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Turning the Tide

A national and local coordinated approach to addressing domestic violence in the United Kingdom

Jane Drumm

Acknowledgements

This is a very small country and this can limit the 'gene pool' generating new ideas. Opportunities to take time out and travel to observe the practice of innovative programmes in other countries, is therefore invaluable. It allows for discussions, experiential observations and reflection time, leading to much better informed recommendations, which are never possible from simply reading about a project in printed material.

I would like to thank the New Zealand Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, the New Zealand Police and the Minister of Internal Affairs' Discretionary Fund for making this trip possible. I am extremely grateful for the chance to visit the United Kingdom in 2006, as I learnt an enormous amount of value. I hope that this report, further reports and conversations, will lead to New Zealand adopting ideas which I am confident will lead to a considerable reduction in this country's shameful domestic violence statistics.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Chief Superintendent Elizabeth Preece, who was a generous and welcoming host to me when I visited Leeds.

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People and Organisations Visited

Even to the most casual newspaper reader it must be obvious that this country has a very serious problem with domestic violence in all its forms. Hardly a day goes by without something being reported on the subject, all too frequently describing horrific injuries to women and children resulting in death or hospitalisation. Research published, as part of an international World Health Organisation survey, by Dr Janet Fanslow in 2004, found that one in three New Zealand women have been abused by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The co-relationship between partner abuse and child abuse is estimated to be somewhere between 45% and 60%.

Families living in misery and fear need us to be the best we can be. New Zealand is a very small country and most of the agencies working in this field are also very small. For this reason we need to seek new ideas from the outside world to build on the expertise and local knowledge we have here. As a result of a previous study trip to the United States and Canada (Cathay Pacific Travel Award) the agency took a massive step up in our response to the health sector, volunteer management and training, services for children witnessing violence, partnership with statutory child protection social workers and partnerships with police.

Preventing Violence in the Home is now much bigger than all the other domestic violence specialist community agencies in New Zealand. The agency provides a large range of services, and I wanted to see how we could enhance these or add to them. At the time of my trip, we were poised to start a local specialist family violence court, and as I have a previous justice background I was very interested in this and other criminal justice initiatives. This agency provides a corporate response to domestic violence, DVFree, which has taken a long time to get any traction.

In the United Kingdom, a coalition of businesses had formed a 'Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence', which I was interested in finding out more about. A major focus of the agency is crisis and practical advocacy and we have strong formal relationships with local hospitals, Child, Youth and Family Services and police (including having staff working on site with each of these organisations). At a national level I have been involved in collaborating on the development of national strategies and I sit on national steering committees.

Therefore, I was interested in wide range of different aspects of how different groups within the United Kingdom were working on domestic violence. I wanted to know what is making a measurable difference and how do they know. This is a small country, with a big problem and tiny amounts of funding for the not for profit sector. To get cut through, we have to make the best use of this country's limited resources.

Initially an objective had been to visit organisations working with child victims as there are few New Zealand crisis response services available to children who are traumatised by the violence they see in their homes. Preventing Violence in the Home does provide a service for these children and it is important that agencies like ours keep on improving our programmes. Unfortunately, I was not able to find a similar type of programme prior to my departure and although I heard about and visited other child focussed programmes these had little similarity with our Child Crisis Team.

The two areas of work that I planned my trip around was firstly, ideas on how to assist mothers and children to develop strategies to get out of violent situations safely. Secondly, I wanted to look at multi-agency approaches to developing a systemic and collaborative response, built on close working relationships and information sharing, with the result that victims get the assistance they need and institutional barriers are identified and removed. In this country many areas have inter-agency forums (we co-ordinate one in Auckland City) but these often struggle with key organisations not being willing to fully engage in developing open collaborative practices, which are essential for consistent and safe service delivery.

I was interested in introducing new practice as a result of this trip, so that the benefits of my study would be practical and tangible. I particularly wanted to see how different programmes actually work in practice, as from my experience, there are often significant differences between how a programme may be described in a report and the way day to day operations are carried out. These difficulties, for instance a problem with a key person, or organisation and the reason why that difficulty is obstructive, or how it is overcome, are often critical to success or failure when trying to replicate something at a distance.

For years I had wanted to go to Leeds as this city seemed to me, on the other side of the world, a major centre of innovation in the way they responded to domestic violence. The two organisations I wanted to visit were the Killingbeck police, which work in an area of Leeds and the Leeds Inter-Agency Project. I had also wanted to visit Dr Liz Kelly, based in London, who has written some extremely influential work on domestic violence, but unfortunately she was not available.

From this initial start, I spent hours and hours on the internet and as I found out about interesting projects and started communicating with people, I asked them who they thought I should visit. I supplied people with a list of different subjects which I was interested in finding out more on, in addition to my two main topics. These subjects included stopping violence programmes, risk assessment, specialist domestic violence courts, children's programmes, crisis advocacy services, police and advocate partnerships. I had found with a previous study trip to the United States of America, that there was enormous value in using the opportunity "*to Hoover up anything not nailed down*" and to be open to learning anything and everything.

This meant I had a very full programme planned out before I left!

The following people very kindly gave me their time and provided invaluable information:

London Meetings

- David Dillnutt, Detective Chief Superintendent, London Metropolitan Police
- Yasman Rehman, Director of Partnerships, London Metropolitan Police
- Diana Barran, of Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA)
- Deborah Jamieson Domestic Violence Team, Violent Crime Unit, Home Office
- Jo Todd, Coordinator of Respect – which is the national association for perpetrator programmes
- Dermot Brady, SPO Domestic Violence Programme Manager, National probation Service, London

- Victoria Hill, Coordination and Development Worker, Standing Together, based in West London Magistrates' Court, Hammersmith and Fulham
- Davina James-Hanman, Director, Greater London Domestic Violence Project
- Allison Buchanan, Children's Services Officer, Women's Aid
- Michael Wrigglesworth, Policy Advisor, Crown Prosecution Service
- Jude Watson, Domestic Violence Project Manager, Equality and Diversity Unit, Crown Prosecution Service

Cardiff

- Jan Pickles, Director, Women's Safety Unit
- Inspector Jo Silver, South Wales Police

Northampton

- Lynda Grant, Manager, Sunflower Centre

Leeds

- Chief Superintendent Elizabeth Preece, Divisional Commander, Killingbeck Police
- Sergeant Helen Dover, Crime Reduction Manager, Killingbeck Police
- Constable John Rowson, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Killingbeck Police
- Katy Grogan, Project Manager, STOP Project
- Alasdair Morrison, CareRing Services Manager, Leeds City Council
- Michelle De Souza, Co-ordinator, Leeds Inter-Agency Project
- Nik Peasgood, Manager, HALT Domestic Violence

Cheshire

- Sue Bridge, Judith Gibson, Chris Greenwood, Helen Lewandowska - members of the Family Liaison Team, Frodsham

Introduction

I looked at a whole range of different things, some of which I had intended to investigate when I had initially planned my trip and others were interesting ideas, or information that I stumbled across on arrival in the United Kingdom. Some things were almost ideas mentioned in passing by people (for instance, head mounted cameras) and it was not until I returned to New Zealand and found out more that they assumed a greater prominence. This report does not just consist of my observations, but also includes further literature research I have conducted to broaden my understanding of what makes these programmes or ideas effective.

All of the many different programmes and topics I observed, or discussed with people were of interest to me. At first all could be grouped under the general heading of 'domestic violence and ways to address it' but apart from that they didn't seem to have much in common. However, the more I thought about them and read more about them all, the more it seemed to me that an 'evolutionary pathway' of one idea leading to another, seemed to connect them. A lot more research would verify an accurate chronological history but I have not done this. The structure of this report is entirely based on my own interpretation of context and history which I have assumed has influenced the development of new ideas

This report discusses a range of different initiatives which describe how different collaborative forums/steering committees/special focus groups are working together to keep victims safe and hold offenders accountable. There are many things that are very different to how things work in New Zealand. A good example is the role of local authorities, which offered opportunities to obtain resources and made practical referral pathways and liaison with local health, education and social services possible, in ways that would be difficult for us to copy in this country. However, the general concept of a national and local coordinated approach, as described in this report, to working on domestic violence is a model we should emulate.

In Wales, I was amazed to see a jam packed camping ground, covered with tents over a bank holiday, with people putting up with freezing wind and unrelenting rain, with mud everywhere. This was not just a sudden change of weather, it had been like this for months. When I commented on it, saying that most New Zealanders would not want to spend a long weekend camping in such conditions, the response was a pragmatic – *"we can't let the weather stop us, we just have to get on with it"*.

So much that I saw I found interesting but two of the most useful were ideas developed as a result of a lack of advocacy resources, but lots of *"get on with it"* attitude. One idea was developed in Cardiff between a small advocacy agency and the police and the other in Killingbeck, Leeds by the police, where there is no local advocacy. These were two examples of innovative responses with limited resources.

In the United Kingdom I was amazed to discover that advocacy agencies seemed far more like most of those operating in New Zealand, than the agencies I had observed years ago in the United States. While not enormously wealthy, agencies there did seem much better resourced financially and with larger teams. Apart from refuges, most of the advocacy services were very small and mainly focussed on responding to the criminal justice system.

Everywhere I went people were talking about risk assessments. This report reflects the fact that these were becoming an integral part of decision making and interventions with both victims and offenders, at every point of contact.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), the model developed in Cardiff, made an immediate impact on me. I had not planned to visit Cardiff, but was told about the MARAC the day after I arrived and changed my plans, to be able to attend a meeting. This meant that I had to cancel two planned meetings with other agencies working with a London specialist domestic violence court. The two things I was told about the MARAC that convinced me that I should go to Wales was that there had been a huge drop in re-victimisation for all domestic violence victims, including a 42% drop in the rate for the most high risk victims. The other thing was that the central plank of government policy was the MARACs and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts - and independent advocates were central to the process for both.

Described in The Second London Domestic Violence Strategy as an “*everywhere and no where issue*”, domestic violence and its reduction was certainly getting a lot of governmental emphasis, but it seemed like this was a very recent change in the United Kingdom. Research reporting the huge economic cost to the country seemed to have been one of the major factors putting domestic violence on the government’s agenda.

The scale of the incidence of domestic violence in the United Kingdom is very apparent. The Home Office reports that for women under 44 years, domestic violence is the greatest cause of morbidity (the relative incidence of a particular disease) – greater than both cancer and road accidents. The official government estimate is that one in four women will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime. However, in 2001, a large scale British Crime Survey (Walby & Allen) found that 45% of women had been subjected to domestic violence (including abuse, threats, force, sexual assaults or stalking) in their lifetime. One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute. On average, two women a week are killed by a current or former male partner. Domestic violence accounts for 16 % of all violent crime in the United Kingdom.

The latest National Domestic Violence Strategy report gives an indication of the wide range of government departments, community groups involved at a national and local level. The breadth and scale of the strategy and the identification of performance indicators, compliance reporting and level of resources demonstrates a real ministerial commitment to making a major impact.

To get any real traction it was recognised that there was a need for a coordinated national strategy that sat over the top of all relevant government objectives, so that there is a cohesive and integrated approach. There was Ministerial expectation down that departments with a key role to potentially play are actively engaged to contribute to a common goal, at the national and local levels, even if this is initially only in a small way at first.

The Home office is the lead department for the government’s strategy to address domestic violence and because of this it was initially very criminal justice focussed. A large part of the national strategy hung on the development and roll out of domestic violence specialist courts. This caused a huge uproar in the domestic violence community sector because millions of pounds are being poured in into one area that many considered was not working well. In the 2004 – 2005 year, of 120,000 domestic violence incidents investigated by the police, 65,000 were determined to be crimes and of these 3,000 went to court, resulting in only 1,375 convictions. (See figure 1).

At first, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) were funded to provide support to victims in these courts. MARACs also attracted considerable attention and these were linked and rolled out together across the United Kingdom. However, Jan Pickles, the Director of the Cardiff Women’s Safety Unit, said that “*the MARACs were seen as good, but not quite as good as the courts’* in terms of interest and resources given them. This has now changed, as the MARAC outcomes have been found to be so compelling that the government’s strategic emphasis has now shifted to the MARACs – “*down playing the courts and upping the MARACs*”.

The government have agreed to fund at least two IDVAs in each area where there is a specialist court and a MARAC. It has been established that they need 350 MARACs and 1,800 advocates to work on high risk cases. These new positions are now funded to primarily work on MARAC related business, which may include supporting high risk cases at court (in other words the reverse of the initial priority). The roll out of MARACs, courts and IDVAs is about a third of the way through.

2004-2005 Domestic Violence Incidents in London

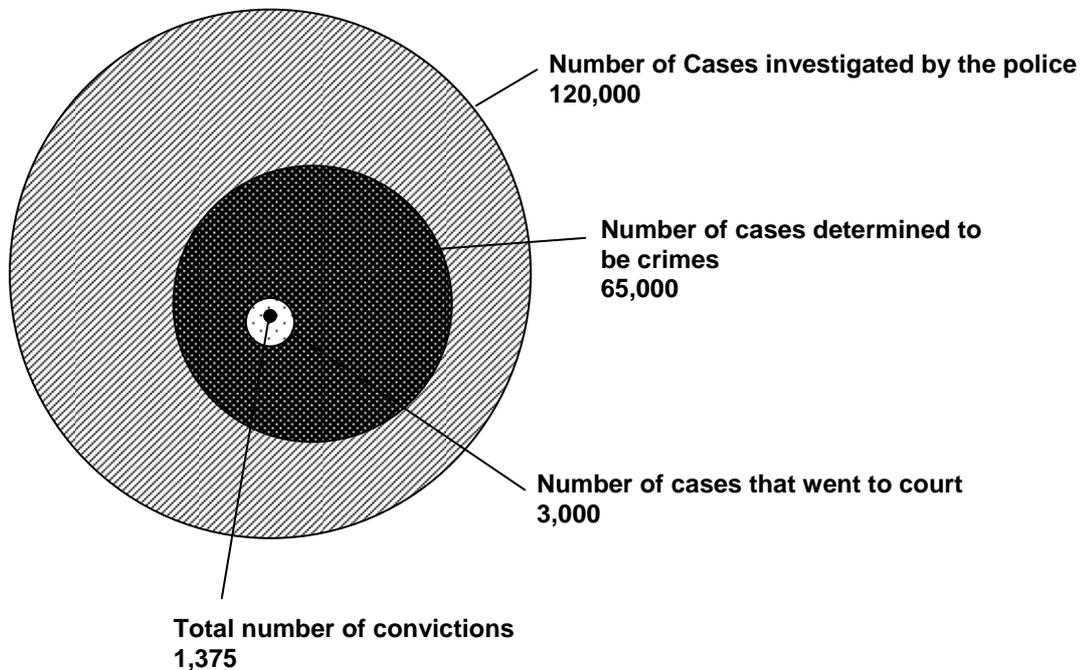


Figure 1.

To be effective, it is not just how an individual organisation responds that matters, it is equally important how that response works in conjunction with other responses. There is no point in making great strides ahead in some areas, if they have flow on impact on other parts of the system which can't cope, or alternatively has different imperatives, which then threaten to undermine good work – ultimately resulting in an expensive waste of time.

The work going on to establish a cohesive criminal justice system which has shared objectives, indicators, outcomes and works together to achieve these, is very impressive. This will take some time, but major progress was being made some of which is briefly discussed in this report. It had been really frustrating and inefficient for the police to spend enormous efforts on improving their response, gathering better evidence, supporting victims, target hardening houses etc – only to have prosecutions refusing to pursue cases in court.

This country has similar problems with a criminal justice system which has seemed at times to operate in parallel universes, all busily going about their business oblivious to the objectives of other parts of the system.

As previously stated, there has been a significant focus and resource going into improving the justice response. Domestic violence is a volume crime. British police receive a call out to a domestic every minute of every day, which amounts to half a million complaints annually. But for decades now the police have been struggling to secure prosecutions for men who beat their partners. When it comes to pressing charges, the onus usually falls entirely on the victim, and because they are often bullied by their abuser into dropping the charges, there has been a frustrating sense that little can be done to combat this crime.

Domestic violence is a crime which is overly reliant on the response of the victim to 'fix it'. If she stays, then *"it can't be too bad"* or *"it's just a waste of time trying to help her as she just keeps going back"*. If she leaves, then she is *"taking the children away from their father"*, *"breaking up a marriage, without giving it a chance"*, becoming *"a solo mother"* with all the negative connotations that this label implies. Most importantly, separation provides no protection against violence and usually increases its frequency. Women who attempt to end a violent relationship expose themselves to enormous danger, as this is a time when she is more likely to be seriously assaulted or killed.

Any kind of stand that a victim may take, such as trying to enlist the support of others, fighting back or calling the police, or being a witness against her (ex)partner in a court case, leaves her open to violent retaliation.

With the onus usually placed so firmly on the victim, some of the most interesting strategies developed by police and others in the United Kingdom to be focused on finding ways to overcome this issue.

I found the work of the Killingbeck, Leeds police fascinating. Very simplistically, the model they had developed resulted from a convergence of three things – no local advocacy services, legislative expectations on local authorities to provide housing and a police driven crime prevention approach. The model was a three tiered stepped response which built in intensity if further offending occurred. It was aimed at supporting and protecting victims and stopping re-victimisation. It involved the police proactively responding to **all** domestic violence incidents, regardless of whether or not an arrest resulted. The model also engaged the local community in protecting victims. There had been some lateral thinking done to build a partnership

with the local housing authority and through this, the police had been able to provide practical resources to victims to increase the security of their homes.

Information Presented To:

I have not had the time to read through and think about all of the enormous amounts of material I was given while I was in the United Kingdom. I am planning to undertake further smaller reports on specific issues, for instance, specialist family violence courts, later this year. Since my return, I have presented several seminars (in Wellington and Auckland), written or edited a number of other reports, prepared small meeting presentations, provided key informant contact details to others and discussed and shared written material. Some of the individuals and organisations I have already provided information to are:

- Commissioner of Police
- Chief District Court Judge
- Ministry of Social Development
- Senior police based at the office of the Commissioner
- Auckland City and Counties Manukau police districts
- Housing New Zealand staff
- Ministry of Women's Affairs
- Ministry of Justice

Information detailed in this report and future reports will be provided to the above, where appropriate and:

- Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment
- Child, Youth and Family Services
- Presentation to a Judicial Conference in August
- Given to the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse
- Presentation to local inter-agency forums
- Articles in *Te Rito News*, which is a family violence newsletter
- Media releases

Recommendations

Key Recommendation

In New Zealand the incidence of domestic violence has reached endemic proportions and is highly contagious. While progress has been made at a national and local level, all of us involved know that this is only a small beginning and services and institutional responses for people needing help are fragmented, poorly resourced and largely uncoordinated and inconsistent. It is imperative that we work together to find solutions and that we put considerable effort into this. As with any emergency, timeliness is critical. When you are dealing with people's personal safety and even life and death situations, you cannot afford to drag your feet.

Unlike the United Kingdom, which has a large population, complex social economic class structures and very difficult race issues, New Zealand is a small country, small enough to realistically get domestic violence under control. We need a willing and sustained effort from Ministers down, but we could do it – if as a country, we really wanted to.

National Strategy

- All government departments (not just criminal justice, social service and health) involved in contributing to the development of a comprehensive national strategy, similar to that developed in the United Kingdom.
- Recognition of the huge drain on the country's finances caused by domestic violence. Treasury contributing to the development of the strategy.
- Budget allocation consistent with government's desire to make a meaningful and timely difference to this country's domestic violence prevalence.
- The strategy setting objectives and performance indicators and then having public reporting mechanisms to measure progress.
- Government departments should develop a comprehensive unified approach to addressing domestic violence. This requires legislation, objectives, policies and procedures, key performance indicators etc which are consistent and coordinated with those of other departments.
- Departmental objectives and key performance indicators set for every relevant government agency. This would include Education, Immigration, Corrections, Courts and Work and Income.
- Departmental policies and practice standards on responding to domestic violence written to give guidance for both local managers and front line staff.
- Relevant departmental national staff having tasks identified in job descriptions, particularly related to both attending and actively participating in strategic inter-agency work.
- The government considering "*it essential to put its own house in order*" by developing HR training, policies and procedures to support staff affected by domestic violence.
- The government expectation that local partnerships will identify the level of domestic violence in their area and include a strategy to tackle it in their over-all crime strategy.
- Over time, move to an assessment framework similar to the United Kingdoms, which establishes compliance standards.
- All government departments and community organisations to have clear policies and procedures relating to information sharing – focussed on how it should be done, rather than all the reasons why it should not.

- Research into perpetrators with the aim of improving interventions.

Legislation

- Legislative and policy changes to allow women with insecure immigration status to access refuges and receive living expenses.
- Offenders should be charged with separate offences against the children, when children are present and witness domestic violence. This recommendation is consistent with New Zealand's Domestic Violence Act (1995).

Local Strategy

- We need a directory of NZ interagency forums.
- A baseline review of who is doing what, across the country, in each community, so we have a clear sense of what is being provided.
- City wide/regional domestic violence strategies – chaired by the local mayor or a senior government representative. Senior local departmental representation, similar to models described in this report.
- Nationally produced guidance on best practise published, which outlines what is expected of these local forums as suggested in this report.
- Resources to support multi-agency forums including at least the salary for a full-time paid co-ordinator.
- Local forums to develop guiding principles, shared objectives and practical action plans.
- Representative must have their role recognised as a proper part of their responsibilities - inclusion in job descriptions is ideal.

Multi-Agency Risk Forums

MAPPA

- There should be a pre-release risk assessment review of offenders who have a history of domestic violence, between probation, police and prisons as part of a Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) model. In the United Kingdom, some MAPPA include relevant community agencies, for instance those working with domestic violence, sex offenders or sexual abuse and this seems sensible.

MARAC

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences have been formally evaluated several times and have been found to be highly successful. This model is now the major focus of the United Kingdom's national strategy. Where ever it has been rolled out, the local community has had good results. We should pilot this model in New Zealand.
- This model involves referral and representation from organisations outside of the criminal justice system.
- Senior staff representation is required to ensure appropriate implementation.
- Initial joint training.
- Formal protocols.
- A shared risk assessment tool so that referrals to the MARAC can be made on an 'apples with apples' basis.
- In most cases this will be the police risk assessment tool which has recently been rolled out across NZ. This should be subject to review as new

information becomes available on homicides, serious assaults and local communities become competent in its use.

- Information sharing policies with an emphasis on how this should be done, rather than why it should not.
- Adequate resources to make this model possible.

Professional Advocacy Services

- Funding for sufficient community based advocates to provide professional support to high risk victims and to specialist family violence courts.
- An organisation funded to develop and deliver an accredited training programme for advocates, working in advocacy agencies and the courts.
- Funding to develop and deliver an accredited training programme for refuge advocates.
- Occupational standards developed.

Safe Homes

- Enabling families to live safely in their homes.
- Personal and housing safety assessment, advice and follow through with equipment for victims of violence, for instance locks, sensor lights etc.
- Each community having a pool of monitored personal alarms for the use of high risk victims.
- A community's requirement for refuge accommodation calculated on local population density and proportion of high victims in reported cases.
- Funding to make this possible.
- To investigate legislative changes which would allow Housing New Zealand to have tenancy agreements with a "*specific clause stating that the perpetration of domestic violence by a tenant can be considered grounds for eviction*". In the United Kingdom this does not require a criminal charge to be laid.

Criminal Justice System

- The crime prevention theories relating to opportunity and the predictable likelihood of re-victimisation needs to be reinforced to all organisations involved with working professionally with either the victim or the offender.
- A national register of high risk domestic violence offenders.

Courts & Prosecution

- All Family Courts to require a comprehensive risk assessment before ordering child contact.
- Protection Orders easily available and acted upon by police and courts. (This country has excellent legislation and Protection Orders could be a valuable tool to help keep victims safe. However legislation, policy and practice are not the same. Much has been written about this elsewhere, but the issues relating to advocates' confidence in these orders now, remain.)
- A Family-Criminal Interface Committee established to co-ordinate work between the jurisdictions and the legislation these courts work with.
- Specialist Family Violence Courts which have the primary objectives of keeping victims safe and holding offenders accountable.
- The onus for holding abusers accountable lying with statutory and other agencies, not being the responsibility of victims.

- A clear message of intolerance of domestic violence conveyed to abusers and the general public - domestic violence is unacceptable behaviour, is a crime and will be taken seriously by all statutory and community agencies involved.
- Good practice guidance for the development of specialist courts.
- Sentencing guidelines.
- All professionals (judiciary, prosecutors and ancillary staff) working in the specialist courts, having training.
- The court operates as part of an integrated and co-ordinated local service.
- There is standardised consistent practise which is systemic, rather than reliant on individual practices.
- Matters are fast tracked through the court.
- An independent victim advocate presents information to the court on behalf of victims.
- Judges to be advised of risk information, in order to assist with decision making.
- There is ongoing data collection, monitoring and evaluation.
- Guidelines for prosecutors.
- An audit conducted of prosecution services in order to establish a baseline for measurement of future performance improvements.
- Specific key performance indicators, that measure numbers of successful prosecutions, reductions in discontinued domestic violence cases and the proportion of successful outcomes in relation to the number of incidents.
- Bail or supervision conditions precluding offender from not only being banned from residing within an 'exclusion zone(s)' around the location of a victim's home or work, but also not being able to enter it for any purpose.
- A curfew imposed as a standard condition of bail.

Police

- Domestic violence is a volume crime. There is a tendency by the police to let perpetrators of 'minor' offending off with a warning, only acting when more serious offences occur. However, in order to get the message through to specific offenders and offenders in general, it is essential to arrest and charge on every single offence, every single time they occur.
- Targeting prolific offenders by police.
- Piloting the three tiered, graded response for domestic violence incidents, which consist of increasing intensity of intervention, as described in this report.
- The model required a response by the police following **any domestic violence incident – not just those resulting in arrest.**
- The piloting or introduction of elements of this tiered approach, which include letters, community constables, 'cocoon watch' and police watch, all coordinated by the area police Domestic Violence Coordinator.
- Enhanced investigation and evidence gathering techniques, including statements from children, house to house enquires of neighbours, hospital records, answering machine tapes, cell phone texts or messages.
- Head mounted cameras piloted.
- Referral pathways to allow for the police, at the time of completing their report, to make a referral to appropriate health organisations/individuals (in addition to referrals to Child, Youth and Family Services).

Advocates

- Independent Victim Advocates funded to be available where ever the new Specialist Family Violence Courts have been rolled out.
- These advocates require formal status within the courts, to allow them to carry out an appropriate advocacy function.
- Advocates should not be employees, or contracted by the Ministry of Justice, or the NZ Police as this will seriously compromise their ability to remain independent and work in the best interests of victims.
- Local community advocacy groups should be contracted to provide Independent Victim Advocates to work in the courts.
- The most suitable funding department could be the Ministry of Social Development's Family and Community Services.
- An organisation funded to develop and deliver an accredited training programme for advocates. This training should be thorough and over an appropriate length of time to adequately prepare advocates.

Probation & Prisons

Community Probation Service

To have performance objectives related to contributing to the reduction of domestic violence. Indicators of work towards this objective could include:

- Probation staff taking an active role at leadership, national and local levels in contributing to an inter-agency approach to addressing domestic violence.
- Establishment of comprehensive range of performance standards relating to domestic violence for the Probation Service.
- Community Probation Service being required to report, as part of a national strategy feedback process, on progress to achieving objectives at regular intervals.
- Staff trained in the dynamics of domestic violence, in how to assess risk and the effectiveness of various sentencing options.
- Probation officers **routinely** assessing violent offenders and making appropriate recommendations, which would **routinely** include the oversight of a probation officer.
- Specific risk assessment tools being developed for domestic violence offenders.
- Staff receiving training relevant to their role as probation officers.
- Probation officers liaising with advocates and closely monitoring offenders' compliance with sentence requirements, in order to increase the safety of victims.
- Probation officers becoming an integral part of local inter-agency forums convened to assess and case manage high risk victims and dangerous offenders.
- Probation staff becoming actively involved in specialist domestic violence courts, supporting an agreed stepped response to offending, based on risk and re-victimisation. Actively monitoring the response of offenders to conditions of their supervision.
- Community Probation Service being allocated sufficient budget to pay for the costs of sending violent offenders on community provided rehabilitative programmes.
- Probation not responding by developing their own programmes, which would contribute to the further reduction in viability of current community providers.

- Prisons
- Accredited stopping violence programmes should be provided within prisons.

Coordinated Responses to Domestic Violence

The more reading and reflection I did the more awareness I had of the ridiculous situation which exists in New Zealand of individual government departments which have developed legislation, policies and procedures, key performance indicators etc which are seemingly entirely independent of each other. Moreover some departmental imperatives work in direct conflict with those of other departments. We do not have a comprehensive unified approach to addressing domestic violence. This means that we have established a system which is vexed by needless frustrations, obstacles and complexities, which in the end does no one any good and least of all victims of violence.

Therefore, finding out how coordinated responses were working in the United Kingdom was one of my two key objectives and so I was really pleased at the wealth of interesting national and local inter-agency forums that I was either able to observe or was advised of. These forums come under three major groups. First is an overarching national strategy forum, then city wide forums (London and Leeds) and thirdly, issue based forums (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences).

It seemed like the publication of a report, commissioned by the Government Ministerial Group (working on domestic violence), on the economic costs of domestic violence, provided the impetus for a more concerted effort by government. The combined tangible and intangible costs were found to be 23 billion pounds a year. Of this 1 billion was spent by the Criminal Justice System – nearly a quarter of it's budget for violent crime. There was 1.2 billion pound cost to the National Health Service, a quarter of a billion to social services and 160 million pound cost to local housing authorities.

This 2004 report (Walby) effectively highlighted the staggering financial impact to such a degree, that a significantly funded national strategy – the National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan - was written in 2005.

This puts in black and white what all organisations, government, not for profit and corporate, are doing to contribute to making a difference. The Plan identifies clear and measurable objectives and then monitors and reports on progress. Significantly, to give real concentration of effort on ensuring a significant difference is achieved, there has also been the development of performance indicators for statutory agencies involved in domestic violence.

The 2006 to 2007 National delivery Plan objectives were to:

- Increase the early identification of an intervention with victims of domestic violence by utilising all points of contact with key front line professionals.
- To build capacity with the domestic violence sector to provide effective support to victims.
- The promotion of a co-ordinated community response to domestic violence.
- To increase reporting and arrest rates.
- To increase the rate at which sanction detections are converted into offences brought to justice.
- To support victims through the criminal justice system and manage perpetrators to reduce risk.

- To develop the evidence base to close key knowledge gaps, particularly relating to understanding the nature and scope of domestic violence and an understanding of what works in reducing the prevalence of domestic violence.

Since 2005, far reaching changes have been made to the way the government tackles domestic violence and these changes involve as many different government and non-government organisations as can be influenced. There are far too many different initiatives to mention all of them in this report, but the following gives an indication of the breadth of the strategy:

Health

- Development of a routine enquiry programme of all pregnant women to assist with early identification.
- Updated guidance for general practitioners to aid early identification.
- A national data collection template created for electronic patient records.
- A programme specifically for mental health patients.
- Guidance for mental health professionals.

Employer Response Programmes

“As a starting point ... the Government considered it essential to put its own house in order. ... the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) for Domestic Violence sent out letters to all human resources leads within those Departments which are members of the IMG, asking them to adopt and implement robust domestic violence policies which would identify and protect staff and if necessary intervene with perpetrators.” (National Domestic Delivery Plan)

- Employee domestic violence policies for government servants.
- Response developed for the British Forces.
- Launching of Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence, which is a partner to the American version. This is a group of progressive companies working collectively to address the impact of violence in the workplace. This has held a conference, created a website with on line resources for employers, developed a management structure and executive Board, developed a strategic plan, conducted internal audit of corporate responses to domestic violence, developed awareness raising materials for employers.

Children

- Guidance for handling domestic violence issues by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).
- Educational resources made available to primary and secondary schools.
- Publication of a domestic violence manual for people working with children.

Awareness Raising & Support

- Awareness raising articles, projects and events within government departments.
- Funded a national 24 hour family violence helpline and the development of a database.
- A social marketing campaign aimed at encouraging friends, family and neighbours to support victims of domestic violence.
- A national public awareness campaign run by the crown Prosecution Service.

Enhanced Local Response

- Issued guidance for local partnerships, giving examples of good practice.
- Revised the domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator.¹
- Developed a huge range of regional partnerships and forums.
- Roll out of the MARAC model across the United Kingdom in conjunction with specialist courts.

Courts & Prosecution Service

- Commenced the roll out of Specialist domestic Violence Courts across the UK.
- Published draft sentencing guidelines.
- A manual outlining updated legislation, policy and good practice was produced for the Crown Prosecution Service.
- Good practice guidance for the development of specialist courts.
- An audit conducted of CPS work to obtain a baseline for measurement of future performance improvements.
- A Family-Criminal Interface Committee established to co-ordinate work between the jurisdictions and the legislation these courts work with.
- All prosecutors and ancillary staff were trained.

Advocate Professional Development

- Developed occupational standards in partnership with Women's Aid, Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) and RESPECT (professional affiliation of stopping violence programme providers).
- Funded a programme of accredited training for refuge advocates.
- Funded a professional training package for all Independent Domestic Violence Advocates to be employed in the Specialist Courts.

Stopping Violence Programmes

- Developed national standards for stopping violence programmes.

Housing

- Spent nearly 57 million pounds on housing related support for victims of domestic violence.
- Started the Sanctuary Scheme².

¹ Information on this Best Value Performance Indicator follows

² Information on the Sanctuary Scheme follows

- 32 million pounds going into refuges for capital funding between 2003-2006 to create more places and renovate existing ones.

Police

- Making common assault an arrestable offence !!!!
- National rollout of training to police officers, which involves 8 modules, some of which are targeted at all staff and some are for specific groups within the police, for instance call takers, managers, domestic violence units.
- Development of an Investigations Pack for front line staff
- A police led domestic violence enforcement campaign (similar to the drink driving blitzes New Zealand is familiar with).
- Targeting prolific offenders by police.

Probation

- All probation services to run accredited domestic abuse programmes.
- All probation service involved with domestic violence offenders, to have had training.
- Establishment of a comprehensive range of performance standards relating to domestic violence for the Probation Service.
- Research into perpetrators with the aim of improving interventions.

However, the “centrepiece of the National Delivery Plan” was the work of the specialist domestic violence court programme. This went in tandem with the development of a coordinated community response model which involves joint work between criminal justice and other agencies, across the country. At the heart of this is the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)³, which is seen as the key to identifying high-risk victims and ensuring that they are kept safe and that perpetrators are managed effectively. Critical to the MARACs and the specialist courts is the role of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors who work with victims.⁴

Local Inter-Agency Forums

The United Kingdom is well ahead of New Zealand in its use of a comprehensive and collaborative approach to preventing domestic violence, at both the national and local levels. The range of government departments involved in a meaningful way in taking responsibility for measurable improvements within their departments was impressive. At a local level, there has been a long history of well planned, reasonably well funded and strategic inter-agency forums which have had a city wide or regional focus. This model has been enshrined in legislation and policy and adherence is monitored by various reporting bodies and mechanisms. The following are three relevant examples which illustrate how a systemic approach to addressing domestic violence can be achieved:

³ More on the MARAC model follows in this report

⁴ More information about the MARAC model and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors follows in this report.

1. Crime and Disorder Act

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities and the police to join with other agencies in local crime reduction partnerships. The government expectation is that these partnerships will identify the level of domestic violence in their area and include a strategy to tackle it in their over-all crime strategy. Every authority should publish a clear policy on domestic violence, which is understood and complied with by all staff. This should cover:

- The detail of good practice expected from council staff.
- Promote good practice individual departments of the authority.
- Provide a frame work of co-ordinated and measurable response to domestic violence by all key departments, including social services, education, housing, and youth and leisure services.
- Include a clear emphasis on effective monitoring and evaluation, and ensure that staff receive appropriate training.

2. Best Value Performance Indicators

Local authorities have to consider their service provision to domestic violence victims within the context of the best value (BVPI) regime. These are published and monitored by the Audit Commission which is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high quality local services for the public.

Its remit covers more than 11,000 bodies which between them spend nearly 180 billion pounds of public money annually. This covers local government, housing, health, criminal justice and fire and rescue services. As an independent watchdog, they provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, they provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, they ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

An amendment to the indicators, BV 225, was mentioned in much of the more recent documentation relating to inter-agency and city wide strategies. BV 225 specifically refers to 'Actions against domestic violence' with a purpose to "assess *the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence.*" It takes the form of a checklist outlining the standards expected of local authorities, against which they are obligated to report their completed progress (partial progress is not sufficient).

Examples from this check list include:

"3. Does the local authority employ directly, or fund a voluntary sector based domestic violence co-ordinator?"

The co-ordinator should be employed at a local authority level and have responsibility for strategically co-ordinating domestic violence issues throughout the local authority area. Where funding has been provided to the voluntary sector, or local partnership, to employ a co-ordinator this will meet the definition, as long as their role remains to co-ordinate work in both the statutory and voluntary sectors across the area covered by the local authority."

“6 Has the local authority developed an information sharing protocol and had it agreed between key statutory partners?”

The information sharing protocol must facilitate the exchange of information to enable domestic violence to be effectively tackled across all statutory agencies. Key statutory agencies are defined as the Police, Health, Housing, Social Services and education. The protocol will also provide an opportunity to implement Homicide Reviews where appropriate. It must ensure that confidentiality and victims’ safety is protected.”

3. Project Umbra

The London Criminal Justice Board commissioned Project Umbria, which is led by the Metropolitan Police Authority with the purpose of improving London’s response to domestic violence. Project Umbra is part of the delivery arm of the Mayor of London’s strategy which involves a range of different partnerships to achieve a multi-agency approach to addressing domestic violence.

I met with Yasman Rehman, who is the Director of Partnerships, based with the London Metropolitan Police. Her role is to coordinate work being done within the police on domestic violence, honour based violence, hate crime and other forms of violence against women (rape, prostitution, trafficking and general crime and safety). Part of her work is to oversee the work of Project Umbra, which is chaired by a police Commander. She briefly outlined Umbra’s six multi-agency strands of work which were:

- **Improving data sharing and performance management** to make sure all organisations are in synch.
- **Improving advocacy and support for victims.** She commented that this was considered central to everything the project does.
- **A focus on children** – improving the liaison and understanding of overlaps between children’s and domestic violence sectors, with a view to have everyone involved view children as domestic violence victims as well.
- **Perpetrator management** – she said that it was acknowledged that this area was not well funded and mainly provided through probation. Part of this work was to improve risk assessment processes.
- **Integrated laws and courts** – ensuring that the interface between civil and criminal justice systems did not have gaps.
- **Domestic violence murder reviews** – statutory duty to conduct a murder review when a homicide occurs. Yasman said that at present children’s and adults’ murders are looked at separately even if they happen together, which she saw as a problem.

She discussed the development of a ‘one stop shop’ based on a criminal justice model operating in San Diego. This is being trialled in Croydon, London, and involves housing, social services, police and the voluntary sector all operating out of one site.

Two other issues she raised was firstly the increasing interest in starting a register of domestic violence offenders, in order that these people could be tracked as they moved from area to area and victim to victim. Secondly, there is consideration being given to adding a new offence category similar to New Zealand’s of ‘male assaults female’. Currently the United Kingdom does not have a specific domestic violence crime and so this type of offending is ‘hidden’ by being lumped with general violent

crimes. Even worse, and a complete shock for me, was that until recently common assault was not even an arrestable crime. In December 2003 the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill was passed which gave the police significant new powers to deal with domestic violence. This also included making it an arrestable, criminal offence to breach a non-molestation order, with a penalty of up to five years in prison.

Inter-Agency Forum Good Practice

It has been a government expectation that there should be a local multi-agency response to domestic violence for well over 12 years. There are now over 200 forums (fora) across the United Kingdom but all of these seem to have some differences, as they must respond to local needs and conditions. Over the years many very helpful resources have been developed to assist with improvements to the way these forums operate. There is also a directory of all forums available and encouragement given to each local group to maintain contact with others. Typically, these forums involve local authorities, which are responsible for the provision of housing, social services and education, the police, probation, health services, refuges and other agencies. It is important that there is a sense of joint ownership of inter-agency initiatives by all the agencies represented and that police are careful not to dominate the forum (Hague).

In 2000, guidance on best practise was published, which outlines what is expected of these local forums (Hague). The main elements of this are:

Forum Purpose

- Co-ordinating and facilitating the development of local agency response and services.
- Improving the practice of agencies, and their service delivery, for example through training.
- Developing a domestic violence strategy.
- Auditing local problems.
- Setting targets for reduction.
- Monitoring progress.
- Sponsoring initiatives, for instance: supporting projects to assist victims, and setting up new ones; awareness raising among the general public; preventative measures such as work in schools; and providing education projects, such as stopping violence programmes.

Minimum Requirements of Forums

- A forum's statement of policy, including a shared definition of domestic violence.
- Information for victims.
- Producing a resource pack, including detailed guidance, for service deliverers.
- Training for service deliverers in meeting the needs of victims.
- Development of a protocol on information sharing between organisations.

Representation

- Senior managers.
- Or, practitioners who have the full support and commitment of their managers, are able to make decision on behalf of their agency, or have access to those who can.
- Representative must have their role recognised as a proper part of their responsibilities - inclusion in job descriptions is ideal.

To be effective, participation with local inter-agency forums must be seen as a means to an end, not an end in itself. Agencies co-operating in the forum must have actual domestic violence policies and practices which they can co-ordinate. They need agreed terms of reference, which are likely to include guiding principles, aims and objectives. Specific objectives need to be achievable, giving rise to agreed, practical action plans, which are regularly reviewed and updated and usually time limited so that participants can plan their workloads.

It is critical to ensure that forums are actually improving the safety of abused women and their children by monitoring and evaluation of the work agreed to. The best models do this by establishing performance indicators, relating to concrete, observable, ongoing improvements. It was found that employment of staff, including a co-ordinator was of key importance in progressing inter-agency work. It was usually essential for this person to have administrative support, in order for progress to be made on forum strategy.

Forums which work best

- Have consistent representation and clear lines of accountability.
- Combine input from practitioners with commitment from senior managers and policy makers.
- Training on domestic violence for participants and member organisations.
- Shared understanding and language about domestic violence and what constitutes risk.
- Are seen as part of participating member's core work, not an 'add on' extra.
- Have resources to support a full-time paid co-ordinator.
- Move beyond networking to develop guiding principles, shared objectives and practical action plans.
- Resist the temptation to take on too much at once.
- Ensure a central role for women's advocates.
- Value and support the contributions of voluntary organisations, including local specialist women's organisations, as equal partners.
- Support participation by women survivors and their children.
- Recognise and respond to issues of accessibility – drug and alcohol dependency, people with mental health problems, same sex, different ethnicities, male victims, older victims, disabilities.
- Balance innovation with support for established programmes.
- Ensure real improvements in service provision arising from their joint efforts.
- Pool resources.
- Evaluate and monitor to measure effectiveness. Evaluation criteria should include safety improvements, policy and practice changes and service user satisfaction.

London Domestic Violence Strategy

Under the leadership of Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, the London domestic violence strategy has the objective of ensuring that quality services are available throughout the capital and for a clear, strategic and co-ordinated approach to be further developed. The forum that the Mayor convenes operates at a very senior and strategic level. Membership of the Forum Steering Group are senior representatives from some of the following organisations: Association of London Government, Chair of each of the five Project Umbra⁵ strands, Children & Family Court Advisory & Support Service (CAFCASS), Crown Prosecution Service, Government Office for London, Greater London Authority, HM Prison Service, Housing Corporation, London Crime Reduction delivery Board, London Child Protection Committee, London Probation Area, London Regional National Health Service, Metropolitan Police Authority, Relate, Respect and Women's Aid.

This document not only outlines a very comprehensive and ambitious strategy, but also a set of minimum standards for all member agencies. Expectations of agencies include that they should:

- Display domestic violence posters in all public areas.
- Provide additional information (leaflets, crisis cards etc).
- Include domestic violence information on their website.
- Ensure that all relevant staff receive training.
- Have in place a personnel policy on domestic violence for staff experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence.
- Have a nominated individual with the agency with lead responsibility for domestic violence work and for this to be included with their job description.
- Mechanisms to monitor their agency's response to domestic violence and to collate data for sharing with other agencies.

The London Strategy oversees each local borough's response to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (see previously mentioned Crime and Disorder Act). This assessment framework has three levels of standards. Examples of what is expected are:

Level 1

- Independent advocacy service in place, consisting of at least one full-time advocate.
- Local authority meeting at least 50% of the government standard BVPI 225.
- Evidence of survivor consultation.
- A named individual with responsibility for domestic violence in at least four local statutory agencies/local authority.
- An elected local councillor with specific responsibility for domestic violence.
- Domestic violence work taking place in at least two schools.
- Inter-agency data collection systems in place involving at least six agencies.
- Local police making arrests in at least 50% of domestic violence incidents where the power exists to do so.

Levels 2 and 3 require more effort, such as increasing the numbers, or percentages required in Level 1. New objectives are also listed such as all refuges having at least one children's worker (funded by the borough), routine enquire in place in maternity

⁵ Information on Project Umbra follows in this report

services, inter-agency information sharing protocol in place, a sanctuary scheme in place, a specialist domestic violence court and community based services for children exposed to domestic violence.

The London Strategy discusses the fact that some desired changes are beyond the jurisdiction of the Mayor. However, to effect greater change to benefit London, he has agreed to provide leadership to encourage other organisations to implement these. Some of the representations he will be making to forward the strategy, are to request that:

- All Family Courts undertake a comprehensive risk assessment before ordering child contact.
- Judges be held accountable when a child is murdered on a court ordered contact visit, despite knowledge of a history of domestic violence.
- The national domestic violence help line numbers to be printed within child benefit books.
- Policy and legislative changes to allow women with insecure immigration status to access refuges and receive living expenses.

Leeds Inter-Agency Project

Inter-agency forums run by the local authority are provided with a lot of support, resources and best practise examples of good models. With the responsibility on local authorities to establish them, this means that basic financial resource and staffing is ensured. Leeds is a good example known internationally and one I visited.

I had read about this organisation years ago and was very excited about having the opportunity to finally actually visit it. In 1989 the Leeds City Council, together with the West Yorkshire Police, set up the first Domestic Violence Forum in the city. This led eventually to the development of the Leeds Inter-Agency Project (LIAP) which has now been operating since 1990. The main aim of LIAP is to work with and support agencies to provide more appropriate services to victims of domestic violence. It does this by:

- Assisting organisations in developing appropriate policies.
- Supporting agencies to develop good practice in delivering services to victims.
- Raising awareness through facilitating discussion, meetings and workshops.
- Writing and delivering a range of training programmes aimed at increasing awareness and developing good practice.
- Providing information for victims and for agencies to disseminate.
- Supporting partnership initiatives.
- Establishing forums to encourage networking and information exchange.

It has 20 different organisations involved, which include a range of voluntary agencies, police, social service, Crown Prosecution Service, health, housing and education. All of these organisations attend a strategy meeting to decide on how they are going to locally address objectives identified by central government.

Each individual organisation has to write their own action plan which states their intention and commitment as individual organisations to contributing to the local strategy. For instance, Housing is responsible for delivering on the Sanctuary

Scheme⁶, reducing the number of homelessness applications due to domestic violence and ensuring that there is one refuge place per 10,000 people in the population.

This forum establishes a three year strategic plan and then meets four times a year following this, so each organisation can report on progress in achieving these goals. The strategy was also informed by information gained through consultation with victims of domestic violence.

The 2004 strategy had the following objectives:

- Raise awareness of domestic violence within Leeds.
- Improve the protection and support for women and children in Leeds.
- Reduce the level and impact of domestic violence in the city.
- Implement government guidance on tackling domestic violence.
- Highlight agencies' commitment to tackling domestic violence.

All of these objectives have key actions and indicators of progress identified in the strategy document, which means that achievements can be recorded and progress on working towards large goals can be recognised over the passage of time.

The Coordinator said that they did have difficulties getting agencies to write specific domestic violence action plans. So staff from the Leeds Inter-Agency Project help them to write them. They have produced a strategy and action plan template which is used by all the organisations in the partnership and this has made the planning process much more coherent.

To ensure that plans are both realistic for small organisations, but they can still feel part of the strategy without it being too onerous, simple ideas are suggested. For instance, "*send staff on domestic violence training*" and "*display posters*" and "*give women information on domestic violence*".

Another practical problem they encountered was that some of the government departments have strategic plans which are developed regionally so they can't be developed as separate city only plans. However, with a proactive approach from Leeds based departments, some of the Leeds originated ideas are feeding into the wider regional plans, which is a positive outcome.

⁶ More information about the Sanctuary scheme appears later in this report

Safety in Homes

I had been very excited when I was organising my trip at the thought of visiting advocacy services similar to the one in Auckland that I manage. Some years ago I had visited the United States and learnt a lot from how they approached the work we do.

Preventing Violence in the Home is the largest agency in New Zealand with a focus on keeping people safe in their own homes. This is not necessarily saying much, as organisations working in this field are very small and poorly funded.

We provide a range of different types of services, but I was particularly interested in visiting organisations undertaking work directly with clients – adult and child victims and with offenders. We run a national helpline and provide 24 hour emergency call out responses to referrals from the police and hospitals. Our work with victims is predominately crisis response and advocacy – not long term counselling. This means the agency has a very practical focus on immediate and urgent needs relating to assisting a victim to understand what has been happening to her and her children and the impacts of this on them both. We give our clients information about systems (ie criminal justice), how to access resources and discuss the implications of various options available. A key part of the work is safety planning, support through a time of personal crisis and encouragement to make difficult decisions.

Our team is well trained and have previous experience in a range of related roles, such as statutory social work, probation, court based victim advisors, mental health, police, refuge and teaching. We work very closely with police, hospitals, other health professionals and Child, Youth and Family Services – some of the advocate staff are actually based on site at a local police station, with Child, Youth & Family and at the Auckland City Hospital. All advocates need to have strong inter-agency links, and a good understanding of how various large systems work, for instance justice and health, and have the ability to move within these with confidence.

Unfortunately, my plans changed at the last minute and so I was not able to visit Standing Together in West London. However, I was able to visit HALT in Leeds, the Sunflower Centre in Northampton and the Women's Safety Unit in Cardiff. Given that the United Kingdom has a much bigger population than New Zealand, I was really surprised by the small size and limited scope of advocacy agencies there. Apart from refuges, most advocacy agencies seemed to be focussed on supporting women through the criminal justice system, particularly if they were required to be witnesses at court. HALT in Leeds was the first advocacy service to do this in the United Kingdom and providing this support still seemed to be the bulk of their work.

The Cardiff Women's Safety Unit is doing some very creative work, despite having only a small team of ten staff. This work is discussed later in this report when information about multi-agency risk assessments is outlined.

In general though, people I spoke to seemed very surprised by the work we were doing at Preventing Violence in the Home and it seemed as though most advocacy agencies were providing small scale services, similar to most of the agencies here. This was very disappointing, as apart from the Women's Safety Unit, I did not really learn anything much from what they did. Positively, evaluations showed that the support provided by advocacy agencies to women who were the complainants in cases going through the courts, seemed to be both welcome and effective at achieving better court outcomes.

To give an indication of what it seemed as though most of the agencies were like, the following brief comments may be useful. I visited first, the Sunflower Centre and read an evaluation of the ASSIST programme in Glasgow. I have included the latter organisation, ASSIST, as it was evaluated by Dr Amanda Robinson who evaluated the MARAC model and the work of the Cardiff Women's Safety Unit and was only published in October 2006. It therefore seemed both current and relevant in its description of what is considered to be a ground breaking advocacy programme in Scotland.

Sunflower Centre

The Northampton Sunflower Centre aimed to increase the detection, conviction and sentencing related to domestic violence and increase the numbers and success rate of women's applications to the courts for civil remedies. This was to be achieved by:

- Supporting women to use criminal and civil law through proactive incident investigation carried out by police officers seconded to the project.
- Close working relationships between the project police offices and the CPS.
- Police training and awareness raising
- The work of the project victim support staff with women referred to the project.

The project was based on a one stop shop model and provided an 'holistic spiralling cocoon of care' approach to advocacy and support. It was hard to know quite what this all meant in practice, however. The Centre was led by a manager and staffed by a small team of police officers and advocates who were mainly office based and contacted victims to offer support. Lynda, the manager told me that an evaluation found that the project had an impact on increasing conviction rates and thus in reducing attrition through the courts. Of all cases heard at the magistrates' court, cases worked with by staff from the Sunflower Centre had a conviction rate nearly twice that of a comparison group of other cases being heard in the court.

One element that appeared important was that of the women who were supported by the Sunflower Centre only one in 10 withdrew their statement before the matter was resolved in court. In comparison to other areas this represents a low rate of withdrawal. This was similar to the figures achieved by the Leeds HALT project. The evaluation found that when provided with appropriate advice and support with criminal justice agencies, women are prepared to support a prosecution. By contrast, there was 50% withdrawal rate in the cases across areas reviewed in a recent evaluation of domestic violence courts and fast track systems.

The Sunflower Centre was interesting because the team was led by a manager who was not a member of the police and the team were providing direct client services. Some years previously I had observed a team in Vancouver which was made up of advocate and police officer partnerships, who jointly case managed very high risk complex cases. In contrast to the Northampton centre, the Vancouver team was based in a police station and led by a sergeant. It also seemed like a more integrated model with the police and advocates working closely together and their work involved more active community involvement.

ASSIST

Scotland has its own law and legal system which has been developing on its own distinct course from that of England and Wales since 1707. Advice, Support, Safety & Information Services Together (ASSIST) was established in October 2004 as a pilot in part of Glasgow. According to the 2001 census Glasgow has a population of 629,501 people, sited in a wider urban conurbation surrounding the city of 1,749,154 people. ASSIST began timed with the commencement of Scotland's first Domestic Abuse Court.

Glasgow is covered by four police divisions and ASSIST operated in one of these. This division is the largest police division in Scotland and has a population of 320,000 living in an area of 111 square miles. The local police have a Domestic Violence Unit with two full time and two part time officers, known as Domestic Abuse officers, who had been trained on a week long specialist course at their police college.

The purpose of ASSIST was to provide risk assessment and a range of services to victims of domestic violence. In addition, there is an enhanced multi-agency response provided to very high-risk victims and advocacy provided to children. The only cases referred to ASSIST were arrests made by officers of people residing in the division and where consent for referral was given by the victim. ASSIST staff were one co-ordinator, two women's advocates, one child advocate and 2 administration assistants.

Most of their work was usually conducted by telephone interviews, undertaking risk assessments and providing information about the court process. Advocates also provided support at the court if the victim needed to attend. There are weekly meetings of advocates and the co-ordinator to review all cases currently active. Multi agency risk assessment conferences based on the MARAC⁷ model are held monthly and are only based on ASSIST referrals (which is different to the Cardiff based MARAC).

The scope of the ASSIST's work was very limited, being mainly focussed on court support and service is minimal following case resolution. Advocates attend court to observe and record outcomes, despite there being another service in the courts similar to that provided by New Zealand's victim advisors whose role it is to contact all the victims. Generally victims are advised of court outcomes by this other service, but sometimes victims are contacted directly by advocates, if they are at particular risk, or if the outcome was not as anticipated.

When an adult victim accepts the service (after being offered it by the police), the advocates ask the victims if they would like to speak with the child advocate. This is followed up by the child advocate who will make contact by telephone to discuss concerns about the children and their safety. If considered safe, a face to face meeting, at the advocate's office, with the children and their carer is arranged to discuss safety planning, court processes and referral options. The child advocate also works directly with children. In Scotland, children are often required as witnesses in domestic violence cases and when this occurs, the child advocate arranges for court visits by the children and supportive measures to be put in place at the court, for instance, screens. Support typically is provided over six weeks, during the court case, although support can continue following this if the family want.

⁷ Information on the MARAC model follows later in this report

Summary

Both projects seemed indicative of the generally poor level of resources available to advocacy agencies in the United Kingdom. Of course it is not fair to generalise based on the operation of these two projects, but it did appear from conversation with a number of people in London, that these may be fairly representative. I was staggered that in a big city like Glasgow (the home of *Taggart!*), the ASSIST project had only been going for such a short time, was so small in scope and was the envy of other police divisions in Glasgow as they had nothing. Later in this report, I discuss the innovative work of the Killingbeck Police, based in Leeds, which is another big city. In Killingbeck they also have no local specialist domestic violence advocacy service.

Safety issues

Opportunity as a cause of crime

Working in an agency which has an objective of keeping victims of violence, who are primarily women and children, safe, my perspective on what is required to reduce or prevent violence has been strongly influenced by a focus on the victim.

“What is the cause of domestic violence?”

Our answer to this question is that a person, usually a man, feels entitled and justified to control another person, usually a woman, through a systematic pattern of intimidation and violence, invoking fear and compliance. People don't think like this in a vacuum and so the way they are socialised plays a major role. This acceptance of the use of violence is enabled by wider societal norms which condone and support inequalities between men and women and the wider acceptance of hierarchical power and resource differentials between groups.

This philosophical position underpins our work and leads to our approach to answering the question:

“How do you stop domestic violence?”

We would work with the victim to help her understand what is happening and that it is not her fault and then advocate for her to assist her obtain the support and resources she needs to be safe. We would also work with offenders to help them gain insight into their beliefs, gain empathy for their victims and this we hope would lead to changes in behaviour. However, in order to make major changes rather than simply focussing on individual behaviour, we also need to work to bring about social change so that violence is not tolerated in any situation.

In New Zealand, as in the United Kingdom, advocacy services are small, the numbers of families living at great risk are overwhelmingly high, access to essential resources is challenging, if not impossible and marshalling other large organisations to provide consistent and co-ordinated support is an ongoing problem. The reality for most women is that any stand they take, such as leaving, or ending a relationship exposes them to serious retribution.

Changing the beliefs, the world view, of any person is hard and with so many advantages to using violence and so few consequences, success in working with violent men often has to be judged by small incremental change.

Changing the way society operates and what it accepts as appropriate values and behaviour is even harder. It doesn't just mean violent people have to change, it means that everyone has to make changes and this is often not a comfortable process – as can be seen by the recent fraught debate on Sue Bradford's anti-violence bill, more popularly known as the 'anti-smacking' bill.

All very difficult and complex tasks. So imagine my surprise when I came to the realisation that an approach taken in the United Kingdom, was from a completely different theoretical point of view. I had known for years that a police district in

Killingbeck, Leeds was famous for using small, silent, mobile monitored alarms, similar to those more commonly used by elderly or ill people in New Zealand. When I had first read about this, I had immediately wanted them too and successfully applied to a philanthropic trust for twenty. These have made a significant difference in Auckland to how safe women have felt and when used have resulted in a heightened and rapid police response. But, it was not until I visited Killingbeck that I realised that the use of these alarms was just one part of a model which was both effective, functional and very pragmatic – and from quite a different perspective.

What was this perspective?

*“The theory of crime settings rests on a single principle: that **easy or tempting opportunities** entice people into criminal action.” (Felson & Clarke)*

Influential Crime prevention Theories

Marcus Felson, a criminologist describes a number of theories arguing that opportunity is a root cause of crime. An understanding of these principles can be used as a practical tool by crime prevention practitioners to analyse a range of different crime problems and eliminate these opportunities. These theories look at crime from **an offender’s point of view, not from a victim’s**.

The perspective of these theories is that the cause of individual behaviour is a product of an interaction between the person and their physical environment and the opportunities to commit crime that this presents.

As described above, people working as advocates in the family violence field have focussed on thinking about what makes some people violent (individual responses to societal norms) and have not paid so much attention to the physical **setting** in which violence occurs – other than to note that it is generally a crime which takes place in the privacy of the home.

Felson argues that a preoccupation with why some people are criminally inclined, has led to the important features of each setting, that help to translate criminal inclinations into action, being overlooked. In other words, the characteristics of the setting provides the opportunity for the crime to be carried out and so should be considered just as much a valid ‘cause’ of crime (in this case domestic violence) as other causes.

Studies on crime patterns have shown that the usual daily activities and routines, transportation routes and sense of familiarity with a known local ‘home’ community all have a big impact on how and where offenders commit crime. This means that consideration of whether or not an offender works and what hours, how he gets to and from work or other destinations and the distance between his residence and the victim’s, are all integral to how ‘convenient’ an offending opportunity is. It follows that an offender with access to a car, who is unemployed, lives in the same house as his victim, or a few streets away, has a greatly enhanced opportunity to commit further offences.

I observed the police using their experience of crime patterns when verifying offenders’ proposed bail addresses at the Domestic Violence Court in Hammersmith, London. Offenders bailed on domestic offences were not allowed to enter an ‘exclusion zone’ around a victim’s home or work addresses. An officer advised the court of the suitability of an address based on their familiarity with the geography of the street’s location, or by simply checking a street map.

Routine Activity theory states that when a crime occurs, three things happen at the same time and in the same space:

1. The first is that a **suitable target is available**. A target could be a person, an object or a place. Various attributes of the target make it suitable. Two of these attributes are relevant to domestic violent crime. The offender must either **value** the target for what they hope to gain, or value it for the effect they have on it. For instance a burglar wants items to sell, or on the other hand, someone may damage a bus stop, because they get some satisfaction from causing the damage. The second attribute, is **access**. If a target is easy to get to this increases its suitability.

2. Secondly, there needs to be a **lack of a suitable guardian** to prevent the crime from happening. A guardian in this context, could be anything, either a person or a thing, that discourages crime from taking place. Some examples are police patrols, security guards, neighbourhood watch schemes, locks, fences, lighting, alarm systems, neighbours etc.

This lack of a suitable guardian, in combination with easily accessed targets, means that the number of crime incidents can increase without the need for more offenders to be present. In the context of domestic violence, this is another explanation for the prevalence of both men who abuse a series of partners and also the prevalence of men who abuse available children in addition to their partner.

3. Lastly, the presence of a **likely and motivated offender**. Some of the major reasons why people are motivated to offend are grouped into the following categories.

- **Gain/need** – for instance, poverty, drug habit, greed.
- **Society/experience/environment** – living in a culture where crime is acceptable, peer pressure, coercion, lack of education, poor employment prospects, family background, mental illness, poor housing, envy, rebellion against authority.
- **Beliefs** – for instance, that crime in general, or particular crimes aren't wrong, a protest on a matter of principle, prejudice against certain minority/ethnic groups.

A crime will only be committed if a likely offender thinks that a target is suitable and a capable guardian is absent. It is their assessment of a situation that determines whether a crime will take place. The ability to analyse a situation from an offender's point of view will increase the effectiveness of any crime prevention strategy.

Another principle is that one crime produces opportunities for another, so for instance, an offender may decide to breach a bail, or protection order condition and visit the victim to talk with her. Upon arrival, he may become enraged about how she responds to his visit and this could lead to him assaulting her or damaging her property. Domestic violence frequently results in a cluster of associated crimes, many of which may not seem serious (for instance, driving by her home or telephoning her, thereby breaching bail conditions), but when seen as part of a wider pattern, they take on a new light. Each are either opportunities to commit other offences at the time, or they instil confidence in the offender to either continue at the same level or escalate to more serious offending, at some later date.

Repeat victimisation occurs when the same person or place suffers from more than one incident over a specified period of time. This is closely linked to crime opportunity for a number of reasons, including:

- The most opportune (convenient and easily accessible) targets for crime attract multiple attacks. Or, if offenders can get to targets with no guardians present - which is generally the case, as most women have minimal protection from further assaults.
- Offenders successful the first time go back again because they anticipate another success.
- In a violent offence, the offender has learned who cannot resist and who can be attacked again.

Therefore, the most opportune targets at the outset become even more opportune after they were first victimised. However, it follows that efforts to prevent crime also have the best chance to succeed when focussed on these convenient, easily accessible and unprotected targets. Domestic violence is more likely to involve repeat victimisation than any other type of crime. It is important to note that a history of repeat victimisation is likely to be much less than that reported to police,

Crime prevention strategies have been used successfully for a whole range of different types of criminal and anti-social activity and these can be clustered into four major categories:

Increase the perceived effort of crime

Effective measures have included 'target hardening' which involves making the target (victim) more difficult to get to by for instance, installing locks on windows and doors. A step removed is to do things to control access to targets, for instance, by the victim living in a gated community, or having a code access to her apartment block. Another straightforward measure is to control objects which make it easier for offenders to commit crimes. Examples of this could be removing guns and gun licence.

Increase the perceived risks of crime

Strategies that increase the likelihood of someone being observed, over heard, or being caught are all effective. These include having entrances and exits more visible, for instance by installing sensor lighting. Formal surveillance works well and this includes police drive bys, monitored alarms and security guards. Surveillance of the victim or target, by associates, including neighbours, family & work colleagues increases the risk to the offender.

Reduce the anticipated rewards of crime

This can be achieved by removing the targets, which could include the victim moving in to a women's refuge, or moving house to new location.

Remove excuses for crime

Offenders have lots of excuses to justify their criminal behaviour. This can be addressed by setting new rules which make behaviour required explicit. Examples are bail and supervision non-contact conditions or protection orders. Another strategy is to 'alert the conscience' of the offender, achieved for example by his attending stopping violence groups or being exposed to social marketing campaigns.

A common excuse for domestic violence is that the offender was drunk and therefore “didn’t know what he was doing”. Accordingly controlling access or desire for disinhibitors such alcohol or drugs is also effective.

As these theories look at crime prevention from an offender’s point of view, the offender has to be aware that the situation is different and that committing crime is not as likely to be successful. It has been found that promoting the use of target hardening and other strategies (even if not in general use), in the media so that the response has widespread publicity, may have a spin off of keeping other women safe, who haven’t had these additional measures. Therefore the value of keeping some strategies secret, versus the diffusion of benefits to all women needs to be carefully weighed up. Research has found that offenders may think that their target may be included in whatever target hardening strategy is being implemented and won’t take the risk. However, the impact of this is diminished if offenders learn that the risk of being detected, or the difficulty of achieving what ever outcome they want with their target, is small. They have to be kept guessing about the precise levels of threat, or quite how much extra effort is needed.

In summary, an offender, a target and an absent capable guardian are needed for a crime to happen. But if you change one of these conditions, this will prevent or reduce the chances of the offence from happening. Efforts to diminish propensity to commit crime through social or community programmes or the threat of criminal sanctions need to continue. However, looking at opportunity reduction not only compliments these, but also has a much greater chance to reduce crime immediately, because the strategy operates on circumstances much closer to the criminal event.

Killingbeck, Leeds – Phase 1

Killingbeck, is one of six police divisions in Leeds. It includes part of the inner city and an outer suburb. The population is largely white, working class with much of the population living in local authority housing estates, some of which are amongst the most depressed in Leeds. The area covered is 55 square miles and serves a population of 151,839. (Hanmer, Griffiths & Jerwood)

In the late 1990’s the Killingbeck Police decided to do something to address the high rate of re-victimisation of domestic violence victims. They didn’t have local advocacy services and so knew that their strategy would have to rely on their own resources. They looked at crime prevention models (described above) which had worked before for other types of crime, particularly burglary.

It had been observed that the likelihood of repeat burglary was massively higher than that of the first. In the 1980s research projects (Lloyd, Farrell Pease), looked at repeat victimisation of burglary victims and found that repeat victimisation fell to virtually zero after measures were put in place immediately after a domestic burglary had been committed. In addition, the total of all burglaries fell to 30% of the previous level. Research found that after a first reported incident, 35% of households suffer a second within five weeks. After a second incident, 45% of households suffer a third within five weeks.

The same successful principles were then applied to domestic violence. A three tiered graded response for domestic violence incidents was developed, which consisted of increasing intensity of intervention. Victim suitability and offender

motivation were linked and addressed through positive police interventions which acknowledge the women's vulnerability, provide suitable support and directly confront the man's behaviours. Providing capable guardianship is achieved by a focus on evidence gathering to secure conviction.

This model called for a much more intensive and concerted effort by the police, taking a pro-active approach to re-victimisation. This is in contrast to a simply reactive one, in which they would only deal with further offences on an incident by incident basis.

This new model had a number of objectives, with the key one being a reduction in repeat victimisation over a twelve month period. An evaluation published in 1999 examined a number of indicators to measure effectiveness and this established that the model was a successful, cost effective programme. Since this time, it has been replicated in many other policing districts across the United Kingdom. Much of the following information is taken from the evaluation, as it provides the background to how the service was operating when I visited seven years later.

Operational Elements

“To protect the victim is to demotivate the offender; to demotivate the offender is to protect the victim.” (Hanmer, Griffiths & Jerwood)

There was equal focus on the victim and the offender and this model required both to know about the actions taken in relation to each other. Supporting the victim reduces her 'target suitability' and the concurrent focus on the offender is designed to prompt him to confront his behaviour.

Offenders were arrested on any and every possible crime that they had committed. For instance, if they were not living with the woman, then they had no automatic right of entry into her home. This allows for arrests similar to those undertaken for burglary when there is an attempted, or forced entry.

Resource implications and the practicality of implementing a different response were major factors how this model was devised. This was managed by the creation of some new positions, the domestic violence unit consisting of two officers and an assistant, by reallocating existing staff and by ensuring that the model incorporated less specialised staff at different levels of intervention. This model required an additional, consistent and timely approach from the police which would have been impossible if left only with the specialist domestic violence unit staff. A specific role for Beat Managers (community constables) and patrol officers was an integral part of the model. In addition, a relatively simple database, had to be created to track and record cases.

The model also involved increased inter-agency co-operation between the police, probation, Crown Prosecution Service and the courts in identifying and processing incidents – to be 'on the same page' in the approach taken.

The model required a response by the police following **any domestic violence incident – not just those resulting in arrest**. Each incident resulted in the allocation of a 'Level' which increased in intensity as further incidents occurred.

No previous police attendances resulted in a Level 1 allocation, one previous incident in Level 2 and two or more previous incidents in a Level 3 allocation. A fourth attendance entailed a repeat of all appropriate Level 3 interventions. Dealing with re-

victimisation over a 12 month period was the objective and initially Levels were allocated depending on the number of incidents occurring within this time frame. However, it became obvious that there was not much point putting someone who had a history of domestic assaults on a Level 1 response, only because this history was prior to the previous 12 months. This model was primarily to reduce re-victimisation of victims who may not be the same women who are at greatest risk, although the two groups have significant overlap. However, a higher response Level was allocated when the incident was deemed extremely serious.

The role of the Domestic Violence Officers

- Ensuring all interventions took place.
- Liaison with other officers and prosecution.
- Co-ordination with social services organisations.
- Monitoring outcomes.
- Identifying and responding to persistent problems, for instance, how to ensure women are immediately notified of bail conditions.
- Making Level 3 visits to victims.

Patrol Officers

Their role was to thoroughly investigate for evidence sufficient to make an arrest on all possible charges.

Letters

Letters were sent to both women and men up to and including a fourth attendance. In addition women received information about organisations to contact for assistance. Each step in level resulted in a different letter being sent. All letters to women were posted a day before those sent to men, so that if they were sent to the same address, she had the opportunity to destroy it before he saw it if she wanted.

Beat Managers (Community Constables)

All Level 2 victims received a visit from a Beat Manager. The purpose of these was to increase awareness of police actions, to explore whether a cocoon watch could be implemented, and if any other assistance was needed.

Cocoon Watch

Police request the help and support of neighbours, family and relevant agencies in further protecting the victim by contacting the police immediately if further incidents occur. A Cocoon Watch is only implemented with the informed consent of the victim, and the perpetrator is made aware of the action.

The police found that the single most important action that the woman could take was to tell others about the danger she was in. Cocoon Watch was designed to facilitate this process by extending her network of supportive people who would call the police if she needed help. Only a minority of women wanted this, but it was found that when asked, other people almost always agreed to cooperate.

It was found that there was considerable variation between police officers 'selling' the idea of cocoon watch and as a consequence, training in domestic violence and effective approaches to offering assistance was given. This led to a much increased

response and to a consequential improvement in morale and project buy in from the Beat Managers. An evaluation recommendation was that each Beat Manager should have the opportunity to have a few 'apprentice' visits with the Domestic Violence Officers, to observe the way they interacted with victims. Clear written guidelines for how to discuss Cocoon Watch were also recommended.

Throughout the evaluation period, women were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about these visits, seeing them as positive and encouraging signs of police interest in their welfare.

Police Watch

This provides a visible police presence to both the victim and the offender and involves police patrols within the vicinity of the incident on a twice weekly basis initially for a period of six weeks immediately following reported incidents.

Police Watch was automatically implemented at Level 3 unless the man had been imprisoned or remanded in custody. It was also implemented when there had been an arrest and bail had been granted. The purpose of police watch was to demonstrate to both victim and offender through a visible police presence, the seriousness with which they viewed the offending. They visited the address, knocking on the door and speaking to the victim (and offender, if resident), twice a week, for five weeks. Research has found that women are at most risk of re-victimisation in the first five weeks after an offence. (Lloyd, Farrell & Pease). When Police Watch was at Level 1, following an arrest, one visit per week was made.

Initially, they timed their visits to the same time and day as the previous incident, as research into crime prevention suggests that much offending follows a pattern. However, there was also a benefit in the woman actually seeing the police in the area and feeling reassured by this. A large proportion of domestic offences occur late at night and so women were often asleep when the police car drove by, without stopping to visit, and thereby waking her. Also some of the officers felt that driving by the address when the occupants were asleep was pointless. Probably a balance should be sought when making decisions about an optimum time to drive by, after discussion with the victim.

Domestic Violence Officer visits

A visit was automatically implemented at Level 3. The aim was to discuss further options with the woman, including referrals to other organisations, make sure that previous interventions had occurred and again offer Cocoon Watch, if this had previously been refused. Visits were also made to men allocated a Level 3 intervention to reinforce, in person, that the police were taking an interest in the case.

The Domestic Violence Unit made very pro-active efforts to contact the victim to arrange these meetings. The Unit policy was to send the woman a letter requesting that she get in touch with them to arrange an appointment. Concurrent with this they called the woman every day, for at least five days, at different times of the day, in order to speak to her directly. If these two strategies failed, then a member of the team would start making cold calls to the address and if she was out, they would leave a note asking her to call, on the door. If none of this worked, they would knock on a neighbour's door and say "*It's the police, have you seen xxxx recently?*" – just to make sure that the woman is okay.

Over time, the range of options available to the Domestic Violence Officer, to offer women to keep them safe in their own homes has increased and these are discussed later in this report.

Inter-agency Communication and Co-ordination

Close inter-agency co-ordination was undertaken with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service. The Crown Prosecution Service agreed to act quickly on *colour coded domestic violence files* and liaised directly with the Domestic Violence Officers. The Probation Service, would prepare pre-sentence reports using information provided from the Domestic Violence Unit's database and from discussion with the Domestic Violence Officers. In 1999, this was considered a ground breaking pilot and was judged so successful by the Probation Service, that it was introduced throughout the United Kingdom.

Management through Monitoring and Recording

The police databases could not be adapted for use on this project so one was developed specifically for their use. Data came from a variety of sources, including:

- Current and historical information culled from the main police database on both the offender and victim.
- Records detailed each incident since the project began, including names of all those involved, ages and a brief summary of the incident.
- Follow up information on the outcome of any arrests – period in custody, charges, bail, court results
- Civil action taken by the victim, if known
- Dates requests for Police Watch or Beat Manager visits, dates these were implemented and any observations by the officers carrying out these tasks.

Paper forms were distributed to officers when a Police Watch or Beat Manager visit was required. Each form included brief details of the incident and if known, bail information. These forms were returned to the Domestic Violence Unit and entered on the database.

All this information was used to monitor the project delivery, such as how victims were responding, differences in particular beat areas etc. This project involved many different staff to contribute to its success, but only the Domestic Violence Unit had an overall perspective. They found that regular communication with all staff helped to keep everyone motivated and enthusiastic about successful outcomes possible to achieve.

Main Achievements

Intervention Achievements

1. Reduced repeat victimisation by early intervention following each incident. The proportion of attendances that were one-off increased from 66% to 85%.

The higher the level the men were allocated, the more likely they were to re-offend. When the project first began, offenders with no previous domestic offending were allocated Level 1 and were more likely to take the police response seriously. However, offenders with previous offending records, but new to the project, were allocated Level 2 or 3. These latter offenders were the group who were more likely to

re-offend – probably based on their experience with the police. Over time, as the project has continued to run, most new offences have been committed by ‘new’ offenders with no previous domestic violence records.

2. The time interval between attendances, where there was further re-offending, increased to over one year for 50% of men.

The median time between repeat offences, at Level 1 was well over one year; at Level 2 it is 270 days; and at Level 3 it is 150 days. After the first year’s timeframe, the median time between offending for Level 1 men, is no longer applicable, as more than 50% will not re-offend.

3. Systematically identified chronic offenders.
4. Reduced the number of chronic offenders.

Level 3 is where the most chronic and persistent offenders are located, with 64% re-offending.

4. Identified factors associated and not associated with repeat victimisation.
5. Established who is at risk of requiring repeat attendance.
6. Began career profiling of men.

The men with a previously recorded attendance, were more likely to require a subsequent police attendance. Therefore, any pre-project incident is the first factor identified as significant in predicting re-offending.

The second factor relates to arrest. Arrested men were 51% more likely to require another attendance. This establishes that arrest (usually where the evidence is more compelling, or the result of offending more serious) is a factor identifying repeat offenders.

The third factor is the suburbs in which victims live. The evaluation found that victims moving from a high crime area to a medium, or a medium to low crime area, were more likely to have a 29% decrease in further incidents. Even more dramatic, a move from a high crime area to a low decreased the risk of further incidents occurring by 51%. Moving in the opposite direction also has a significant impact on further offending. A move from a low to a medium, or a medium to a high crime area, increased the risk of re-offending by 40%.

Did women separating from their partners make a difference?

This is the most obvious factor that could account for positive results. Leaving is the most common action taken by women after all other ways of trying to manage the relationship have failed. However, it was found that this had no statistical impact on re-offending levels. There was some evidence that indicated that more serious offending was being perpetrated against women who had separated. This is consistent with other NZ and overseas research that women are at greater risk when they separate from a violent partner. It could also suggest that had these particular women stayed with their partner, there could have been more repeat attendance and even more serious injuries.

7. Encouraged women to ask for assistance.
8. Encouraged the supporters of women to seek assistance for her.

During the pilot, those women who had no previous contact with police were very impressed by their response. Those women whose partners had entered the project at Levels 2 or 3 because of previous incidents, were not impressed by the initial front line response. However, upon subsequent incidents occurring, these women were more positive as they could see major differences in the way the police were working.

Women saw the arrest of the offender as a positive response and considered that this was a major disincentive to continuing violence and that the police were taking the matter seriously.

The letters they received were really appreciated and helped women to feel less isolated and therefore less vulnerable. They also liked the fact that letters were being sent to the men, seeing this as official condemnation of their behaviour.

Visits, information provided and offers of Cocoon Watch were also appreciated. Police Watch, although often involving the least personal contact (drive bys may have been in the middle of the night, or knocks on the door by police often resulted in very brief chats), was found to be an intervention that attracted the most positive comments.

“The patrols were seen as a form of protection carried out by the police, rather than relying on the woman or her neighbours and other supporters; that is, someone in a position of power and authority was acting on her behalf without her intervention....Police Watch was re-interpreted (by the woman) so that any passing police car could be seen as there to support the woman.”

(Hanmer, Griffiths & Jerwood)

Women praised the consistency of service delivery by the police, particularly valuing the Police Watch; the visits; the rapid response to calls for help; opposition to bail, when previous bail conditions had been broken; and perseverance in locating offenders, when offenders had decamped from the scene, in order to make arrests.

Organisational Achievements

1. Involved all frontline staff.
2. Required few additional resources.
3. Established the accuracy of recording domestic violence incidents, which had previously been poor.
4. Developed recording categories for domestic violence.
5. Positive impact on uneven service delivery to victims and offenders.
6. Equal policing attention on victim safety and de-motivating the offender.
7. Improved agency communication and inter-agency co-operation.

Domestic Violence Victims Driven from their Homes

Many victims feel isolated and are often terrified of repeat incidents. This may result in them having to move home on numerous occasions, and potentially becoming homeless and being removed from friends and family, support networks, schools and general practitioners. Besides the disruption to their children's schooling, they may also experience disruption to their income. After all there is no point in trying to 'get away' from a known address, if the new home can be simply found by following the woman home from her employment, or the children from their school.

While home security and personal safety advice is often given, there are usually no resources available to make remaining safely in their accommodation a realistic one. In New Zealand, many women go from having their own accommodation, either as property owners, or as tenants, to being reduced to homelessness, a series of temporary accommodation, or much poorer accommodation located in less attractive communities, all as a result of violence. With every move, there are severe financial consequences and over a remarkably short period of time, many women and children go from reasonable comfort to poverty.

When women are forced by circumstances to go into a refuge it always requires major adjustments for them and their children. At a time of great personal crisis and fear they go from having their own home to having to share facilities (for instance one bathroom, one fridge, one stove), reside in one room of an overcrowded house and have to relate to three or more families in a similar situation. Sharing a house can be a very difficult experience at the best of times, but in these circumstances, it can often greatly add to everyone's stress. The reality in most New Zealand communities is that refuge bed space is at a premium and so many women are not able to get in even if they choose this option. Boys over the age of 14 years are not allowed to accompany their mothers. Older male children cannot be accommodated by refuges, resulting in the exclusion of some women, or in women having to be apart from their children.

Being a victim of domestic violence involves considerable emotional grief and for many women, being able to stay in their home and feel that they are both safe and comforted by having their possessions, stability, continuity, sense of control, sense of belonging etc is very important.

The impact of often hurried and perhaps frequent moves on young children, who are already traumatised by what they have witnessed, can be long lasting. This is often most clearly seen on the set backs they experience with their education as they change schools. Not only do they have to adjust to a new school environment, with a different teacher, lack of continuity in lessons but also they need to make a whole new group of friends. It is well recognised in research that frequent changes of schools has a major adverse effect on children's educational attainment levels, which usually means lifelong disadvantage.

Leaving home is therefore a last resort.

Local Authorities and the Homeless

The situation for people who are not able to find their own housing is completely different in the United Kingdom to the way it is here. In New Zealand, Housing New Zealand is a state agency charged with assisting people with subsidised accommodation. This accommodation is limited in number and only a proportion of those seeking it, are able to access it. In the United Kingdom, many services which in New Zealand are centralised, are devolved to local authorities. Under the Housing Act 1996, local authorities are required to find accommodation for the homeless. The local authority has its own properties but in addition it pays for homeless people to stay in private sector accommodation, most often owned by a registered 'social landlord'. It also pays for hostel accommodation and women's refuges and bed and breakfast accommodation.

Local authorities are expected, under recent changes to standards set for the good use of public funds, to take responsibility for ensuring safe housing for victims of

domestic violence (BV 225). Local authority housing policies should provide that women fleeing domestic violence who decline to return to their home under the protection of a non-molestation order (NZ Protection Order) or any other court order, should be considered homeless, on the basis that it is not safe for them to return. Sympathetic treatment should be given to victims of domestic violence, for example where there are rent arrears or a need to fit new locks. 'Best Value' standards, for the use of government money, set the expectation that local authorities should ensure that:

- That there is a minimum of one refuge place per ten thousand population.
- That there is a sanctuary type scheme (information follows).
- To report on the level of homelessness and subsequent re-housing as a result of domestic violence.
- To have tenancy agreements with a "specific clause stating that the perpetration of domestic violence by a tenant can be considered grounds for eviction." This does not require a criminal charge to be laid.

To assist local authorities with their documentation, a Department for Communities and Local Government document gives the following suggested wording for tenancy agreements:

"The tenant must not use threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) against any other person lawfully entitled to reside in the property. In the event of any domestic violence being reported to any statutory or voluntary agency, this will leave you in breach of your tenancy agreement and you can be evicted. It is sometimes difficult to prove domestic violence has taken place, so the word of the victim will be taken as a legitimate source of information and taken at face value unless there is firm evidence to the contrary. Evidence of domestic violence for eviction purposes does not need to rely on a criminal charge. Evidence may be based on civil evidence."

This fiscal pressure on local authorities has provided the context for a major enhancement of the Killingbeck model, a local adaptation in Cardiff, Wales which I heard about and more recently, to a major Government initiative – all designed to make victim's homes safer. These are outlined in the following sections of this report.

Killingbeck, Leeds Phase 2

When I visited in 2006, it was many years after the initial pilot and evaluation had been completed in 1999 and things had moved on. Not only were community groups more involved, but significantly, the Leeds local authority housing department was now a key partner with the police.

Constable John Rowson was my key informant. As a member of the Domestic Violence Unit he said that when they met with victims they had to judge for themselves what needed to be done, depending on the situation. The range of options now available to them was now much more comprehensive, although cocoon watch and police watch still continued.

An integral part of this approach is that there is always a consequence for offenders and an offer of support for victims every time an incident is reported. This is because the police know that if they let offenders get away with 'low level' offending, then this is likely to be repeated and escalate in severity. Research and their experience has

proven that it is a better use of police time to put the effort in at the beginning to “*nip it in the bud*”.

It is often the case that police arrive at a reported domestic incident to find that the offender has left the scene. If he is not located and arrested that night, the Domestic Violence Unit keeps a record of names and pass this on to their CID. If there are still outstanding names after the CID have tried to locate them, then the names are passed on to a neighbourhood policing team which is assisted by ‘tutor groups’ of new recruits. Once a month these teams “*do a blitz on them*”.

In a situation where the relationship had ended but he kept coming back and harassing her, the police now assisted her with making her home more secure, or if this wasn’t appropriate, referring her to a local refuge. The police work with the local authority housing staff, to have better security installed, including changing and improving locks. They felt strongly that Cocoon Watch was a very beneficial part of the way they worked, particularly in situations where victim may not be able to get to a phone. Constable Rowson’s view was that a woman at risk should not just rely on the police to protect her and it was much better for her to have her community actively engaged in assisting her to be safe, with her permission for this to happen. When approached by the police, he had found that neighbours or friends very rarely ever refused to assist, particularly as all that was required of them was to contact the police if they saw the offender in the area.

However the police also worked with the woman to think of other community agencies which would be able to provide appropriate support. There was still no local specialist domestic violence advocacy agency, able to provide crisis support, which they really felt the lack of.

A key resource for the police were the Family Outreach workers based in schools, which may have some similarities with New Zealand’s ‘social workers in schools’ programme. Although based in schools, these workers took their referrals from lots of sources, although their focus was on pre-school children. Workers used a needs approach when working with families referred to them. Woman who have lived in violent relationships have often been very isolated from family and friends, so workers would encourage them to “*get out of the house, give them purpose and a wider network ... encourage them to join play groups, take assertiveness classes, or even a college course.*” Obviously, some aspects of this type of support are only possible once the worst of a woman’s anxiety about her safety and practical issues have been dealt with.

The local Women’s Aid (refuge organisation) has an outreach worker who works with women with either no children, or older children. In this way, limited local advocacy/support services were able to share the work of assisting domestic violence victims, between them. Constable Rowson said that the local Victim Support service also helped women, but exactly what this help entailed, was not explored.

If the woman wished to remain living together with her violent partner, then the Domestic Violence Officer suggested that the offender move out for a period, even if this was only for a brief period. He also suggested that the offender attend a local stopping violence programme. In situations where there was serious violence occurring and the officer was extremely concerned, he also “*got housing in to wield a big stick*”. This could include having the offender evicted for breaching the terms of their tenancy, causing a nuisance, damaging property etc. If young children were

involved, then Social Services were also informed. They would then check their child protection register to see if they had their own records.

However, the Leeds City Council's housing department, through their Care Ring Services, and the Killingbeck police's partnership, is more famous for an innovative project involving lending high risk victims small, silent personal alarms which are monitored on a 24 hour a day basis. This is a portable alarm, which was originally marketed as an emergency help for the elderly, enabling them to summon help quickly. One alarm can be used time and again for crime prevention at different locations. Alarms are offered for a limited period, of 12 weeks, until it is considered the greatest risk period has passed.

These alarms have two parts to them. The first is a similar size and shape to a home telephone and this is usually connected into the telephone line. It can then be hidden from view in some discrete part of the home, for instance on top of a wardrobe. However, there have been problems with offenders cutting the telephone lines, which then deadens the personal alarms. To avoid this, some alarms are run through a sim card, which allows the machine to be plugged into the electricity supply, so that it doesn't need an open telephone line.

The other part of the equipment is a small, light device which can be either hung as a pedant around the neck, or attached to clothing. These are worn by the victim in and around the house, allowing her to go outside to hang washing or collect her mail from the letterbox, but not having a range much beyond this. If threatened by the offender, the woman can activate the alarm, which is completely silent, by pressing a button on the pendant, which opens a voice link. Even if the person is unable to speak, the origin of the call is evident to those monitoring the system. This then allows the organisation providing the monitoring service to listen in to anything that is being said and make recordings of this to be used later for evidence.

When alarms are activated the monitoring company immediately contacts the police and alerts them to an urgent situation. A number of years ago Preventing Violence in the Home read an evaluation of this project, which was considered highly successful, and subsequently we bought 20 alarms (more recently, we have added 10 more). Around the same time, a few were bought by the New Zealand Police and are in use in some districts around the country. As is the case in Killingbeck, when these alarms are installed a 'Special Situation Report' is forwarded to the Police Communications Centre, which briefly outlines the parties involved, previous history and the nature of the concern.

Our experience has been that the response by both victims and the police to these alarms has been exceptional. The alarms are lent by the agency to women who are in grave danger of further assaults and have resulted in them feeling less fearful of staying in their homes. The response by the police to any alarms that have been activated has been rapid, usually within a few minutes and generally more than one car is sent – sometimes the police helicopter also attends. The presence of the Special Situation Reports means that police are given far more comprehensive background information than is usually the case – all without the woman having to telephone for assistance.

Constable Rowson informed me that "*Housing*" got involved because it was "*cheaper to put locks in and set up the monitored alarm system, than to find women alternative accommodation ...Housing have to pay 300 pounds a week to the refuge if a woman goes into one*". Care Ring Leeds, which is part of the Leeds local authority, has been established to run a communication centre and install and monitor a whole range of

alarms primarily for domestic violence and burglary victims. They also suggest improvements on home security and arrange for other types of security modifications to homes to be done, for instance:

- Locks being changed or installed.
- Mobile phones which can only be used to dial 999 (NZ 111).
- Strong torches – to be used if the power is cut to the house.
- Installing CCTV cameras, which have a sensor so they are only activated when there is a movement.
- Reinforced doors and door frames – in New Zealand access is typically through a window, but in the UK access is usually through kicking in a door, because windows are double glazed and harder to break.
- Windows fixed.
- Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers.
- Hand held small personal alarms which can be carried about and emit a loud noise when activated – particularly useful when the woman is away from home, shopping or going to and from work.
- Sensor lighting.

In a Bradford study, (cited in Hester & Westmarland) having a combination of both a panic alarm and home security had the most impact on reducing repeat incidents. Women given only the panic alarm also had a marked reduction in recorded repeat reporting. Mobile phones alone had the least impact. But it is important that target hardening measures are offered within a wider framework of support and alongside regular risk assessments.

Realistically all these security options are only available to victims not currently living with the perpetrator of the violence. Not moving can enable victims to keep in contact with many of the 'protective' factors which might include family support, social networks, such as friends and colleagues, self-esteem and environmental factors, including housing which may well mitigate some of the consequences of domestic violence.

Sanctuary

It is not right that victims should have no other choice but to go into temporary accommodation or refuges, which can feel unsettling and cause family upheaval at the worst possible time. In the United Kingdom the homelessness legislation (Housing Act 1996) requires that local housing authorities must secure suitable accommodation for applicants who are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and who fall within a priority need group. If someone is at risk of violence if they were to remain in their home, then it is not considered reasonable for them to continue to do so. This has given rise to a number of different schemes funded by the local authority, which from a New Zealander's perspective seemed like amazing and unattainable resources.

The Sanctuary project is the most recent of these initiatives and was launched in 2004 in partnership with the government and the police. It is an alternative to temporary accommodation for families that have suffered from domestic violence. The major feature of this is the creation of a 'sanctuary room' – a 'fortified' safe room - within the victim's home, from where she can call for assistance and be safe until this arrives. A door to a main room, generally the main bedroom, is replaced with a solid core door and the door frame is reinforced. Two substantial locks are fitted to

the top and bottom of the door, three large steel hinges, hinge bolts and a door viewer. Window locks, front and back door locks and fire safety equipment are also provided. In addition to this room, other security measures can also be provided, for instance, locks on other windows and doors, fire blankets and emergency lighting.

Significantly, this option is provided to all applicants regardless of the status of their tenancy or ownership – ie not just local authority tenants. This is because, without this option, women and dependent children could then be classified as homeless and require assistance from the authority to find them suitable housing. Sanctuary scheme guidelines state that it should only be provided when it is the choice of the victim and where it is safe and appropriate for them to remain in their own accommodation. These guidelines require that it should be clearly presented as only one of the range of options open to those at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence.

The scheme should be implemented in partnership with the police, the fire service and a specialist domestic violence service, with support provided to the victim throughout the process.

However, many believe that sanctuary schemes are simply a cheap way for the government to deal with victims of domestic violence rather than the more expensive option of re-housing them or before or after a period in a refuge. Domestic violence is a factor in one in eight of all new cases of homelessness, which is around 13,000 homeless households a year. In Leeds, refuges are able to charge the local authority for each of the rooms they have occupied at the rate of 300 pounds a week. The work entailed in establishing a 'sanctuary' within a home is around 800 pounds, but this could be up to 2,000 pounds, depending on what is required. This is still much cheaper for local authorities than weeks, or months of having to provide funding for alternative housing.

Views in opposition say that these sanctuary rooms result in women made to feel like prisoners in their own homes. Those in support say that unfortunately, for many women, they would feel that way with or without bars on the windows. At least this way they can sleep at night.

Another point of view was provided by Constable Rowson who has had years of experience working with families to make their homes safer. The sanctuary concept relies on the woman having the time and ability to gather her children from possibly all parts of the house and get into the room, before the offender is able get to them. Constable Rowson thought that it was far better to make a whole house secure, if necessary putting bars on windows and doors and fitting new doors etc, rather than just making one room safe.

In the United Kingdom frightened victims who feel unsafe in their homes have a choice, at least in theory. For many women, making their homes more secure will not take away the reality of ever present danger and so for them it may be better to go into a refuge or move to new accommodation in a completely different area.

Risk Assessments

A major piece of research was undertaken of murders which had occurred in London from 1 January 2001 to 6 April 2002. Any murder occurring during this time became part of the study. In addition, in-depth analysis was undertaken of 400 serious domestic violence offences occurring in the first few months of 2001. This entailed offender profiling as well as analysing the context of the violence, behaviour, lethality and dangerousness.

The purpose of the study was to learn lessons about dangerousness, lethality, prevention, protection and enforcement. This has then led to improvements in the way professionals and agencies could work in order to better protect victims of domestic violence. The review came to the conclusion that a shared understanding of risk was critical when so many different organisations are involved. It recommended that it is necessary for everyone to be able to recognise who is high risk and focus resources on these people.

Risk assessments can not predict the behaviour of any single individual, but they can provide information about comparative risk, based on that of many individuals with similar behaviour and circumstances.

“Domestic violence is obviously much more widespread than domestic homicide, making it difficult to determine those women, from the large numbers who suffer domestic violence, who might be seriously ‘at risk’ of homicide.” (Bookman & Maguire)

However, risk factors predictive of homicide are also predictive of the occurrence of more serious physical and sexual violence and so a significant reduction of the frequency of continued serious violence should also have an impact on homicide figures.

“Generally speaking, predictions based on clinicians’ judgements have been found to have poor predictive value. On the other hand, claims of greater success have been made for predictions using actuarially based risk assessment instruments.” (Bookman & Maguire)

As a result of the murder review, a robust risk assessment tool was created which could clearly highlight to professionals the level of danger victims of violence were in. This model was described as being about **prevention** not **prediction**, to be used as an over arching model for case management decision making. It is important to note that the risk factors found in this review are consistent with those found in other studies, notably in the United States of America. Accordingly, it is very likely that they will be highly pertinent to risk assessment in this country.

High risk factors identified:

- Separation – victims who try and finish relationships are frequent homicide victims. Women were particularly at risk within the first two months.
- Child contact - of murders reviewed, 30% of the children involved actually witnessed the murder. Many of the murders happened as a result of disputes over separation and child contact.
- Pregnancy / New birth – assaults to pregnant women increase the risk of serious harm to both woman and baby.

- Escalation of abuse – frequency and severity. The time intervals, between assaults, decreases as the frequency increases.
- Cultural Issues and Sensitivity (for instance, English as a second language, ethnic minority, isolation of victim, being ostracised by community, rigid gender roles, stigma, insecure immigration status).
- Stalking – this was reported in 40% of the murders and the combination of stalking and obsessive thinking is highly related and extremely dangerous behaviours. Obviously stalking and separation, or intentions to separate, are highly co-related and women should be warned of the enhanced risk they face.
- Sexual Assault (and sexual jealousy) – Sexual assault was found to be associated with more serious injury. One in twelve of all reported domestic sexual offenders were considered to be very high risk offenders. It should also be noted that other studies have found that rape was associated in 75% of cases where women were desperate enough to kill their abusers.
- Attempts at strangulation - It was found that 27% of victims were stabbed, 20% died from head injuries and 11% were strangled.⁸
- Verbal threats to kill, or to commit suicide if the victim leaves. *“If I can’t have you, then on one can”* is a common threat, which leads to the continuation and escalation of violence post separation.
- Frequent use of alcohol and drugs.
- Access to guns or weapons.
- Unemployment – associated with a general recidivism. Low income and financial stress are also risk factors, with sudden changes of employment status, such as being fired or made redundant, may be associated with increased risk for violence.

Many excellent and sensible recommendations were made following the review and these include:

- The need for one risk assessment tool to be used as a basic framework by both government departments and partner agencies, in order to create a common understanding and language about risk. A number of NZ organisations are already using risk assessment tools. However, if these were used on a more integrated and multi-agency basis, their effectiveness would be vastly enhanced. Risk assessment is not a one off activity, as circumstances can change quickly and so they need to be updated on a frequent basis. This is most easily achieved when a number of organisations are using the same criteria for assessment, as different organisations will have contact with the victim at different times.
- That offenders should be charged with separate offences against the children, when children are present and witness domestic violence. This recommendation is consistent with New Zealand’s Domestic Violence Act (1995).

⁸ Death occurring as a result of a singular severe head injury, or the cumulative effect of a series of head injuries over several months, is not given enough attention in New Zealand. Each time a blow to the head is sustained, there is the risk of the brain not only being injured, but bleeding into the very small space between the brain and skull. It takes around six weeks for much of this blood to dissipate and during this period the victim is at heightened risk of death should she suffer a further head injury, as the more blood has no where to go but down the brain stem – resulting in death. Therefore two identical blows to the head, each a few weeks apart can be lethal. A review of 100 victims referred by the police, following an arrest, to Preventing Violence in the Home, found that 51% had sustained a blow to the head (Drumm 2000). If not death, head injuries can lead to chronic disability affecting cognitive functions such as decision making, impulsivity, low tolerance to stress, irritability, inability to concentrate etc.

- The devastating long term impact of witnessing violence is not formally recognised by the criminal courts. There should be a system for the sharing of information with child protection and domestic violence agencies, about potential safety issues which arise for both women and children as a result of the criminal court process.
- There should be a pre-release risk assessment review of offenders who have a history of domestic violence, between probation, police and prisons. Prior to the review being carried out, in the United Kingdom there was already a formal process for planning for the management of offenders considered to be dangerous to the public. These are called Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Introduced in April 2001, MAPPA's are convened under the terms of Section 67 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000). Following a study trip to the United Kingdom a few years ago by a previous Churchill Fellow, Alison Thom, these were introduced in the Auckland/Northland region and I understand other areas are in the process of commencing them.
- Judges and Magistrates were criticised in the review for continually bailing dangerous and habitual offenders. Judges need to be advised of risk information to ensure that dangerous offenders are not granted bail. Several murders were committed while the offenders were on bail. Currently information on risk is not provided to Criminal or Family Court judiciary.
- Given that between 20 – 40% of the UK prison population had a history of domestic violence, accredited stopping violence programmes should be provided within prisons.
- A national register of domestic violence offenders, with the suggestion that this should concentrate on offenders who were considered high risk of causing extreme violence.
- The use of a shared risk assessment framework should result in early identification and effective response to serious assaults, repeat victims and chronic offenders.
- Given the huge numbers of domestic violence cases coming to notice, start with a greatly enhanced standard of intervention when dealing with the most serious offences, as the numbers of these are smaller. As systems and resources for supporting victims improves, mainstream enhanced protective interventions to all cases.
- There should be forums specifically established to review high risk cases and these should include representatives from organisations working outside the criminal justice system. Health, child protection, housing, education, addiction services and mental health all had critical knowledge of risk factors prior to the murders.

Currently in New Zealand, consideration is being given to the commencement of domestic violence murder reviews and given the valuable information gathered in the United Kingdom, this is a very welcome and long over due step.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The MARAC was started in Cardiff, Wales, in April 2003, as a result of joint project planning by the Director of Women's Safety Unit, the local advocacy service and a senior police officer. The MARAC process is part of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA), that was introduced for the management of violent and sex offenders. MAPPAs are now a common feature across the United Kingdom, however the MARACs differ in two important respects. The first is that they focus is on managing the risk to victims and are initiated by their needs, rather than emanating from the need to manage offenders. Secondly, the agencies involved are not just criminal justice system departments, as they tend to be with MAPPAs.

The idea to establish a MARAC model came from taking a critical look at the resources available to their city and thinking about ways to make the best use of them. They had a limited advocacy resource and pressure on time available for inter-agency meetings. This model also had the benefit of being able to build on other models and research described previously in this report – some of which, for instance the homicide reviews and the development of MAPPA, were still very topical.

The MARAC is a multi-agency forum with the role to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase victim safety. Up to date information is provided by all participants who are working with the family. By sharing information, agencies get a better picture of victims' situations and so develop responses that are tailored to the needs and goals of individual victims and their children. Safe information sharing also allows agencies to manage the perpetrator in ways that reduce risk.

Ideally, it would be best to be able to discuss all reported cases, but the reality is that in a city there are too many. It would be impossible to provide the level of intensive agency resource required to respond to any but the ones in the direst situations. The MARAC focuses on high risk victims – women at risk of being seriously injured or murdered. Cardiff is a city of 305,500, which is reasonably similar to Auckland City's population of 370,000 and Christchurch's 316,000. In 2003, the South Wales Police received approximately 260 domestic violence complaints per month for the Cardiff Area. Of these around 24 women per month were classified as high risk and subsequently referred to a MARAC, which is slightly less than 10% of the total number.

The fact that it was developed in a city was a great attraction for me as I have heard about other initiatives in smaller New Zealand communities and felt so envious as I had thought that we could not do something so easily in Auckland. In fact, this model has a lot of similarities in common with a great model called TAIN, operating in Gisborne – but it also has some very significant differences. One example of this is that the MARAC was established to focus on high risk cases only, not every family violence case as TAIN does.

In a city there are so many new domestic violence cases being identified each week that we must have an ability to prioritise our response to families most at risk, rather than being swamped by numbers. The fundamental question of whether or not it is acceptable to concentrate efforts mainly on high risk cases, versus providing the same level of assistance to everyone, is a controversial and very upsetting one. It

raises many questions for advocates involved with helping people who are frightened and could reasonably be expected to be vulnerable to further danger. Is it okay to know about and decide to leave some women to deal with 'a little bit of violence', but not as much as that experienced by other women, by themselves, when we could give them support?

There are not only ethical concerns relating to issues of equity, but also anxiety about sometimes not knowing enough information to be able to judge whether or not someone is at risk, without making further time consuming enquires. Concurrently, there is also the reality of spreading ourselves too thin so we don't have the time to help people at imminent risk as much as necessary. High risk often, but not always, is often associated with high needs, for instance English as a second language, poverty, ill children, uncertain immigration status, lack of basic resources such as stable housing etc. With these very complex cases, we worry that if we don't step in early and provide a lot of support then the situation will often progress to a more serious situation.

In the end it comes down to – what is realistically achievable, given the huge need? This is the position that the Cardiff Women's Safety Unit arrived at and the MARAC became their answer.

However, this does not mean that they ignore all other victims of violence. The time intensive MARAC process is only for the most high risk victims, but the Women's Safety Unit also provide support to other victims which although relying on other agencies for resources and services, does not require them at the same level as MARAC cases. Over time, two things have happened which have had a dramatic impact on re-victimisation rates generally:

- As they have *"got the high risk cases sorted, and they haven't come back"*, Jan Pickles, the Director says that they have been able to drop the risk threshold down, so that women are now being referred to MARACs, with lower numerical risk assessments. In other words the bar has been lowered.
- But perhaps more importantly, the experience for all the diverse professionals of working together regularly to jointly case manage high risk cases has built an enormous amount of trust between them all. It has also served to educate all participants about the risk families are in and the effectiveness of everyone doing their bit to help. Therefore, when the Women's Safety Unit ask for help of a MARAC colleague outside of the meeting (from say, a probation officer or health nurse), for a woman at lower risk, they get the help they need.

The result of this is that

"In Cardiff, where the MARAC has been evaluated, the level of reported repeat victimisation has dropped from 32% in 2004, to an average of under 10% in the period from April 2006 to December 2006".

(National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan 2006/07)

In a recent conversation with Jan Pickles, she said that in fact their latest figures showed that the rate is now only 4%. **(There has also been a 17% drop in children going on the local 'at risk' child protection register)** This is remarkable as domestic violence victims all over the world, suffer incidents of repeated violence and

threats time and time again. In New Zealand this is a huge performance issue for the police as they work to try and reduce alarming rates of re-victimisation of between 31% and more than 41% nationally. This means that huge amounts of police time are taken up with attending these crimes, in one district anecdotally this is estimated to be 50% of their time – time not spent working on other types of criminal activity. Obviously, the human impact for terrified victims of constantly living with the fear of further assaults, never feeling safe, is a sense of hopelessness - in addition to the injuries sustained.

MARAC Objective:

Victim safety (not criminal conviction of offender, although this may be an outcome).

Women are often responsible for the care of children who are also at risk and so the MARAC considers their needs too. Traditionally support services have focused on helping the victim make informed choices. With a MARAC, the local agencies share some of this burden and help manage the risk that victim faces. The desired outcome of victim safety for those cases discussed at the MARAC can be measured by:

- Whether or not, and how many times, there are subsequent incidents reported
- Canvassing directly with victims what impact the intervention has had on their safety

An evaluation in May 2005 of the views of victims whose cases were brought to a MARAC, found that nearly all victims felt that it was a combination of their own strength and determination which was necessary for the multi-agency support and assistance to work. However, they felt that they needed this support and assistance provided by the MARAC before they could successfully move on following an often lengthy history of domestic violence. Many commented on the enormous amount of support they felt they had received and they made a specific point of noting that the support they received was from many different agencies, which had a big impact on their confidence.

A tangible statistic that the MARACs are having an effect is that since they have begun the murder rates have trended downwards. In 2004 prior to the MARACs beginning, there were 11 murders in the South Wales area, where Cardiff is the major city. Jan said "*and we knew most of them*". In 2006, there was one. However, this year there has been an aberration with six murders already, but these were of women who were "*unknowns to anyone – nobody knew anything about them.*"

The MARAC achieves this objective by:

- Having a shared understanding of the causes, and dynamics of family violence, specifically violence perpetrated by men on current or previous female intimate partners.
- Sharing information to increase the safety, health and well-being of child and adult victims of domestic violence.
- Determining whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual, or the general community.
- Jointly constructing and implementing a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm.
- Reducing repeat victimisation.
- Improving agency accountability.

- Improving support and safety for staff involved in high risk cases (by sharing risk assessment information it is possible to keep professionals like health visitors to the home aware that they could be at higher risk of harm).

In order to do this all agencies must have:

- A shared understanding of what constitutes risk.
- Confidence about information sharing.
- Commitment to safety.
- A common understanding of each agency's powers, responsibilities, limitations and obligations.
- A high degree of trust in each other and good working relationships.

Responsive Community

The MARAC ideally sits within a community which is highly responsive to victims of violence and its ability to be effective is diminished if the following other factors are not present:

- Pro-active community police response.
- Intensive advocacy services which assist with support, information and access to resources.
- Personal and home security for instance alarms, windows and doors being made more secure/substantial and locks changed.
- Basic resources such as housing, income, food, furniture, equipment etc being made easily available.
- Specialist Family Violence Court.
- Protection Orders easily available and acted upon by police and courts.
- Support with issues relating to children and the impact of the violence on them and on their custodial parent's ability to parent.
- Victim's motivation and determination to be free of violence and willingness to participate in interventions.

Who attends?

This is an integrated community model and so agencies invited to attend should be any that have a role to play in the victim's safety, so it is crucial to have non-criminal justice system groups there. This is really important in New Zealand as well, with so many different organisations introducing screening policies, for instance Health organisations and Work and Income. The effect of this is that it broadens the source of cases being referred in and expands the range of options available to make a difference.

Research has found (Bybee and Sullivan 1999) that access to resources and social support serve as protective factors against continued abuse, whilst also increasing the quality of life for many women. As the number of supportive people in a woman's life increases, the research indicates that so too do her options for protection and safety.

Those attending the MARAC should be senior staff who have the authority within their agencies to prioritise the actions that arise from the MARAC and to be able to make an immediate commitment of resources to those actions. The representatives who attend play a pivotal role, in that they are the conduit for information coming into the MARAC from their organisation and then for disseminating it back out again to staff working with the families. Some case managers may also attend to discuss

their own cases (for instance a probation officer, or social worker), after which they would generally leave the meeting.

Permanent Attendees

- Police.
- Social Services (in NZ: Child Youth & Services).
- Victim advocacy services (– This representation will work differently in various parts of the country, but generally it is which ever agency receives most of the community's family violence referrals, including POL 400s).
- Health representatives (in NZ: midwifery, public health, hospital staff, Plunket).
- Housing.
- Work and Income.
- Probation.
- Education.

In the United Kingdom these are the groups considered critical to the MARAC's success, as these agencies are most likely to have contact with most of the high risk cases discussed. Each agency is seen to contribute a unique and valuable perspective, and in combination, the information can provide an accurate assessment of both the risks faced by a victim and also how different agencies can contribute to her safety. For this reason it is vital that non criminal justice system agencies are well represented at the MARACs. For example, nursing services and others visiting the home will have a different perspective to that of police or probation, which are typically only aware of criminal incidents. Victim orientated agencies are able to provide information from the victim's perspective. Social services can provide information about the children, and take actions on their behalf. Police and probation are able to offer information about the perpetrator's history, and presence of other aggravating factors such as drugs or weapons.

In the United Kingdom, they seem to have a big advantage in that much of the housing, education and social service provision in an area is paid for, managed and run locally. In this country, our services are organised differently and so there may be significant co-ordination problems that may mean, particularly in cities, that it is not practical for some professionals to participate. This may be the case with independent midwives and educational professionals, for instance. As an example, there is no structure for one professional to represent all primary schools in an area. In Auckland City, where we are based there are 92 primary and intermediate schools. It would be impossible to have all of them individually involved, as this model relies on continuity of representation and shared understanding of the issues.

Obviously the smaller the area, in which a model such as the MARAC operated in, the less this is a problem.

Additional Attendees (as individual cases dictate)

- Perpetrator programmes.
- Mental health.
- Drug and alcohol services.
- Children's support organisations.
- Refuge – if they are not the primary advocacy service.
- Victim Support – if they are involved in providing a response to domestic violence incidents.

- Women's programmes.

Again this list reflects the circumstances operating in the United Kingdom. Perpetrator programmes are largely run by Probation in the United Kingdom, whereas here this is not often the case. Therefore, representation from stopping violence programmes should be core to a New Zealand model. We may well find in New Zealand, for instance, that high risk offenders overwhelmingly have drug and alcohol problems and so representation from these services may also be critical.

The MARAC has some similarities to New Zealand's Strengthening Families model, but it is not identical. One significant difference is that the victim and perpetrator do not attend. The victim is usually advised that the MARAC will discuss their case.

How does the MARAC work?

Referral

All agencies attending use the same risk assessment form and any one of these is able to refer cases to it. See sample referral form (see figure 2).

Lead Agency

Normally police or probation take this role and the meetings are chaired by an officer of the rank of Detective Inspector. The agenda, listing the cases to be considered by the next MARAC, is circulated 8 days prior to the meeting, by the lead agency. Minutes are also the responsibility of the lead agency.

Prior to Meeting

Prior to the MARAC, the police should immediately institute target hardening measures. These may include an 'occurrence marker' being placed on their data base, alerting police attending any subsequent incidents of the high risk the victim is under. In addition, locks may be changed and a police watch instituted. A police watch provides a visible police presence to both the victim and the offender and involves regular patrols within the vicinity of the incident, these may include visits to check on the safety of the victim.

If children are involved, children are referred as priority cases to child protection services (Child Youth and Family in New Zealand).

Once each agency receives the agenda, they should establish what information is held by their organisation about each case. This information should be looked at with reference to the risk factors. For instance, probation may have information about previous convictions, refuge may have information about threats to kill and hospital staff may know details of previous injuries sustained – and they may each be unaware of the others' information until they meet at the MARAC. A copy of the basic research form is available. This form helps agencies to share information in a consistent and time efficient way. See sample research form (figure 3).

MARAC Referral Form

To Lead Agency:	Ph:	Fax:	Date:
Victim: Name and date of birth Address of victim:			
Perpetrator: Name and date of birth Address of perpetrator:			
Children: Names and dates of birth Address of children:			
No of 'ticks' on checklist (possible total 20):			
Reasons for referral:			
Background and risk issues:			
Why does this case require a multi-agency approach?			
Is the person referred aware of the MARAC referral? YES / NO (Attach risk assesment where completed)			
Referring officer and agency:			
Ph:		Mob:	
email:			
Address:			

Figure 2.

Research form for case subject to MARAC review – strictly private and confidential

Name of Agency: Contact: Ph: email: Mobile:
Research all information, files and databases using NAME, DOB and/or ADDRESSES of ALL individuals concerned. Confirm basic contact information, ages of all concerned and number of children.
Contact relevant officer or support/key worker in your team and request current, accurate information and their professional opinion about the individuals concerned. Record this here.
Note recordings of last sightings, meetings or phone calls.
Note recent attitude, behaviour and demeanour, including changes.
Highlight any relevant information that relates to any of the risk indicators on the checklist.
Identify any other concerns you may have about the victim. Clarify any areas of potential misunderstanding for the partner agencies at the MARAC or inaccuracies on the agenda (eg information missing, more than one individual/ alias names, conflicting information, more/fewer children than on agenda).

Figure 3.

The Meeting

The MARAC is held fortnightly and about 15 - 20 cases are discussed. Mondays are often busy days in organisations and so MARACS are optimally held Tuesday or Wednesday to allow time for actions to be carried out prior to the weekend. The meetings typically last from 9am to 2pm with breaks for morning tea and lunch. Each case is given about 12 to 15 minutes discussion time. The meeting commences with the Chair reviewing the previous meeting's cases to check that actions agreed on have been carried out and if anything is still outstanding. Then the new cases are discussed in the following order:

- Women who are pregnant.
- Women with infants.
- Women with older children.
- Women without children.

This order was established to ensure that those attending were able to use their time as efficiently as possible. Normally representatives from children's services leave once their cases are completed.

Content

It may be useful to consider one of the underpinning philosophies of the MARAC at this point:

"We owe a duty of care to our clients since they have become our clients precisely because a propensity to harm exists. We need to make defensible rather than defensive decisions. We should not wait to manage the harm once it has occurred. The emphasis is on decision making processes and their management."

Many practitioners working fields where by the nature of their role they have access to confidential information feel reluctant to share information. They may be concerned about breaching their client's privacy and also anxious about breaching departmental policies, professional ethics or legislation. The safety of domestic violence victims and their children must come first. Information shared must be directly relevant to the safety of the victim:

1. Basic demographic information about victim and children.
2. Key risk indicators.
3. History of domestic/child abuse, sexual violence relating to victim or perpetrator.
4. The perspective of the victim – provided by the support agency.

Attendees sign a declaration at the start of each conference that information shared is strictly limited to the aims of the meeting. Information gained at the meeting cannot be used for other purposes without the permission of the agency supplying it.

Guidance on the legal ground for information sharing is well beyond the scope of this report. However, the recently released report by the *Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families* clearly signals government's intention to enhance the ability of government departments and community agencies to exchange information. The New Zealand Police have undertaken considerable work on information sharing guidelines.

Some practical examples of information sharing between agencies include:

- Police disclosing previous convictions and details relating relevant ones, this enables other agencies to be aware of the potentially violent person they may also be working with.
- Health and social services are able to provide information about particular needs of victims, perpetrators, and or their children which may be important factors to address. For example neglect of children, mental health problems, previous injuries requiring medical assistance.
- Housing can provide information about the tenancy of a particular address, which can help with making decisions about whether victims need to be re-housed, or whether perpetrators can be evicted.
- Advocates can provide information from the victim's perspective, for example whether her priority is relocating to another city, following through with the prosecution of a case or getting help for her partner. The goals of victims ultimately influence what the MARAC can and cannot accomplish.

Action Plan

The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individual agencies, it is not transferred to the MARAC. After each case is briefly discussed, the Chair briefly sums up information given and what each organisation has agreed to do to address needs and services identified. Minutes are taken and circulated after the meeting on the same day. These will include a list of actions and who is assigned them. This is in addition to the normal work of each professional with the victim or perpetrator. Agencies carry out actions on the same day as the MARAC is held or as soon as possible thereafter.

All agencies have an important role to play, but the police and the Women's Safety Unit were critical to information provision and implementation of resulting plan. The Women's Safety Unit is a team consisting of 11 people – one Director, three administrative staff, six victim advocates and one seconded police officer (until recently, there was also a seconded nurse who developed a screening response in the local hospital emergency department).

The following are examples of usual tasks allocated:

Advocates: Make, or continue contact with the victim to get current information from the victim, or to inform her about actions other agencies were planning to take on her behalf. Advocates often have a liaison and co-ordination role with other agencies. Victims get given a diary, which advocates had found was good for people with chaotic lives to have, as they may suddenly have lots of appointments. It is also useful for women to keep records of physical and psychological violence. This is not only useful for evidence, but also reinforces to the woman how much is going on, demonstrates a picture/pattern of behaviour and incidents

Police: 'Law enforcement' type actions. Further investigation of the original offence, bail breaches, protection order breaches, or potential additional charges. They also put occurrence markers on their data base and implement target hardening strategies. They would also pro-actively plan with probation how to jointly manage an offender about to be released from prison.

Probation: Tended to use their criminal justice powers in many cases - recalling parolees to prison, breaching supervision orders, issuing instructions relating to residence. They frequently worked with other organisations to arrange probation

office appointments with the offender, timed to suit home visits to the victim by advocates, social workers or health professionals.

Social Workers: Were likely to jointly work with other professionals such as advocates, or health professionals or police.

Health: Were most likely to liaise with the advocates. They would refer their patients to the advocacy service and would advise the advocates of victim, perpetrator, or child health issues relevant to safety.

Housing: Fast-tracked victims into appropriate housing and were most likely to work closely with the advocates. Their information relating to who had tenancy was often critical to the decision making of the other agencies. They also assisted with alarms and house security, such as changing locks. Many women commented in the evaluation how much they valued having their locks changed promptly.

Resource Implications

In this country we have not got any recent research on the costs of domestic violence, the last being published in 1994 by Suzanne Snively. However, this work has been done in the United Kingdom with research being published in 2004 (Professor Sylvia Walby *the cost of domestic violence*). Based on this, the MARAC was considered a cost effective use of statutory time and resources.

Agencies attending regularly spend around one to one and half days per meeting, or two to three days per month. This is half a day at the meeting and a day and half in gathering information ahead of the meeting and implementing actions after the meeting. The workload of the lead agency is 3 days per meeting, which includes time needed to compile the agenda, write up minutes, and an additional day of administrative support.

However, this 'pro-active' time has been found to considerably reduce time spent on 'reacting' to further victimisation, particularly for the police. Taking into account the costs typically associated with high risk cases, including police call outs, major investigations following serious assaults or murders, general practitioner visits, prescriptions, A&E attendance, ACC payments, stay in refuge, prosecution, social work involvement etc, not addressing very high risk cases in an effective manner is a very expensive choice to make.

Risk Assessment

Effective and consistent risk assessment is at the heart of the MARAC. A common understanding of risk is fundamental. As previously discussed there are very realistic fears that risk assessment will be used to limit service to victims. It is essential that all victims of domestic violence be offered assistance, by any services that are necessary to keep her safe. However, in this discussion I am specifically talking about a model which involves the coordinated response of a multi-agency group. It is not possible for this model which is a very time consuming and high resource approach, with an expectation of rapid response, to be available to every person.

Agreement by all organisations participating is required:

- On the process for screening by 'generic' professionals and consequent referral.
- On what should be included in the full list of questions on the risk assessment checklist.
- That all questions must be asked.
- What is the threshold for very high risk at which one must breach client confidentiality.
- How and with whom they share risk information.

Referral to a MARAC is based principally on an actuarial assessment of risk. However, the work of the MARAC permits a comprehensive clinical overlay by multiple practitioners to this. In other words, a numerical risk figure is calculated with the use of commonly shared risk assessment tool, referral into the MARAC is made dependent on an agreed numerical level (for instance, seven positive responses out of a possible twenty) and then during the meeting there is the opportunity to share information and discuss the relative risk of individual families.

Risk Factors – five main categories

- Nature of the abuse (emotional, physical, sexual).
- Historical pattern of behaviour (previous convictions or abusive behaviour).
- Victim's perception of risk (specific fears for themselves and children, pets).
- Specific factors associated with an incident (use of weapons, threats to kill).
- Aggravating factors (drugs, alcohol, financial problems, social/cultural isolation).

Arriving at what everyone could agree was a robust risk assessment tool took some time. In December 2002, the South Wales Police piloted a *Victim Initial Risk Indicator* form for responding officers to complete at the scene of domestic violence incidents. This was based on a review of 47 domestic homicides investigated by the South Wales Police, relevant research and wide discussion with their multi-agency partnerships. In addition, survivors of domestic violence reviewed and approved the form.

Following this in 2003, there was a major study undertaken of homicide cases and 400 other cases (Richards). This study has been previously discussed in this report. The research findings corresponded closely to that of Dr Jacqueline Campbell's research. She is a leading American expert on risk assessments and her assessment tool is widely used, including in many health settings and in some justice settings, such as the San Diego Family Violence Justice Centre. The similarity of the findings in these three studies, gave the people setting up the MARAC great confidence in its suitability for use, although they enhanced the risk assessment by adding five additional questions. This assessment tool is now used widely, including by their Family Court in contested child protection cases. It combines an actuarial assessment of twenty questions and some additional questions requiring clinical assessment. In order to ensure that clinical assessments are consistent, debate by practitioners, in every area where the tool is used, is required to define appropriate responses.

With the success of the MARAC model about half the police in the United Kingdom now use the South Wales police risk form (the F.S.U.9)⁹ which had been designed as a multi-agency risk assessment tool. (See sample risk assessment form figure 4) Other police areas use a range of different risk assessment tools, with the most common one being that developed by the Metropolitan Police (the SPECSS). Jan Pickles said that the SPECSS tool is a very good one, but was designed for police use and has not translated well as an ideal tool for multi-agency work. As a result in some areas both are being used, or hybrid combinations. There has been a move by the Association of Police Officers to stop the proliferation of risk assessment tools and they are working on resolving this issue currently.

In Cardiff they consider the high risk threshold to be:

- 7 positive responses to the risk assessment questionnaire.
- Or 4 or more positive responses to the 5 questions asking responses to 'causes significant concern' or Question 1's 'is record domestic abuse related?'
- Or more than 3 police call outs in a year.
- Or a particularly isolated victim, either due to the physical location of her home, or lacking support from friends, family and wider community – including women from minority groups with limited support from their own culture.

In other parts of the UK this threshold varies depending on the volume of cases reported.

Protocol

Prior to the establishment of a MARAC each organisation needs to sign a formal service protocol agreeing:

1. Appropriate Resources

- To actively participate and provide appropriate resources.
- Senior staff representation.
- To ensure continuity of representation, where possible.
- Each of these representatives to undertake some initial joint training.

2. Risk Assessment Tool

- To work proactively to agree on a shared risk assessment tool – 'apples with apples'.
- Used by all organisations.

3. Sharing Information

- To obtain organisational legal opinions on information sharing, with an emphasis on how this should be done, rather than why it should not.
- To disclose confidential client information, making 'defensible' case notes in client files clearly outlining reasons for this.
- To safe guard information disclosed by other organisations in the way this is recorded, used and stored.

⁹ A copy of this is included in this report, but it has been taken off the Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) website, so it is not labeled with the South Wales Police logo or report code, FSU9.

CAADA Recommended Risk Assessment Checklist for IDVAs and other agencies

(South Wales Police checklist using non-police language assuming the IDVA or other professional will be discussing this with their client.)

QUESTIONS (do not tick shaded boxes)	Yes (tick)	No/ Don't Know (N/DK)	Significant Concern
1. Does partner / ex- partner have a criminal record for violence or drugs?			
If 'yes', is the record domestic abuse related?			
2. Has the current incident resulted in injuries?			
If 'yes', does this cause significant concern?			
3. Has the incident involved the use of weapons?			
If 'yes', does this cause significant concern?			
4. Has your partner/ex-partner ever threatened to kill anybody? If 'yes', which of the following? (<i>tick all that apply</i>) Client <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other Intimate Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Others <input type="checkbox"/>			
If 'yes', does this cause significant concern?			
5. Has the partner/ex-partner expressed / behaved in a jealous way or displayed controlling behaviour or obsessive tendencies? If 'yes', describe in summary:			
If 'yes', does this cause significant concern? Give details:			
6. Has there been/going to be a relationship separation between you and your partner/ ex-partner?			
7. Is the abuse becoming worse and/or happening more often?			
8. Are you very frightened? Give client's perceptions of the situation indicating what they think the partner/ex-partner will do.			
9. Is your partner/ex-partner experiencing/recently experienced financial problems?			
	Yes	No/ DK	
10. Does your partner/ex-partner have / had problems with the following: Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/>			

Drugs <input type="checkbox"/>		
11. Are you pregnant?		
12. Is there any conflict with your partner / ex-partner over child contact? Describe in summary:		
13. Has partner/ex-partner attempted to strangle/choke you or past partner?		
14. Have you or your partner/ex-partner ever threatened/attempted to commit suicide? If 'yes', which of the following? Client <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/ex-partner <input type="checkbox"/>		
15. Has your partner/ex-partner said or done things of a sexual nature that makes you feel bad or that physically hurts you? Give details:		
16. Are you afraid of further injury or violence?		
17. Are you afraid that your partner/ex-partner will kill you? (See note on victim's perception of risk in Guidance at end of form.)		
18. Are you afraid that your partner/ex-partner will harm her/his children?		
19. Do you suspect that you are being stalked?		
20. Do you feel isolated from family / friends? Give details:		
Advocacy Worker's perception (please complete this section with your observations about the client's risk especially where there are lower numbers of 'yes' responses):	Total	Total Significant Concerns

The guidance below is based on the experience of the South Wales Police force and the Womens' Safety Unit in Cardiff.

Guidance on classifying risk levels

<p>Very High Risk = 10 ticks in the yes box OR 4 significant concerns (Q1-5) OR If there are 3 police call-outs in 12 months</p> <p>High Risk = 6-9 ticks in the yes box OR 3 significant concerns (Q1-5) OR 2 police call-outs in 12 months</p> <p>Medium Risk = Up to 6 ticks in the yes box OR 1 or 2 significant concerns (Q1-5)</p> <p>Standard Risk = Where no question is ticked in the yes box</p> <p>Maximum number of ticks = 20 (do not include 'significant concern' questions in this total)</p> <p>In all cases, IDVAs should take the victim's perception of their risk very seriously and should use their professional judgement if a client appears to be at high or very high risk even if they do not meet the criteria outlined above.</p>

This form, originally developed by South Wales Police, has been updated to reflect the research on its use by IDVAs both at the Women's Safety Unit in Cardiff and the ASSIST advocacy service in Glasgow. CAADA has added a 'don't know' option as there is a risk of ticking 'no' when information is not known, which might be incorrect and give a false low risk level. The levels of risk are useful in clarifying the different response that a service will offer to a client depending on the severity of their situation.

Health Warning

IDVAs must be aware that this is a risk indicator checklist and not a full risk assessment. It is a practical tool that can help you to identify which of your clients should be referred to MARAC and where you should be prioritizing the use of your resources. Risk is dynamic and IDVAs need to be alert to the fact that risk can change very suddenly.

Risk indication is more about balancing information with current practice, knowledge and previous experience and then making a judgement about whether there is a strong possibility that a person is at risk of serious harm.¹⁰

Figure 4.

¹⁰ South Wales Police risk indicator checklist guidance for officer.

4. Collaboration

- To work collaboratively.
- To think laterally about possible case management strategies.

5. Immediate Action

- To promptly action case management plans agreed.

Evaluations

There have been three evaluations published by Dr Amanda Robinson, that are very positive, all of which showing that the MARAC was having a significant impact from very early in its existence. In fact the results achieved by the MARAC model have been so impressive that they have attracted national acclaim and along with specialist domestic violence courts, are central to the government's national domestic violence strategy. MARACs are now being rolled out across the United Kingdom.

A brief summary of two of Dr Robinson's evaluations gives an indication of the outcomes achieved – and it must be remembered that these are for cases which are the most difficult and dangerous and one of the defining characteristics of domestic violence is the high re-victimisation rate. An evaluation published in June 2004, covering an assessment period of six months from October 2003 - March 2004, included a sample group of 146 women and found that:

- At the time of the offence which led to the MARAC, 46% of the offenders were the ex-spouse, or ex-partner of the victim – so separation was no protection from serious danger.
- After the MARAC, 66% of victims experienced no further incidents of violence. Given the six month research time frame, the longest period post-MARAC was 6 months, but for some victims it was only one month.
- Of the victims in the sample who were six months post-MARAC, 62% were violence free.

A further study was published May 2005, which followed up on 104 of the same women from the first evaluation sample group, to assess the longer term impact of the MARAC. The assessment period was over October 2004 to April 2005. This study found that:

- 42% of victims experienced no repeat incident, measured by reports to the police and telephone interviews with victims, conducted by the researcher.

The percentage of victims who remain violence free reduced over the 12 month period, however the figures are still very impressive. This is particularly significant since these women had been assessed as very high risk and had extended domestic violence histories. Those who did suffer repeat victimisation typically suffered a less severe level of abuse than had previously been the case. However, it should be noted that often when women were assaulted again shortly after a MARAC, this group remained at risk of further assaults. Therefore, this is an important indicator that further interventions need to be targeted to them over the coming months.

The evaluations of the work of the MARAC has found that four of the risk factors were significantly correlated with victims making further domestic violence complaints, following the case being discussed at the MARAC. These are:

- Aggravating problems (alcohol, drugs and/or mental health).
- Jealous or controlling behaviour.
- Separation.
- Abuse becoming worse or more frequent.

The combined work of advocacy services, improved policing and the MARAC process have had a major impact on public confidence. Health workers including midwives, health visitors, and school nurses, have a particularly important role in identifying victims, assessing risks and triggering support from health and other services. Information on risk factors high-light the potential contributions of other public services, for example housing services which are often in contact with victims at times of heightened vulnerability.

However some notes of caution should be mentioned:

- As mentioned above, this should not be used to deny any support for victims of violence not deemed high risk.
- This is particularly important as in New Zealand our cut off point may well be much higher than Cardiff's seven affirmative answers. We have found from analysing our referrals using the risk assessment form that a greater proportion of the women we see in our Auckland based agencies would be considered at extreme high risk in Cardiff. If we are only able to realistically discuss 15 cases a fortnight, or even a week, due to resource constraints, there will be many women who are also at great risk, who will miss out.
- The model has been really well evaluated, but the context it is operating in is significant. Cardiff is a small city so it has a relatively manageable population. Nor does it have a hugely ethnically diverse or mobile population – 92% of the population are white. The key people involved in the MARAC have been around 5 – 7 years, so levels of history and trust are very high.
- This model works on the assumption that the people and organisations that highly confidential information is shared with, will do something safe and appropriate with it. It is essential that abusive people can not access it.

In summary, the MARAC offers the opportunity for us in New Zealand to build on existing community responses to establish a comprehensive, better informed and co-ordinated, earlier and more proactive response across all relevant agencies. These include social services, health services, the criminal justice system, housing, income support and the police. There is usually a wealth of information held in the community about all the people impacted by domestic violence in a particular household, but it takes a MARAC type process for that information to come together in a way that can actually create meaningful difference in people's lives. Models like the MARAC offer the opportunity to enhance awareness, involve more agencies, and ultimately improve policy and practice by developing a domestic violence strategy that can be implemented consistently across a whole local area.

General Comments about the Justice Sector Response

In the course of preparing this report I was not able to spend the time necessary to properly research and consider everything I saw or heard about during my trip to the United Kingdom. Over the next year it is my intention to continue working my way through the huge amount of material I collected and as I do, write further reports and provide information to relevant parties.

Topics for further consideration include:

- Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.
- The role of education in working with children affected by domestic violence.
- Business alliances to address domestic violence.
- Stopping violence programmes.
- Advocate training programmes.
- Role of Probation Officers.
- City wide domestic violence strategies.
- Independent advocates working within specialist domestic violence courts.
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- Sentencing guidelines.

The following points are therefore just general observations, with little in the way of context.

Police Domestic Violence Units

For many years I have read about the existence of specialist teams within the United Kingdom constabulary, with great envy. When people are given the opportunity to move from having a generalist role to having a specialist focus, when there are sufficient numbers of them all doing similar specialist work, when they have the support of their national and local management and when they have a level of resource – then not only is there enhanced effectiveness, but also the potential for creativity exists. Obviously not everyone thinks about their work in new ways, but I was impressed by the police domestic violence unit representatives I met with who were justifiably so proud and enthusiastic about what they had achieved.

Information about the Killingbeck police, in Leeds, has already been described, as has the Cardiff, South Wales, police's crucial partnership in the development of the MARAC model. In Cheshire, the police have piloted the use of a domestic violence investigation car. This works 6pm to 3am every Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and on the evenings of every English football game. This team is composed of a police investigator who checks on arrests by other officers, auditing files, re-interviewing victims if necessary and a forensic specialist who collects evidence and takes photos of the victim and the crime scene.

In New Zealand, of all government departments, the Police have led the way in their proactive response to domestic violence. For many years within Police management there have been passionate advocates for continuous change and a huge interest in learning from local and international good practice models. However, the police have a responsibility for a large range of crime prevention and deduction activities and the need to juggle competing resource priorities, which has limited resources available to

address domestic violence. More recently, there has been an increasing acceptance of the value of developing specialist teams at a local and national level and so in my opinion this country is poised for some major advancements in police response. As a major gateway into the criminal justice system, the impact of this enhanced response by the police will be profound.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

This is a particular area of interest for me and observing the West London Magistrates' Court which has a specialist court in operation was one of the key objectives of my trip. I did do this but unfortunately was not able to spend as much time as I had planned, with the local community organisations which are integrally linked to the court. This is because I cancelled meetings in order to travel to Wales to observe the MARAC meeting.

Since my return, four new specialist courts have been established in New Zealand and I had hoped to have information from my trip available prior to this. However, I have not had the available time to spend on analysing all of the resources I received and written observations I made whilst visiting the court. Instead, another staff member from Preventing Violence in the Home has written several reports to help inform the development of these New Zealand Courts. I have edited both of these and provided separate commentary and written communication to the Chief District Court Judge.

Over the coming couple of months, I plan to write a report specifically on these courts and provide it to the Chief Judge, judiciary involved in new specialist domestic violence courts and to the police. I am also a speaker at a forthcoming judicial conference on specialist domestic violence courts, where I will summarise the major attributes of how the courts operate in the United Kingdom and how they fit into wider community initiatives.

In the United Kingdom, there was a lot of controversy about these courts, with a variety of opinions about their worth, but people did speak very favourably about the West London Magistrates Court. Very briefly, the West London Magistrates Court seemed to be an extremely effective model and many aspects of its operation and underpinning philosophies we could do well to emulate. Formally agreed written protocols and clearly defined roles for all key stakeholders were essential to the strength of the model. The court is based on the 'power and control model' for understanding domestic violence, which is popularly known as the 'Duluth Model'.

The goals the court strives for:

- There is a safer community.
- Women and children, who are usually the victims of domestic violence, have safe choices and the opportunity for self determination, as a result of the court process.
- A reduction in the severity and dangerousness of domestic violence.
- A reduction in repeat victimisation.
- An increase in service user satisfaction.
- A reduction in the long term negative consequences for women and children.
- Upholding of human rights.
- A decrease in social acceptance of domestic violence.

The objectives of the court are to ensure that:

- Women and children have increased safety.
- The abuser is held accountable for crimes committed.
- The onus for holding abusers accountable lies with statutory and other agencies and is not the responsibility of victims.
- There is a clear message of intolerance of domestic violence conveyed to abusers and the general public. This message is that domestic violence is unacceptable behaviour, is a crime and will be taken seriously by all statutory and community agencies involved.

The way that this is achieved is that:

- The court is part of an integrated and co-ordinated local service.
- There is standardised consistent practise which is systemic, rather than reliant on individual practices.
- Matters are fast tracked through the court.
- Key stakeholders have been trained in domestic violence dynamics.
- An independent victim advocate presents information to the court on behalf of victims.
- There is ongoing data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

In the United Kingdom and in New Zealand, a coordinated attempt by the local community to protect women at risk, has been jeopardised by the recurring situation of offenders receiving bail at court after being charged with serious assaults, or having matters dealt with leniently. It was hoped that this problem would be resolved by the introduction of specialist domestic violence courts around the United Kingdom. One police officer said *"We talk about women withdrawing complaints, yet it appears that the courts are withdrawing from their responsibilities far too often."*

"It is about an approach which situates the court system and the Criminal Justice System as part of a community wide response to domestic violence... We also want to develop court systems which put domestic violence victims at the heart of the process." (National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan)

Five specialist courts had been operating in various parts of the United Kingdom, each completely independent and different from each other. There was an evaluation done of these courts and then two further ones were established in Croydon and Gwent, based on the best of the original five. At the time I visited there were 25 of these courts and 35 court districts had made application to be considered for 25 new funded courts, due to commence in September 2006. To be eligible for consideration, areas wanting a specialist court had to have multi-agency, high risk forums already in place, based on the MARAC model. Funding for these courts included money to cover the cost contracting with local advocacy services to provide independent victim advocates.

Domestic violence is a volume crime and the specialist domestic violence courts are a means to bring offenders to justice. However, many advocates were not very impressed by the new courts and were aghast at the government *"pouring money into courts, when it would be better to put money into advocacy services, refuge or children's services, where women were actually going for help"*. A comment on the specialist courts by one person was *"that the outcomes were not that flash generally – the most common sentence is a fine and the next most common one is a bind over to keep the peace... all this focus on establishing more and more of these courts, but no one has done any work about victim satisfaction and safety to see if they make a difference."*

At Croydon the victim advocates, who see their role as assisting women to become safer, have withdrawn from working at the specialist court. This is because *“they were under pressure to support women who weren’t high risk, but were pursuing prosecutions and to not support women who were high risk, but were too scared to act as witness for prosecution”*.

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates

“The role of IDVA is a pivotal component of both the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) model and the Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) ... IDVA involvement with victims of domestic violence has been shown to decrease victimisation, increase notification of children at risk and reduce the number of victims unwilling to support a prosecution ... During 2006/2007 3 million pounds in funding has been used to seed fund IDVAs in the 64 SDVC areas.” (National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan 2006/2007)

The role of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) was initially developed to act as an advocacy and support professional, working alongside others in the criminal justice system, especially the specialist domestic violence courts, to support victims. In the United Kingdom, this role is seen as critical to the success of the courts, as it has been in specialist courts operating in the United States. Since then, the role has been expanded out to have a much wider brief, which includes taking a pivotal role in MARACs and other community based inter-agency work.

Currently the Ministry of Women’s Affairs are researching an independent advocacy role to work with the new specialist domestic violence courts, at the request of the Taskforce on Family Violence. These advocates have proved to be an integral part of the new courts in the United Kingdom, so it is hoped that the Taskforce will support similar funded positions to be available wherever the new Specialist Family Violence Courts have been rolled out. Independent advocates require formal status within the courts, with speaking rights, to allow them to carry out an appropriate advocacy function.

They should not be employees, or contracted by the Ministry of Justice, as there are inherent problems with Justice’s requirement to take a neutral stance. In New Zealand, issues relating to neutrality and privacy have severely compromised Justice employed victim advisors’ effectiveness and severely hampered their ability to collaborate with local community services – thereby limiting victims’ access to coordinated services.

An important part of Independent Advocates’ work is to help victims access services, coordinate their delivery and as a result this often leads to victims feeling more confident about the justice system’s willingness and ability to support them. As a consequence, as has been found in the United Kingdom, they are more inclined to act as witnesses in defended hearings. However, overseas experience is that there are also significant draw backs to having this role funded by the police (or prosecution services). The role invariably changes from one of providing independent advocacy in support of victims and working in their best interests, to focussing primarily on ensuring successful prosecutions, by encouraging victims to act as witnesses.

There are many aspects to the way the United Kingdom has approached the introduction of this role which are commendable. I was very impressed by the way they have gone about ensuring that the new positions have the best possible chances of success. They have contracted an independent community agency, CAADA, to identify the scope of the role and to develop and deliver an appropriate training programme. CAADA very kindly gave me a copy of this training programme which we hope will be useful in this country when advocacy positions within the court are agreed to.

Crown Prosecutions Service

In the United Kingdom, Police are able to arrest offenders but don't charge them with crimes, this is the prerogative of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). A police supervisor monitors the process that investigating officers carry out to ensure that they are carrying out their work appropriately, but then the case is handed over to the CPS for consideration.

I heard quite heated debate about the role of the CPS with domestic violence cases. This centred on whether or not they acted as gatekeepers. At the time I visited, only one domestic violent incident out of ten, the police investigate and refer to the CPS is then taken up by them to be prosecuted. The police have a pro-arrest policy but prosecutors are not taking them all on. This has resulted in a significant balancing issue as the police are being told that offences have to reach a high threshold before they can proceed to a court case and so are often erring on the side of caution when arresting – and concurrently, there is anxiety that cases are not resulting in being charged, when they should have done. Lawyers are expensive and have limited time and so therefore there is a tension between what the police are told to do and what then happens.

Another perspective was that since the Crown Prosecution Service have taken over the responsibility for making charges, there is now a better level of charges being laid. This has also resulted in police carrying out more directed, better quality investigations, gathering evidence which is robust enough to result in convictions.

However, cutting across this debate has been an enormous push, over the last eighteen months, to improve the response of the CPS, which has resulted in:

- New domestic violence prosecution guidelines.
- All staff being trained in how to work with domestic violence cases.
- A very comprehensive employer response being developed.
- A 'snapshot' of data being analysed to give a baseline for improved responses.
- New very specific key performance indicators, that measure numbers of successful prosecutions, reductions in discontinued domestic violence cases and the proportion of successful outcomes in relation to the number of incidents.

Police Evidence Gathering

It has been found that when photographic evidence was collected, victims were more likely to give witness statements and less likely to retract their statements at a later stage. Photographic evidence has also been found to be more compelling evidence in court cases and offenders are less likely to persist with not guilty pleas. Having the ability to take this evidence gave constables greater confidence that their cases would stand up in court and as a consequence this may have led them to make more arrests. I was informed that in Cheshire, during a study involving the use of Polaroid cameras for police working on domestic violence cases, they found that there was a higher tariff sentence compared with cases where there was no photographic evidence.

There is a huge focus by the United Kingdom police on improving the way investigations are conducted and to ensure that more thorough evidence gathering is undertaken (see figure 5). Officers in England and Wales and Scotland instructed to conduct investigations with a view to obtaining robust corroborating evidence which would be sufficient to build a strong case, regardless of whether or not the assault victim agreed to be a witness. The objective is to minimise the onus placed on victims to provide testimony. Part of typical evidence gathering check lists include:

- Recordings of 999 calls (111 in NZ).
- Previous history.
- Demeanour of victim and/or suspect.
- Signs of injury.
- Subsequent photographing of victim's injuries - initial photographs to be followed with further photographs taken 24 to 48 hours later, when soft tissue contusions become more visible.
- Signs of recent disturbance at scene.
- Statements from the victim and other witnesses.
- **Statement from child if an essential witness and of an appropriate age.**
- House to house enquires with neighbours.
- Statements made by suspect.
- Hospital records.
- Answering machine tapes, or cell phone texts or messages.

In Scotland they are bound under legislation to advise the 'Principal Reporter' (a role which may have some similarities to the Commissioner for Children) full details of:

- Any child's presence during an incident.
- Any child normally present at the home, regardless of whether they were there at the time.
- The child's demeanour.
- Whether they were exposed to risk or unnecessary suffering during the incident.

At the time of completing a report as a result of a domestic violence incident, police are required to **make a referral to the Health Visitor or Midwife** in addition to referrals to the local child protection service. This would be an excellent idea for New Zealand police to consider – although there is not a straight forward referral process here, as there is in the United Kingdom.

File Preparation required By the Crown Prosecution Service

- All relevant victim statements (including retraction statements, medical and victim personal statements, as appropriate);
- All relevant witness statements (including, for example, those of neighbours and children);
- Case exhibits (including photographic evidence);
- Audio or videotapes of victim, witness and defendant interviews;
- Any photographic or CCTV evidence;
- Relevant police records, for example, pocket notebook entries, risk assessments recorded on forms, incident logs, custody records and 111 tapes, where appropriate;
- Crime reports from previous incidents including those against other victims, highlighting potential similar fact evidence;
- History of the relationship, particularly if there has been violence or abuse in the past;
- Any past or current civil proceedings;
- Any previous convictions;
- Details of the victim's injuries (medical, photographic and written);
- Description of the scene with any photographic evidence or relevant statements including those from the first officer at the scene;
- Whether the suspect/defendant used a weapon;
- Whether the suspect/defendant made any threats before or since the incident;
- Whether the suspect/defendant planned the incident;
- Details of any children of the family including where they were during the incident and the impact of the domestic violence upon them;
- Chances of the suspect/defendant offending again;
- Status of the victim's current relationship with the suspect/defendant;
- Effect on that relationship of continuing with the prosecution against the victim's wishes, and the victim's views on their own and their children's personal safety if a prosecution does not follow;
- Location of the address of the victim and the suspect/defendant in relation to one another;
- Whether bail conditions apply;
- Whether counter allegations have been made;
- Whether the defendant, victim or witness requires an interpreter;
- Names and details of any interpreters used during police interviews;
- Any requests by the defendant, victim or witness for an interpreter of the same sex or of a particular ethnic group, political orientation or affiliation;
- Whether there is a need for an early special measures meeting with Prosecutions;
- Where applicable, which special measures would be available to assist a witness and why;
- Evidence of the defendant or the defendant's relatives or associates contacting the victim since the incident or post charge;
- Whether an independent victim advocate has supported the victim;
- Any relevant records or statements from other agencies, for example pre-sentence reports from probation, damage reports from local authority or social housing departments, any information or views expressed by social service departments;
- Any evidence pending or not currently available to be included as part of the file, when available.

Figure 5.

Head Cameras

In Plymouth, England, the local police force has been piloting the use of head mounted video cameras. This has been described as a brilliant success and in January this year, the Home Office issued draft guidance for police use of the devices.

The head camera scheme, provides police officers with the tools to gather evidence at the scene of an incident. The mini digital video cameras can be worn on a headband, or attached to the side of police helmets. The cameras are tiny and are about the size of an AA battery and can record images and sound of an extremely high quality. Each device weighs about 750gms and can produce high quality digital video, or stills and record sound.

The camera can be attached to existing police helmets and is worn level with the eyes. It is able to film in whichever direction the officer's head is turned. A wire links the camera, which is the size of a marker pen, to a 4 inch screen worn on the belt on which footage can be played. It can record 400 hours of footage but must be recharged every 12 hours. The film can be downloaded on to a computer or on to a DVD for use in court. The date and time is imprinted into the film and the film and sound recorded can not be tampered with.

An Interim Report, January 2007, of the Plymouth Head Camera Project found that:

- Violent crime has reduced by 8% in the pilot sectors (in Devon and Cornwall) compared to 1% reduction across other areas. Within this reduction, wounding has reduced considerably by 18% in pilot areas compared to no change across other areas.
- Increase of 20% in converting a violent incident into a crime.
- Increase of 85% in the number of violent crimes resulting in an arrest.
- Increase of 40% in the number of violent crimes detected.

A company called Audax produces the *Cylon* body worn surveillance system and has now sold over 500 units to the United Kingdom constabulary. Each unit costs 1,700 pounds (NZ\$5,500 GST excl), which makes outfitting a force an expensive exercise. However, the advantages of the camera use quickly became apparent and convincing argument for making a major investment in the equipment. General advantages are:

- The quality of evidence gathered, for a whole range of criminal activity, is so indisputable that offenders are generally pleading guilty.
- Use of the cameras resulted in more incidents being converted to an offence which could be prosecuted.
- Members of the public and noticeably youths show more respect.
- Large groups are less confrontational.
- A good tool for capturing witness names and addresses.
- Good for traffic offences (recording vehicle details, who was the driver, site of accidents etc).
- Training and review of staff performance, as the camera captures their work on film.
- Potentially cuts some complaints made to the police regarding their behaviour, as the evidence is indisputable.
- Anecdotal evidence of reduction in officer time spent on paperwork.

However, it is with domestic violence incidents that it is a remarkable asset for gathering primary evidence. In domestic violence cases video footage of the statements and demeanour of victims and offenders, real time evidence of the victim's injuries and of the crime scene will crucial in such "*one word against the other*" style cases. During the pilot, the police were able to capture on film men making violent threats against their partners, the blood on clothes and furniture; and the victim hysterical with fear.

All highly distressing, but compelling evidence.

Crucially, this evidence can be used to successfully obtain convictions regardless of whether or not the victim feels able to act as a witness. In addition, when victims realise that the crime scene is being filmed they seem reassured that the police will have evidence of the attack.

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