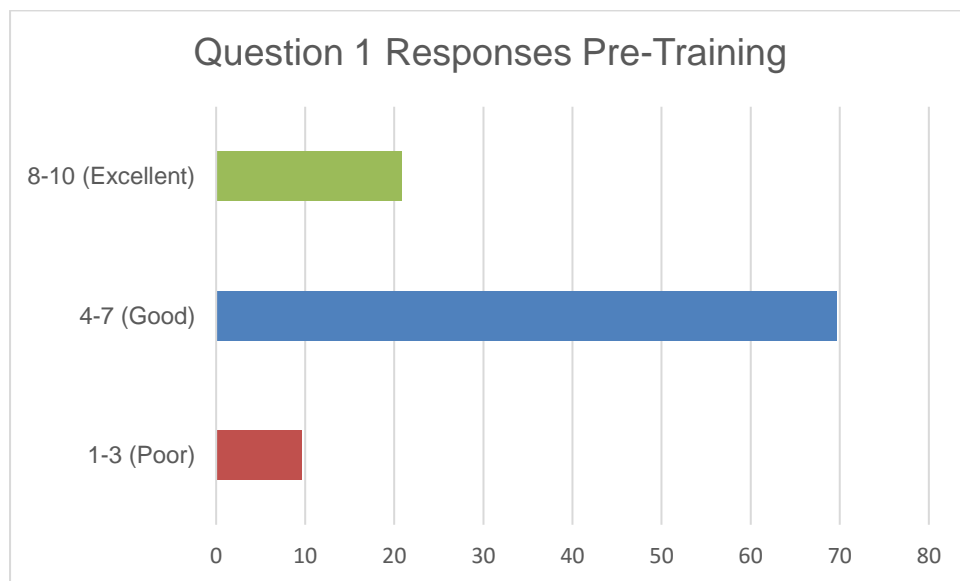
### The Responses

Respondents were asked to rate their response to each question from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent). The following tables show the percentage of participants rating their responses to each question both pre and post the training.

#### Question 1

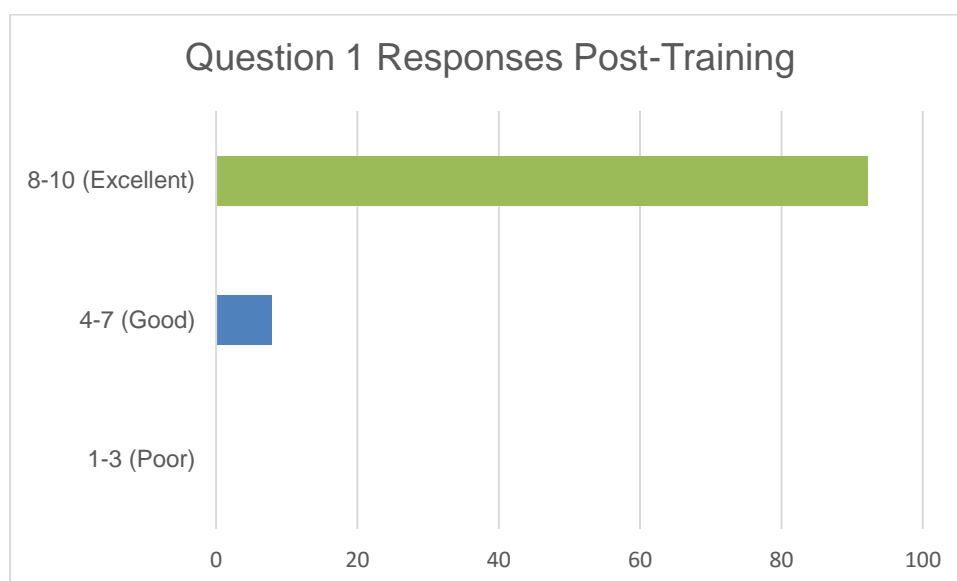
Pre training - How do you rate your current understanding of domestic abuse?

Figure 1 - Question 1 Responses Pre-Training



Post training – How do you rate your level of understanding of domestic abuse now you have attended the training?

Figure 2 - Question 1 Responses Post-Training



It is interesting that only 10% of participants felt they had a 'poor' knowledge of domestic abuse prior to commencing the training, yet there was a clear increase in knowledge of all participants with over 90% rating their knowledge as 'excellent' after the two days. From the list of job roles cited above, the majority are likely to be dealing with domestic abuse on a regular basis which may explain their level of understanding. It is also worthy of note that a number of participants made comments on their post evaluation form that they had 'overestimated' their understanding on the first day, and that it was only by doing the training that they realised how little they knew. For example, a Development Officer commented:

*'I was a bit arrogant yesterday and vastly over marked the initial form. I actually knew very little'.*

This suggests that in fact, participants may have learnt more than the above graphs depict.

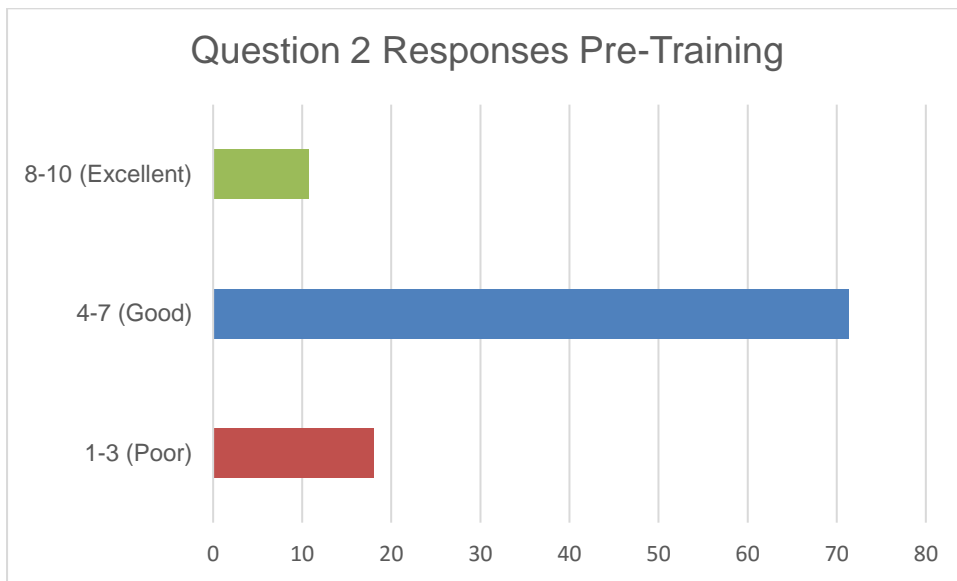
It is also important to highlight that this training is very specific to one form of domestic abuse. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Freedom Programme is based on the Duluth Model which attributes domestic abuse to the abuse of power and control by men over women which is condoned in a patriarchal society. Therefore, the understanding of domestic abuse which participants leave with, is very much focussed on this one dynamic. The trainers are direct about this at the start of the

session, making clear that domestic abuse exists in various forms, but that the focus of this training is male perpetrators and female victim-survivors.

**Question 2**

Pre training - How do you rate your knowledge in identifying the range and pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member?

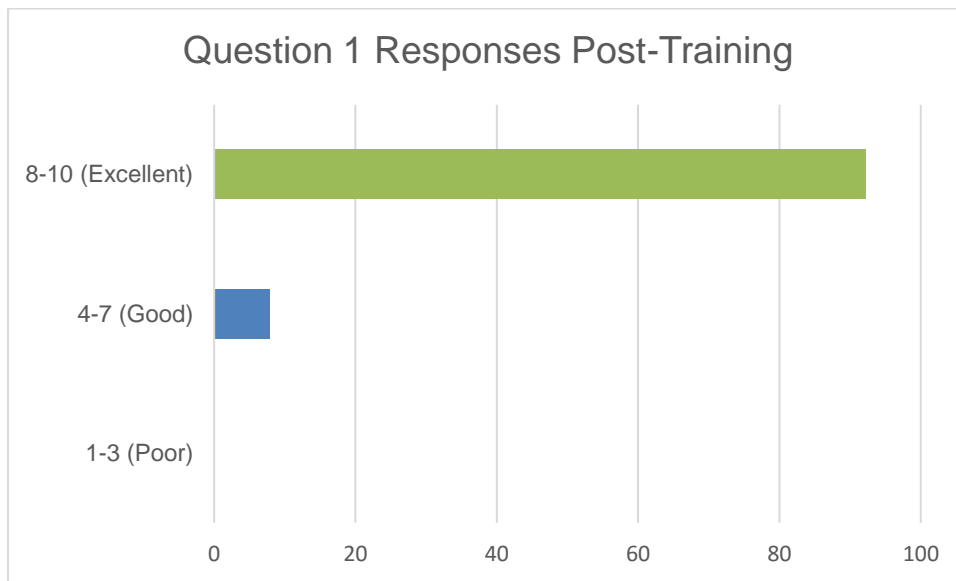
*Figure 3 - Question 2 Responses Pre-Training*



Post training – How do you now rate your knowledge identifying the range and pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member?



Figure 4 - Question 2 Responses Post-Training

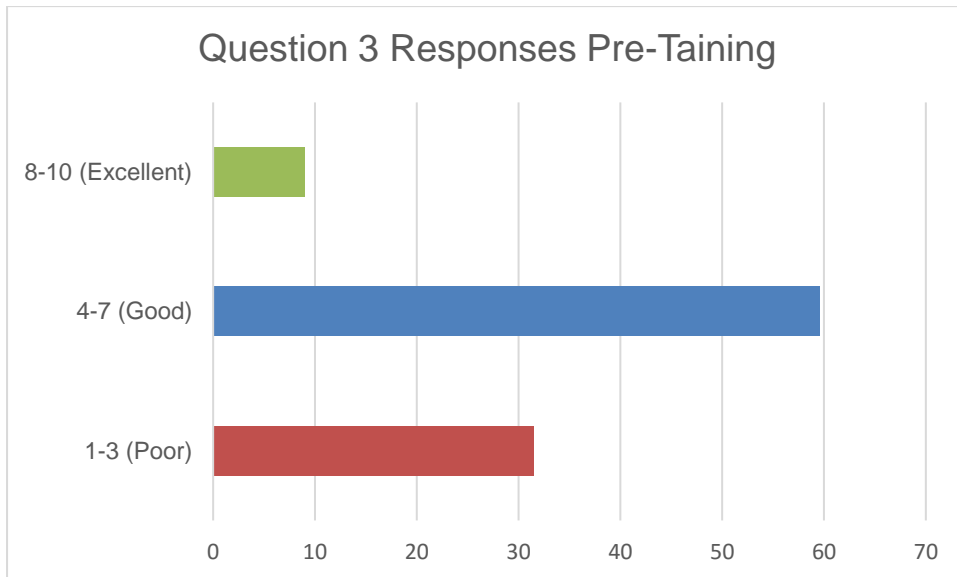


While more participants felt their knowledge in relation to this question was 'poor' prior to the training (18%), over 92% then felt their understanding was 'excellent' at the end of the two days. The nature of perpetrator behaviour forms the fundamental basis of the course, with participants working through the range of behaviours covered in the Freedom Programme. It is not surprising therefore, that participants felt their knowledge in this area had considerably improved.

### Question 3

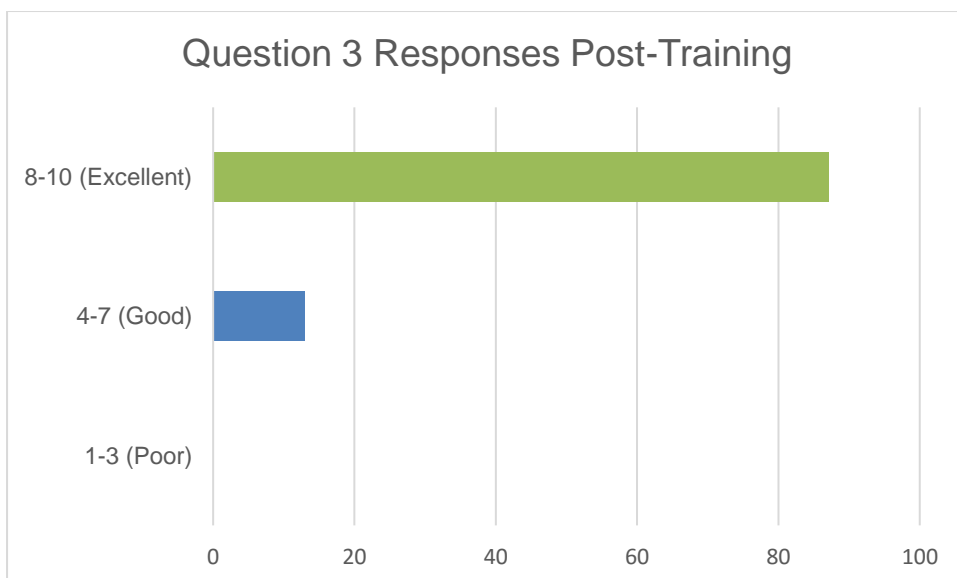
Pre training - What is your level of understanding of the term 'coercive control'?

Figure 5 - Question 3 Responses Pre-Training



Post training – How do you now rate your level of understanding of the term 'coercive control'?

Figure 6 - Question 3 Responses Post-Training



This question has become essential to all training on domestic abuse following the introduction of Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 which created a new

offence of 'coercive control'. The legislation is designed to criminalise behaviour that had previously been unpunishable by the criminal justice system. The types of behaviours this offence may constitute include:

- isolating a person from their friends and family;
- depriving them of their basic needs;
- monitoring their time;
- monitoring a person via online communication tools or using spyware;
- taking control over aspects of their everyday life, such as where they can go, who they can see, what to wear and when they can sleep;
- depriving them of access to support services, such as specialist support or medical services;
- repeatedly putting them down such as telling them they are worthless;
- enforcing rules and activity which humiliate, degrade or dehumanise the victim;
- forcing the victim to take part in criminal activity such as shoplifting, neglect or abuse of children to encourage self-blame and prevent disclosure to authorities;
- financial abuse including control of finances, such as only allowing a person a punitive allowance;
- threats to reveal or publish private information (e.g. threatening to 'out' someone).
- preventing a person from having access to transport or from working.

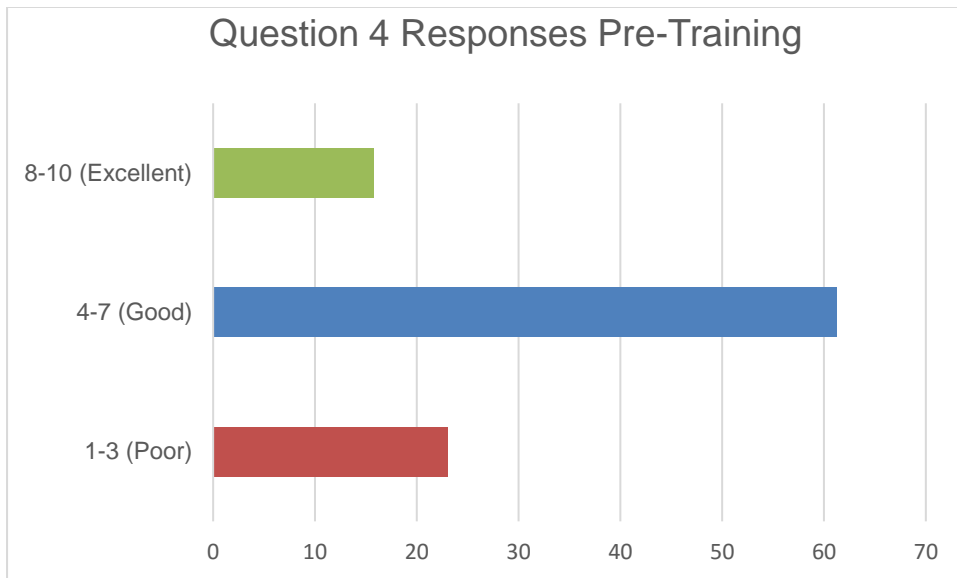
(Home Office, 2015, p.4)

It is particularly interesting, considering the importance of this issue, that over 30% of participants felt their understanding prior to the training was 'poor', but it is encouraging that following the two days, nearly 90% rated their understanding as 'excellent'. As with any new legislation, it takes time for people to understand the nature of the offence, and arguably, if more professionals understand the concept following this training, they will be better placed to inform potential victim-survivors who may then report to the police. Furthermore, as a number of police officers and detectives attended the training, they may have identified additional lines of enquiry as a result of increased understanding.

#### Question 4

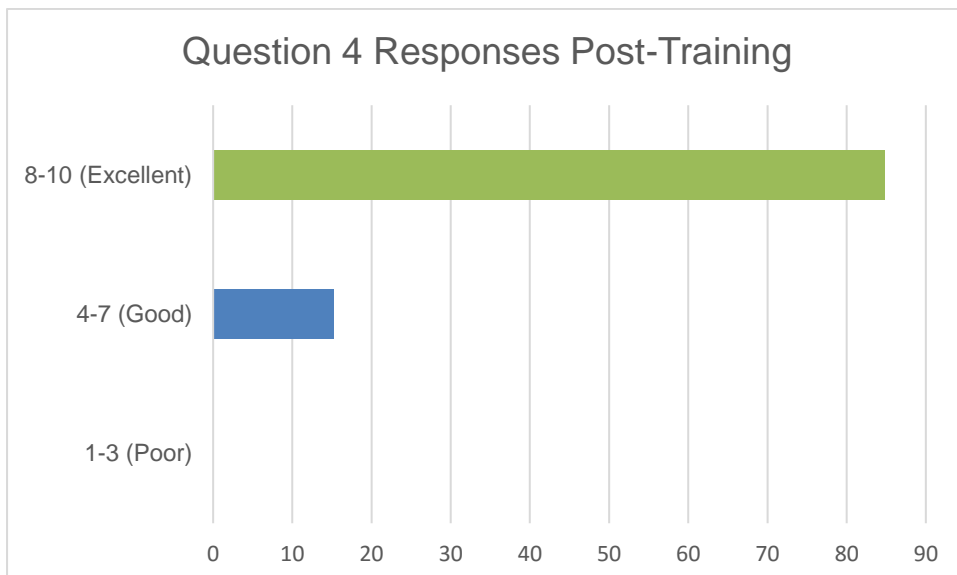
Pre training - How do you rate your confidence in supporting and signposting victims/survivors of domestic abuse?

Figure 7 - Question 4 Responses Pre-Training



Post training – How do you now rate your confidence in support and signposting victims/survivors of domestic abuse?

Figure 8 - Question 4 Responses Post-Training



The issue of confidence is interesting, but unfortunately can be difficult to define. Over 75% of participants already rated their confidence in supporting victim-survivors as 'good' or 'excellent' prior to the training, but this had increased to 100% following

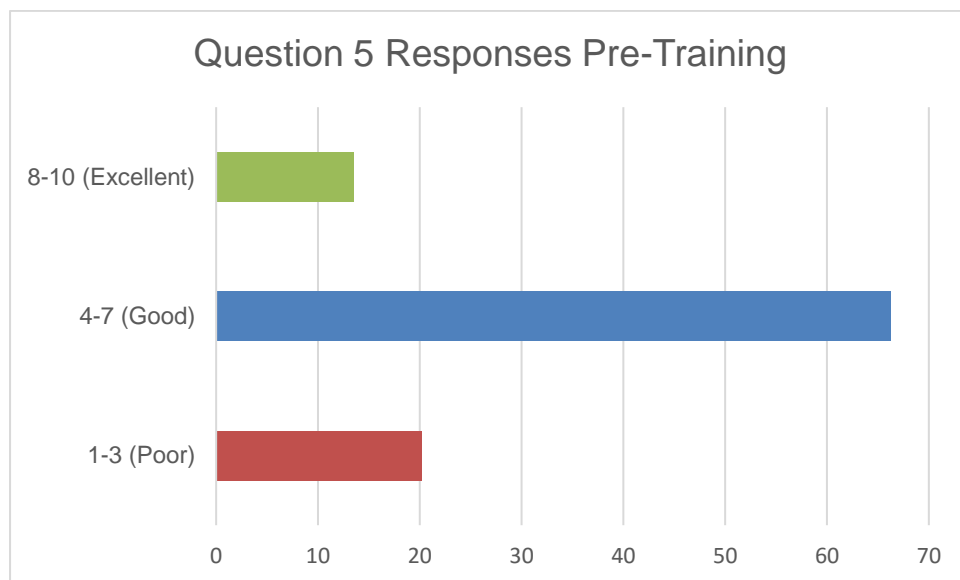
the two days. Confidence, here, is likely to be related to how often participants come into contact with victim-survivors or perpetrators of domestic violence – the more someone deals with the issue, the more likely that they will feel able to respond.

Importantly, however, the fact that 85% of participants rate their confidence as ‘excellent’ following the training suggests that these professionals may now reach a greater number of victim-survivors as they will feel able to broach the subject and know where to signpost.

### Question 5

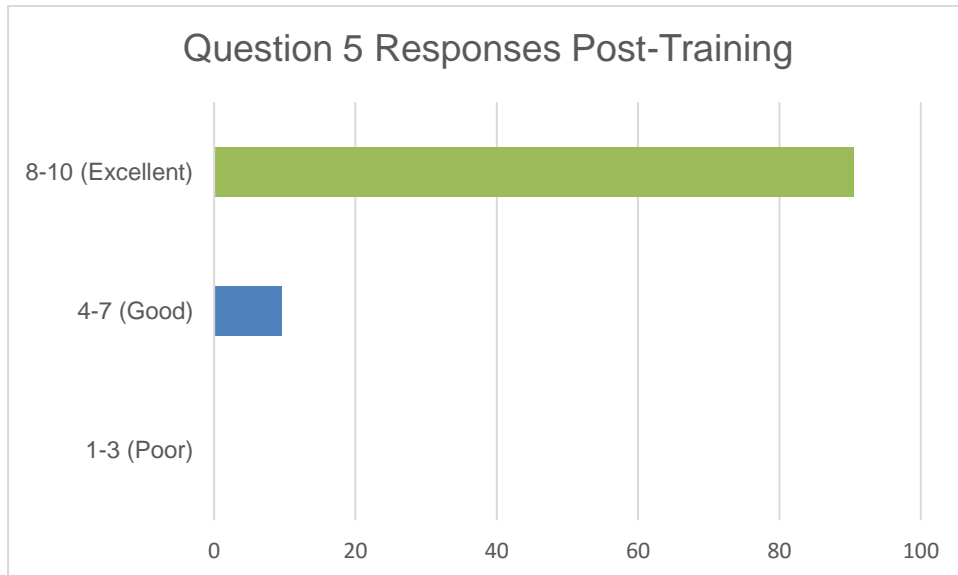
Pre training - How do you rate your awareness of the tactics used by the perpetrator to control a partner through the use of children – particularly post-separation?

Figure 9 - Question 5 Responses Pre-Training



Post training – How do you now rate your awareness of the tactics used by the perpetrator to control a partner through the use of children – particularly post-separation?

Figure 10- Question 5 Responses Post-Training

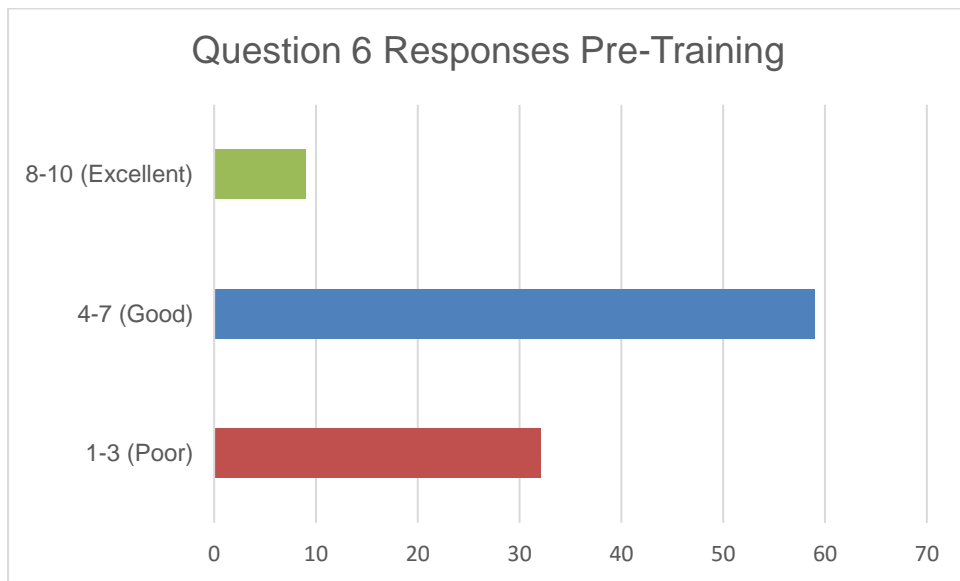


As with previous questions, there was a clear shift in awareness at the end of the two day training – with only 13% feeling their awareness was ‘excellent’ prior to the training, yet this increased to 90% at the post evaluation. The issue of child contact is particularly difficult in the context of domestic abuse. Hester (2011) has referred to the ‘Three Planet Model’ whereby those involved in child contact have very different priorities to those involved in child protection – the result being that women are told by children’s services to leave their abusive partner or risk losing the children, only to be told by a family court judge some months later that they must facilitate contact between the child and the perpetrator. This anomaly is particularly difficult for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, and so the more those involved in child protection understand this issue, the more informed their response can be.

### Question 6

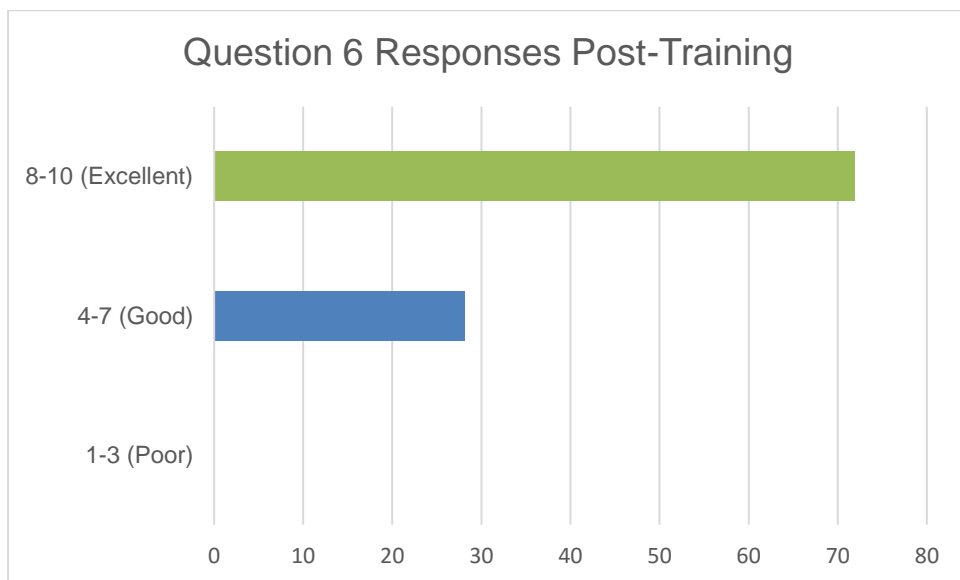
Pre training - How you would rate your knowledge of the specialist services within the county to support both you and victim/survivors?

Figure 11 - Question 6 Responses Pre-Training



Post training – How would you now rate your knowledge of the specialist services within the county to support both you and victim/survivors?

Figure 12 - Question 6 Responses Post-Training



Interestingly, this question received the worst response from participants both pre and post the training, with over 32% feeling their knowledge of specialist services was 'poor' prior to the training, and just over 70% rating their knowledge as 'excellent' following the training. Upon speaking to the trainer, it became apparent that across the three counties, there are very different approaches to providing this

information. In Worcestershire for example, the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence produces a comprehensive pack with details of all relevant services as well as information about domestic and sexual abuse in general. This may account for the fact that 80% of Worcestershire participants rated their response to this question as 'excellent' following the training.

Warwickshire provide a two page handout with details of relevant services, whereas Shropshire advise participants to refer to the Local Authority website. It is perhaps not surprising that only 47% of Shropshire participants rated their response to this question as 'excellent' following the course. While this issue is outside the control of the trainer, it is important for the Local Authorities to consider whether they could provide more accessible information to professionals who are likely to be signposting victim-survivors to relevant services.

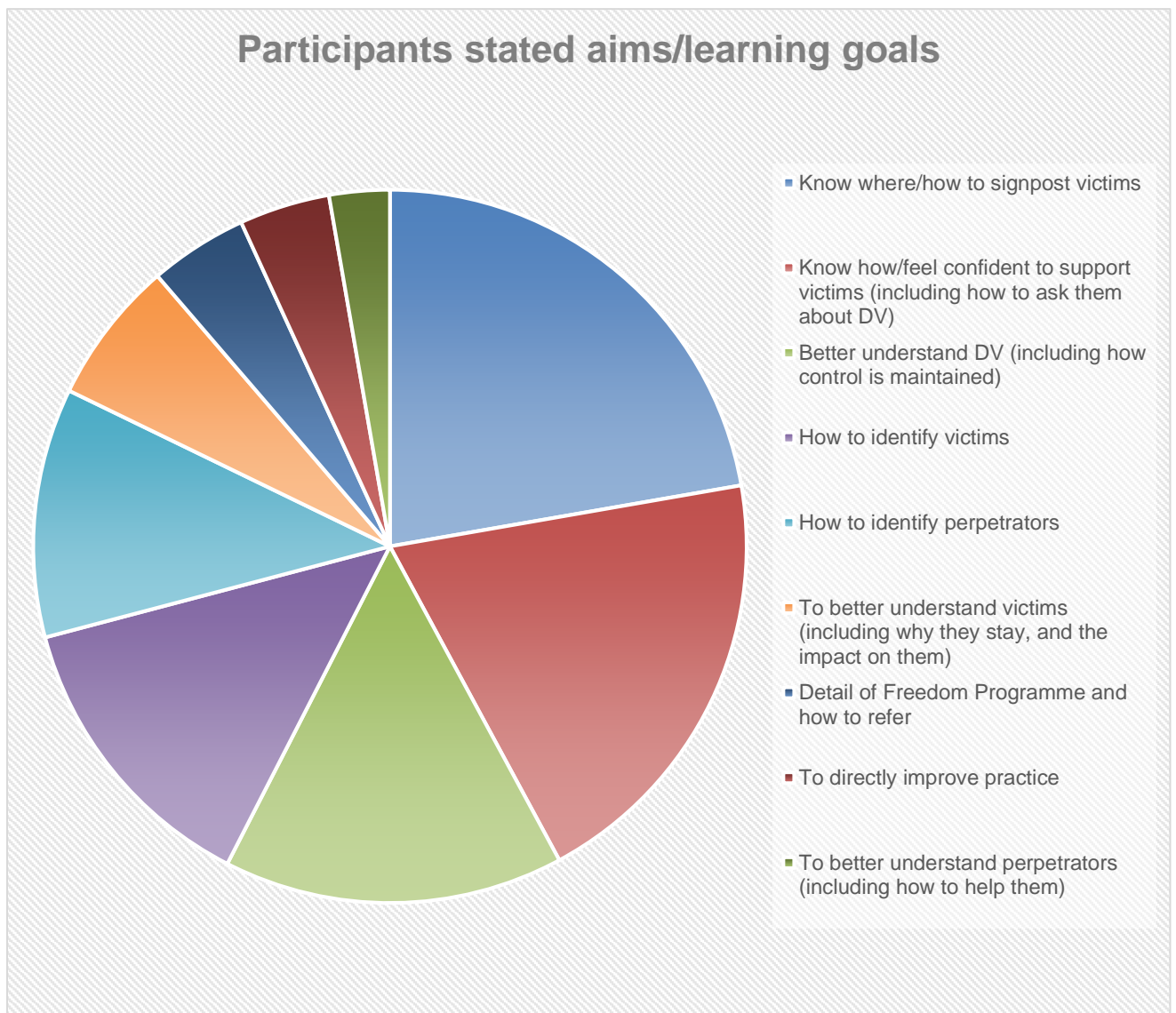
### **Question 7**

What are your personal learning goals? What do you really want to learn/be able to do with more confidence as a result of this training?

There were a number of themes to emerge relating to participants aims of the training (as recorded at the start of the first day). Of the 174 responses (out of 178 participants), the most prevalent aim was a desire to know more about specialist agencies that are available to support victim/survivors and how to access them. This was followed by the aim of knowing how, or feeling confident to, support victim-survivors effectively.



Figure 13 - Participants stated aims/learning goals



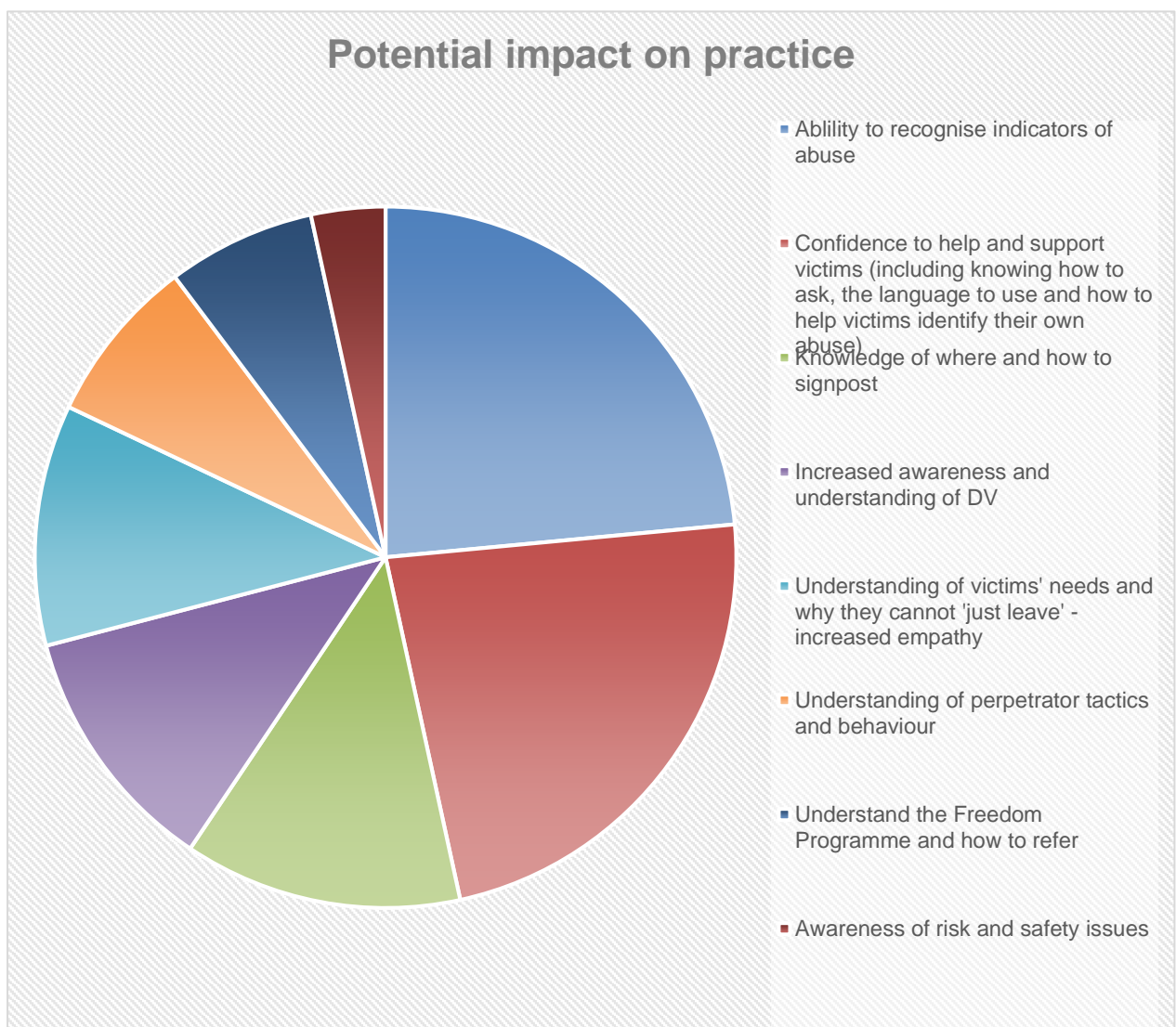
The responses to this question suggest that the most common goals for participants were knowing how to speak to victim-survivors and where to signpost them to. These are very practical aims and suggest that ultimately, participants want to be able to 'help'. It is interesting that more participants expressed a desire to better understand victim-survivors than those wanting to better understand perpetrators – the reasons behind this are unknown but this may be a reflection of the fact that the majority of organisations dealing with domestic abuse are focussed on the victim-survivors as opposed to the perpetrator.

### Question 7 (Post)

If you think this training will change/enhance your professional practice, please say how.

Of those who responded to this question (176 of the 178 participants) all of them felt the training would have an impact on their practice. The most common response was for participants to feel that following the training, they would be better able to recognise indicators of abuse. Importantly, a significant number of participants reported feeling their practice would be enhanced as they now felt more confident to help and support victim-survivors – some of the sub-themes here related to them now knowing how to ask a potential victim/survivor and the most appropriate language to use, as well as knowing how to help victim/survivors identify the abuse they were experiencing.

Figure 14 - Potential impact on practice



While it is encouraging that a number of participants felt the training had given them an increased understanding of perpetrator tactics and behaviour, there is a potential issue in that some commented they could now 'identify' a perpetrator. For example, a Home Support Officer, commented:

*'Definitely, now aware of signs to look for (along with control and power) to recognise a dominator'.*

A word of caution may be needed here, in that this programme is looking at abuse in the context of male perpetrators and female victims, and so professionals need to be alert to the fact that perpetrators come in many shapes and sizes and they risk silencing the victim-survivors of 'alternative' perpetrators if they focus too narrowly on a patriarchal male dominator.

Despite this, it is undeniable from the responses to this question, that participants felt the training would have a significant impact on their practice, as evidenced in the below quotes.

**Participant Quotes:**

*'Just by listening to real life experiences by survivors has given me more confidence to help identify abuse and support victims' (Social Worker)*

*'I thought I knew a lot about dv previously but I now know a lot more. I feel able to help/support my clients appropriately with my increased understanding' (Health Visitor)*

*'I thought I had a good understanding of my safeguarding role but I feel that I have learnt a lot about how I can provide a better service'. (Domestic Abuse Risk Officer – Police)*

*'It has really made me think and question my perspectives and way I practice'. (Community Mental Health Nurse)*

*'As my role is to write pre-sentence reports, this training will enhance my assessment skills - what to look out for will influence risk. This in turn may help to influence sentencing and intervention in the right direction'. (Probation Officer)*

*'I feel I would be more confident to start the conversation and more able to see/hear the client'. (Neighbourhood Officer)*

*'I had a poor understanding of domestic abuse before this course. I feel that I now have the knowledge and skills about domestic abuse to support the women I work with at a much greater level'. (Early Years Family Support Worker)*

### **Question 8**

Did the training meet/exceed your learning goals? If so, please say how. If the training failed to meet your learning goals, please describe how.

For those who responded to this question (174 of 178), 168 participants (97%) stated that the training had fully met or exceeded their learning goals. There were 3 participants who felt the training had 'partially' or 'mostly' met their initial aims, and a further 3 participants did not state either way if the training had met their needs, but they did make suggestions.

For 2 of those who stated the training had partially met their aims, the reasons were related to discovering that there was a lack of services available as opposed to there being something missing from the training. The third person, however, commented that they would have liked more information regarding the impact of domestic violence on children.

A small number of recommendations were made by participants in answer to this question. These were as follows: more information regarding why perpetrators abuse; more opportunity to share examples of practice; discussion of other types of abuse (i.e. elderly parent abused by adult child); to see how each agency has involvement; hear the account of a victim-survivor.

It is worth noting however, that some of these suggestions were commented on by other participants as having been present in the training. The issue of hearing a victim-survivor account related to one session where a video clip could not be shown due to IT issues.

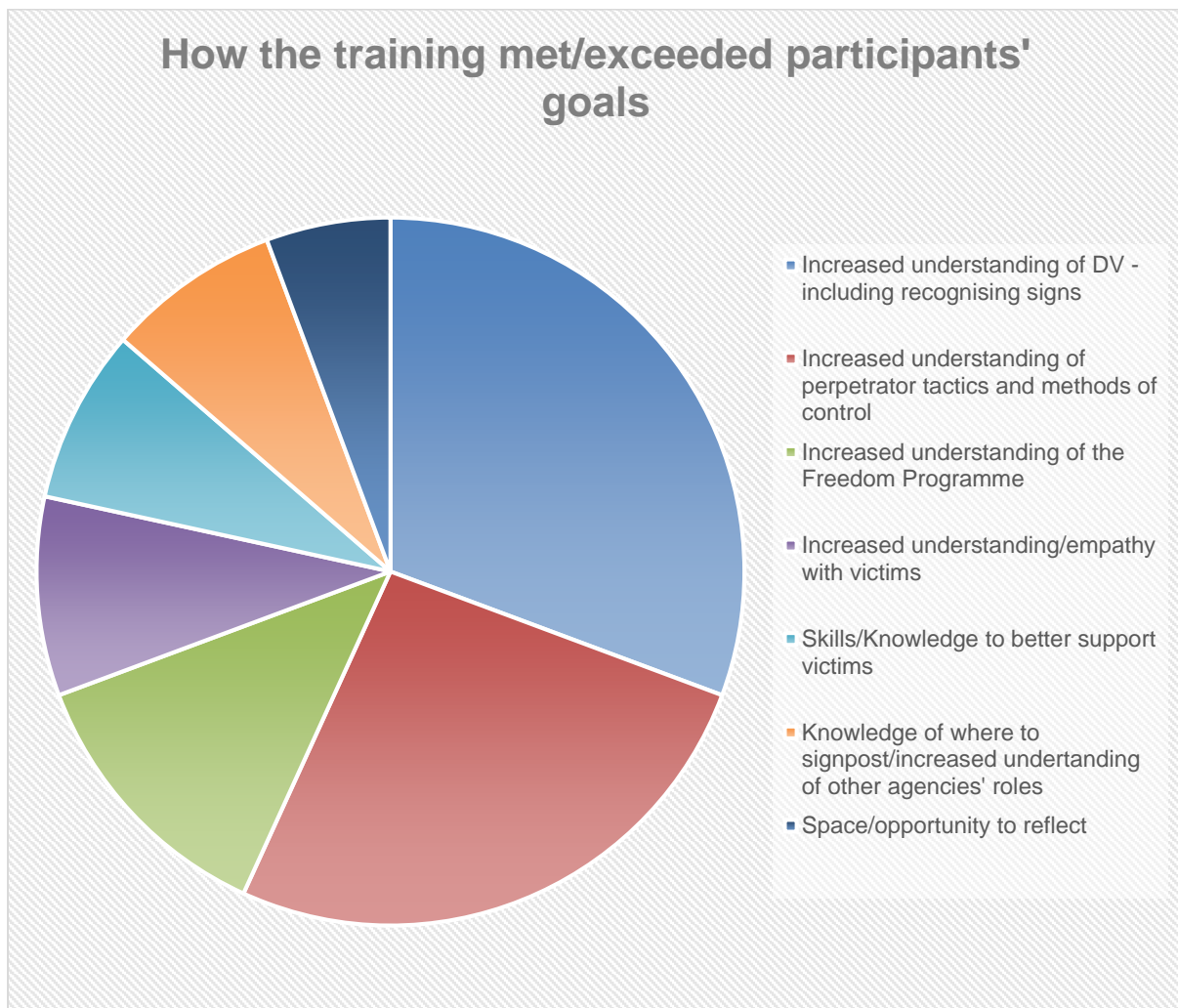
In terms of *how* participants felt the training had met or exceeded their goals, a number of themes emerged. The most common of these was the fact that the

training had increased their understanding of domestic abuse, including how to recognise the signs.

It is encouraging to see that a number of respondents felt the training had given them an increased empathy with victim-survivors and that they could understand why it was so difficult to leave. Having discussed this with the trainer, this outcome is not only the result of having a victim-survivor co-delivering every session, but also due to the fact participants are taken through the Freedom Programme as women would be.

It is interesting that a common theme to emerge was 'space and time to reflect'. This course is run over 2 days and despite pressure to reduce it to 1 day, the trainer has resisted this due to her belief that in order for participants to really learn from experience, they need the space and time of 2 days. This clearly constitutes a resource issue for organisations, however, the fact that the training has a lengthy waiting list in all counties, suggests organisations are willing to release their staff for the required time.

Figure 15 - How the training met/exceeded participants' learning goals



**Participant Quotes:**

*'One thing I will take away which helped to exceed my goal was 'perpetrators of DA won't gain any help from anger management' this will be fed back to my team'.  
(Social Worker)*

*'Most definitely exceeded my learning goals. I had an 'ok' understanding prior to the course but what I have learnt these past few days takes this to the next level!!  
Excellent and invaluable'. (Health Visitor)*

*'Exceeded my learning goals. In all areas I would be a 10 however I feel no-one knows everything and you are always learning'. (Youth Justice Worker)*

*'I had been told by other colleagues that have been on it already that it was really good but I personally feel it is the best training I have ever done in 36 years of being at work'. (Benefits Assessor)*

*'I have been on several dv courses. This is the very best, in knowledge, information and transferable to practice'. (Counsellor)*

*'Best training course I have attending during my 12 ½ year police career. I have learnt things that I will use daily'. (Police Officer)*

*'Came in clueless, went out knowledgeable'. (Housing Enforcement Officer)*

### **Question 9**

Did the trainer's delivery style assist your learning? If so, please say how. If not, please say what the trainer could have done differently.

As with the previous question, there were 174 responses (out of 178). Of these, 168 (97%) stated that the trainers delivery did assist their learning. Of the 6 who did not state definitively if the trainer's style had assisted their learning, none of them made any negative comment about the delivery style, rather they made suggestions about what they would have liked, including being shown video clips and having more time for discussion.

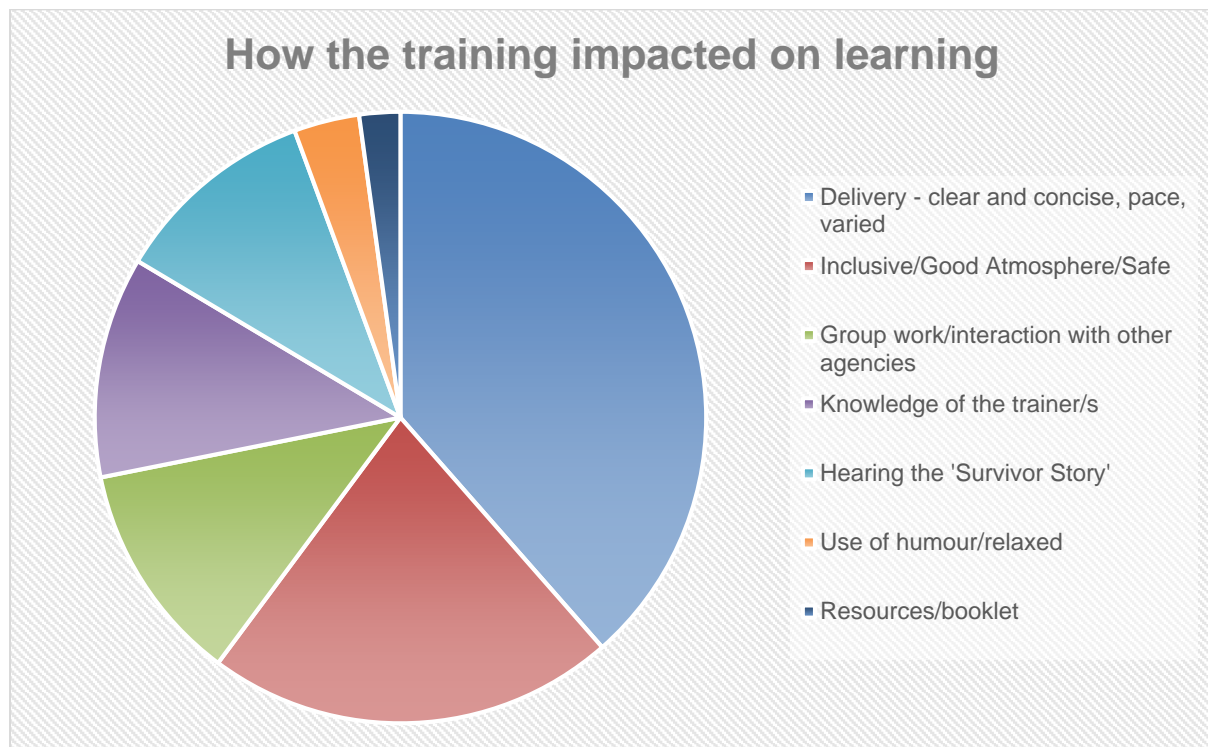
There were a small number of suggestions made by other participants, which mainly focussed on the need for video clips to be shown (again, all relating to the one session where there were IT issues). Two people commented on the room being too hot and cramped, one felt the pace was too slow for them, and one stated that the trainers should be clear from the start that this training relates to female victim-survivors and male perpetrators of abuse – something the trainers advise they do.

In analysing the responses to this question further, several themes emerged to show *how* participants felt the trainers' delivery had impact on their learning.

The responses to this question suggest that not only did practical issues impact on their learning, such as group work, resources and a varied delivery, but just as

important were less tangible factors, including a safe and inclusive atmosphere and the use of humour. It was clear from the responses that participants benefitted from the extensive knowledge of the trainers and felt they were allowed to ask anything without being judged. This is potentially an explanation for how involved participants were in the training and why they feel they gained so much.

Figure 16 - How the training impacted on learning



**Participant Quotes:**

*'Kay was very open and friendly creating a pleasant learning atmosphere. Julie's story was inspirational and informative. (Social Worker)*

*'It was done with humour, sensitivity and experience. Powerful ways to get messages across'. (Social Worker)*

*'Yes, clear and concise delivery. Obviously very knowledgeable and very engaging. Straight to the point and direct approach successful in helping content to be absorbed'. (Social Worker)*



*‘Engaging - able to direct the session depending on group discussion. Everyone was involved and I’m sure everyone has been enlightened’. (Doctor)*

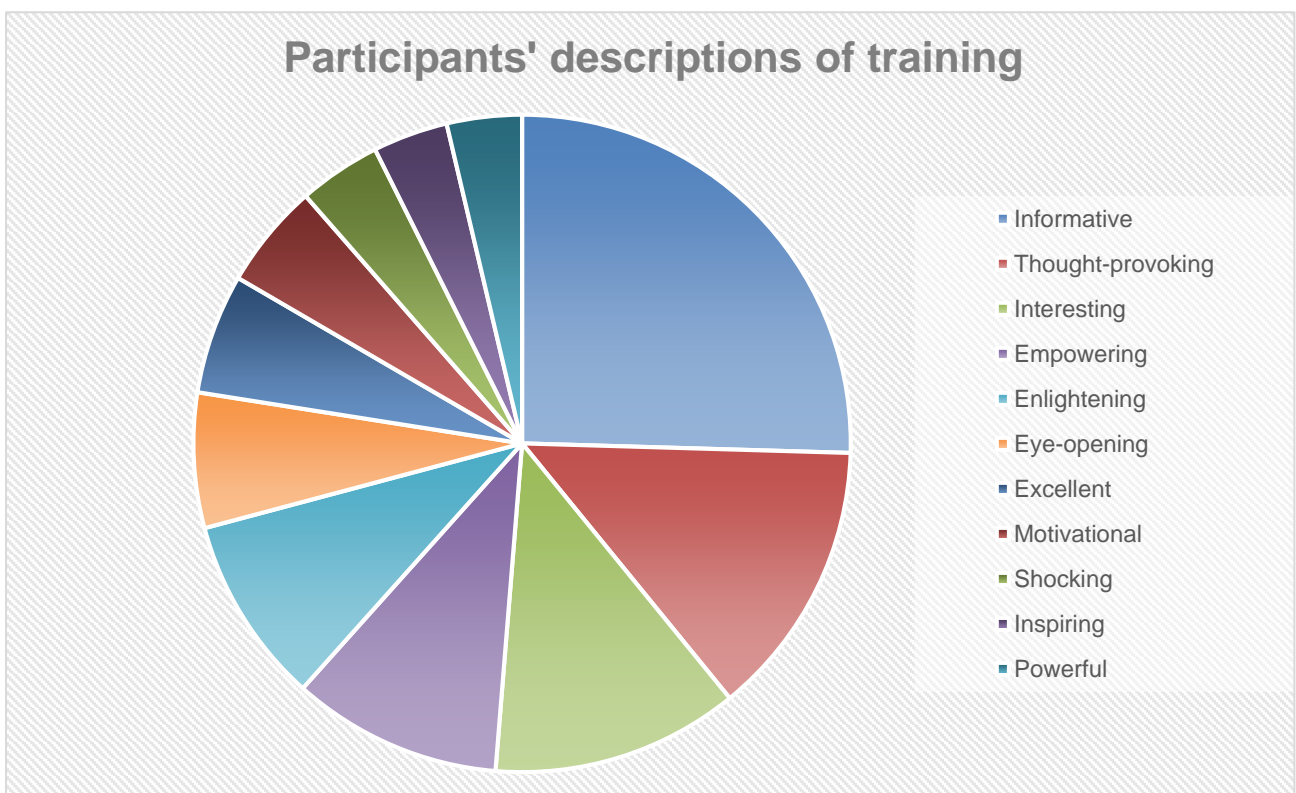
*‘Very good use of group work, video footage, outside speakers. I enjoyed every minute of it’. (Health Visitor)*

*‘Everyone’s opinion/suggestion and comment valued’. (Health Visitor)*

### Question 10

The final question asked participants to choose three words to describe the training. There were a high number of common responses as shown in the chart below. All of the words used were positive regarding the training – however, some words relating to the content may appear less so. For example, the word ‘shocking’ was used by 11 people, and the word ‘scary’ used by 2 people. Several of the participants using words such as this further clarified that it was the prevalence of domestic abuse they found ‘shocking’ or ‘scary’ as opposed to the training. Interestingly, 6 participants stated that the training was ‘life-changing’, with 3 suggesting that they would approach parenting their children differently.

*Figure 17 - Participants’ descriptions of training*



These descriptions of the training are evidence of the impact it had. The fact that so many commented that they felt 'empowered' suggests delegates were motivated to put their new learning into practice.

## Chapter Five – Conclusion

The aim of this evaluation was to establish the extent and nature of the impact the two day training on professionals. As discussed in Chapter Three, the evaluation consisted of a pre and post evaluation form to determine the distance travelled by participants over the two days. Questions were also asked to determine how the participants felt the training would impact on their practice, and what it was about the delivery of the training that assisted their learning (or not).

In terms of the learning outcomes set by KMC Training, it is clear from the evaluation that participants feel they have acquired knowledge in each of these areas.

*Greater ability to identify the range and pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member.* Respondents who felt their knowledge of this particular issue was ‘excellent’ prior to the training was only 10%, however this had increased to 92% at the end of the two days. Furthermore, when asked how they felt this training would impact on their practice, a significant number of participants commented that they now had the ability to identify indicators of abuse, that they understood domestic abuse more fully and that they could now better understand perpetrator tactics and behaviour.

*Deeper understanding of the victim’s level of fear and the impact this has on them, their children, family, social and work life.* It was encouraging to see evidence of participants increased empathy with victim-survivors in response to two separate questions. A number of delegates stated that their practice would be impacted on because they now better understood victim-survivors and why they could not just leave. Furthermore, when asked how the training had met or exceeded their goals, one of the more common themes was an increased empathy with victim-survivors. This issue corresponds with recommendations made by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2014) who specified the different levels of training necessary for health and social care staff. In outlining the components of Level 2 training, they suggest that: “Staff should also be able to respond with empathy and understanding, assess someone's immediate safety and offer referral to specialist services” (NICE, 2014). From the responses in this evaluation, it would appear that this training meets the requirements for Level 2.

*Greater understanding of perpetrator tactics thereby reducing the risk of unwittingly colluding with a perpetrator.* This learning goal is reflected in a number of the questions in the evaluation. When asked about their understanding of coercive control, only 15% of respondents felt their knowledge was 'excellent' prior to the training, however, at the end of the two days, this had increased to 85%. The very nature of coercive control requires perpetrators to manipulate the victim-survivor and those around them (including professionals). Therefore, the more participants understand the techniques of manipulation, the better placed they are to avoid this. In addition, 'understanding perpetrator tactics and behaviour' emerged as a theme when asked how the training would impact on their practice. It also emerged as a theme when asked how the training had met or exceeded their learning goals – suggesting professionals were far more attuned to the possible tactics used by perpetrators following the two day course. The importance of this increased understanding was highlighted by CAADA who issued guidance around coercive control in 2014 – specifically around the MARAC process - suggesting professionals needed to 'ensure that they are not unwittingly colluding with the perpetrator' (CAADA, 2014).

*Greater awareness of the tactics used by a perpetrator to control a partner through the use of the children -particularly post separation.* Only 14% of participants rated their knowledge of this issue as 'excellent' prior to the training, however, this had increased to 90% by the end of the course. Some comments in the evaluation suggested that participants had not considered this issue before the training but that they were now more aware – in particular of the impact it may have on children.

In addition to the learning outcomes set by the trainers, this course can also be seen to contribute to a number of the strategic aims for domestic abuse across Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire.

Common across all three counties is a focus on prevention and awareness raising.

- Prevention of Violence - Challenging attitudes and behaviours which foster domestic abuse and sexual violence and intervening early where possible to prevent it (Worcestershire)

- Preventing violence against women and girls from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it (Warwickshire)
- To further increase and develop awareness generally about domestic violence and abuse and the measures in place to help the victims (Shropshire)

This course is contributing to the aim of prevention by increasing professionals understanding and awareness of domestic abuse with 92% of delegates rating their understanding of domestic abuse as excellent following the two days. Furthermore, when asked how the training would impact on their practice, the most common themes related to better understanding domestic abuse and being able to recognise indicators. The fact that more professionals left the training with a comprehensive understanding of domestic abuse, means they are in a position to share this knowledge with colleagues, friends and family, which will ultimately contribute to challenging attitudes and behaviours.

A second strategic aim across the three counties is that of partnership and multi-agency working:

- Partnership Working - Working in partnership to obtain the best outcomes for victims and their families
- Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families
- To develop and deliver a high-quality, coordinated multiagency response to domestic violence and abuse

One of the key strengths of this course is the fact it is delivered in a multi-agency setting. When asked how the training style had impacted on learning, the third most common theme related to the benefits of group work and interaction with other agencies. Participants also commented on the fact they better understood other agencies' role when asked how the training had met or exceeded their goals. It is clear from speaking to the lead trainer that the course is structured to ensure participants work with people from different organisations and that they work with different people throughout the two days. This is likely to lead to increased

understanding between agencies which creates the opportunity for more effective partnership working.

The training can also be seen to contribute to two further strategic aims. The first relates to support for victim-survivors:

- Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims where violence does occur (Warwickshire)
- To improve services and support for all victims of domestic violence and abuse (Shropshire)

When asked how confident they felt to support/signpost victim/survivors of domestic abuse, only 15% rated their confidence as 'excellent' prior to the training. However, at the end of the two days, this had increased to 85%. This increased confidence has the potential to improve the service that victim-survivors receive from a wide range of organisations (whose primary role is not necessarily related to domestic abuse). In 2015 SafeLives (formerly CAADA) published a report called 'Getting it right first time'. In their research they found that:

85% of victims sought help five times on average from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse. Regardless of whether the contact was about the abuse, each contact represents a chance for us to help the victim disclose and get help – a chance that was missed, leaving the family to live with abuse for longer (2015).

This shows the importance of all professionals understanding domestic abuse, having the confidence to support victim-survivors, and most importantly, knowing where to signpost them to. It is therefore encouraging that when asked how the training would impact on their practice, the second most common theme was an increased confidence in supporting victim-survivors, including knowing how to ask the question. This directly impacts on the aim of improving services and increases the chance of victim-survivors receiving an appropriate response the first time they disclose. Similarly, 100% of participants rated their knowledge of specialist services as 'good' or 'excellent' following the training, again suggesting victim-survivors may receive a better response from professionals who have attended this training as they know who and how to refer.

The final strategic aim this training can be seen to contribute to is that of risk management:

- Justice Outcomes & Risk Reduction - Taking action to reduce the risk to victims and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice (Worcestershire)
- Taking action to reduce the risk of women and girls who are victims of violence and ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety (Warwickshire)

The fact that police and probation staff attended the training means that they are in a position to use their increased knowledge to identify the risk from perpetrators. For example, a police officer with responsibility for managing domestic abuse offenders stated:

‘I now have a far better understanding of the tactics used by men and can assess their behaviours better’

Similarly, a probation officer explained:

‘As my role is to write pre-sentence reports, this training will enhance my assessment skills - what to look out for will influence risk. This in turn may help to influence sentencing and intervention in the right direction’.

These comments show how criminal justice staff can use learning from the training to make a direct impact on how offenders (and therefore risks) are managed. This issue is reflected in the new Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020 with a recommendation for the police being to: “Ensure training supports officers to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse and that their attitudes and behaviours reflect their knowledge” (Home Office, 2016. P.44)

It is clear from this evaluation that not only does the two day Freedom Programme for Professionals meet its own learning outcomes, but that it also significantly contributes to the strategic aims of prevention, partnership working, improved service

to victim-survivors and risk management as defined by the counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire.

As Chapter Four has identified, participant's knowledge, understanding and confidence is significantly increased following this two day course. Professionals stated their practice would be impacted in a number of ways, mainly through an increased understanding of the issue, ability to identify indicators of abuse and an increased confidence in supporting victim-survivors. The vast majority of delegates felt the training had exceeded their learning goals, with increased understanding of perpetrator behaviour and empathy with victim-survivors emerging as common themes. In terms of how the training is delivered, participant's responses suggest there is something unique about this course, with some commenting it is the best training they have ever attended, and others suggesting it was life-changing. This training is intentionally focussed solely on domestic abuse perpetrated by men against women, and it appears that the knowledge, passion, skills and experience of the trainers, combined with the victim-survivor story is a recipe for success in enabling professionals to better understand the nature and context of an abusive relationship.



## Chapter Six – Recommendations

1. The Freedom Programme for Professionals should continue to be commissioned in the counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire.
2. The counties of Shropshire and Warwickshire should consider producing an information pack for professionals similar to Worcestershire.
3. Professionals from a wider range of organisations should participate on the training to further contribute to the strategic aim of prevention.
4. Consideration should be given to the practicalities of developing a similar session for members of the general public to increase awareness.
5. Increased participation from criminal justice staff could improve the response of these agencies and contribute to the strategic aim of reducing risk in Worcestershire and Warwickshire.
6. As the Freedom Programme is focused on ‘power and control’ and therefore only relevant to male perpetrators and female victim-survivors, consideration should be given to commissioning training that includes different theoretical perspectives that can incorporate a wider range of abusive relationships.
7. Further research should be commissioned to identify how participants implement the learning into their professional roles.
8. Further research should be commissioned to evaluate the Freedom Programme for women in order to increase the evidence base regarding its efficacy.

9. Further research should be commissioned to understand the impact on victim-survivors of participating in this training.

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Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy 2011-2014

## Appendix 1 – Power and Control Wheel



## Appendix 2 – Pre and Post Questionnaire



### Pre-Training Questionnaire

Please fill out the following questionnaire before the training starts.

Training being attended:

**2 DAY FREEDOM PROGRAMME FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKSHOP**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ County: **Worcestershire** **Warwickshire** **Shropshire**

JOB ROLE: \_\_\_\_\_ GENDER **M** **F**

**Please circle the response that best describes you: 1 = POOR, 5 = GOOD, 10 = EXCELLENT**

**1. How do you rate your current level of understanding of domestic abuse?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**2. How do you rate your knowledge in identifying the range and pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**3. What is your level of understanding of the term 'coercive control'?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**4. How do you rate your confidence in supporting and signposting victims / survivors of domestic abuse?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**5. How do you rate your awareness of the tactics used by the perpetrator to control a partner through the use of the children-particularly post separation?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**6. How would you rate your knowledge of the specialist services within the county to support both you and victims/survivors?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**7. What are your personal learning goals? What do you really want to learn /be able to do with more confidence as a result of this training ? Be specific, with a maximum of 3- (if you can only list 1, that's perfectly OK)**

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**PLEASE HAND THIS FORM TO YOUR TRAINER ONCE COMPLETED.**

**THANK YOU!**



## Post Training Questionnaire

Training being attended:

**2 DAY FREEDOM PROGRAMME FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKSHOP**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ County: Worcestershire    Warwickshire    Shropshire

JOB ROLE: \_\_\_\_\_ GENDER    M    F

**Please circle the response that best describes you: 1 = POOR 5 = GOOD 10=EXCELLENT**

**1. How do you rate your level of understanding of domestic abuse now you have attended the training?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**2. How do you now rate your knowledge in identifying the range and pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**3. How do you now rate your level of understanding of the term 'coercive' control'?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**4. How do you now rate your confidence in supporting and signposting victims / survivors of domestic abuse?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**5. How do you now rate your awareness of the tactics used by the perpetrator to control a partner through the use of the children-particularly post separation?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**6. How would you now rate your knowledge of the specialist services within the county to support both you and victims/survivors?**

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

**7. If you think this training will change/enhance your professional practice, please say how**

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**8. Did the training meet/ exceed your learning goals? If so please say how. If the training failed to meet your goals please describe how.**

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**9. Did the trainer's delivery style assist your learning? If so, please say how. If not, please say what the trainer could have done differently.**

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**10. Please find three words to describe this training.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!-THE SUPPORTWORKS FOUNDATION'S TRAINING TEAM .**

