



Not in front of the children

Domestic Violence Consultation

Full Report

July 2003

Devon Domestic Violence Partnership

Background and Rationale

The 'Not in Front of the Children' domestic violence consultation was commissioned by the Devon Domestic Violence Partnership, funded by the Devon Children's Fund and co-ordinated by Devon Youth Association. The main aim of the consultation was:

"To better understand the scale and impact of domestic violence on children living with domestic violence and to inform the design and delivery of appropriate services across the county of Devon".

The consultation was seen to be of crucial importance to the overall implementation of Devon Domestic Violence Strategy which is seeking to tackle the problems of all those it impacts. The strategy recognises that some children are adversely affected by living with domestic violence and that attitudes to the issue need to be changed amongst the next generation if the cycle of violence is to be broken and tolerance of the abuse ended.

From Devon Police statistics we know that in 2002/3 of the 6958 recorded incidents of domestic violence there were 2755 children within the households affected. It is of critical importance that we hear the voice of these children and others so that services and interventions reflect their needs.

To achieve a holistic consultation a partnership was developed to steer the project and draw on the specialist expertise of the agencies involved which was broken down into three specialised areas of work:

- **Devon Youth Association (DYA)** - DYA took responsibility for co-ordinating the whole consultation and also consulting with large groups of young people across Devon. This aspect of the work drew on DYA experience in group work with children and young people to gain opinions and ideas on definitions of domestic violence, who domestic violence affects and ideas for making services better in the future. DYA worked with nearly 90 young people across Devon from the age of 11-18.
- **The Children's Society** - The Children's Society took responsibility for working with children and young people who had direct experience of domestic violence. This involved; face to face interviews with young people who had accessed services following incidents of domestic violence; a file review of past cases to see how many may have had unacknowledged experience of domestic violence; and a questionnaire to their existing database of 70 young people who are all looked after by the Local Authority.
- **Jenny Archard** - Jenny was responsible for collating a literature review to support the findings of the primary research. Jenny's main objectives were to look at relevant national, local and international material including statutory frameworks, relevant published research, national and local policy.

To supplement the main consultation Exeter Safe Project and North Devon Women's Aid gave support, specialist advice and knowledge throughout the whole process.

"In 90 per cent of domestic assaults on women which occur in the home, children are in the same or an adjacent room"

Mayhew P., Aye Maung N., & Mirlees-Black, C. (1993) The British Crime Survey. Home Office Research Study No 132. London, HMSO

Main Findings and Recommendations

The following are the collated findings and recommendations from each of the three specialised areas of work.

Devon Youth Association

- There needs to be more information and publicity about existing services and where young people can get support, advice and information, including creation of young person friendly leaflets videos and internet provision.
- More education needs to be set up for young people to become aware of the issue of domestic violence and how to get help if needed. This should take place in schools and other youth settings.
- Education and counselling for perpetrators should be provided so that they can reduce the chances of re-offending.
- Training needs to be developed for adults and professionals on how domestic violence impacts children and young people. The young people saw supportive adults with whom they had an existing relationship as those they would first turn to. Hence teachers, youth services and other staff in Education should have training to deal with domestic violence as it impacts children and young people, and an awareness of where to refer for more specialist help.
- Healthy relationship training for victims of domestic violence should be developed to make people aware of what is and is not acceptable in a healthy relationship and ensure the cycle is not repeated.
- For those children and young people looked after by the local authority the services they receive and alternative care provided after leaving a domestic violence situation is not always meeting their needs. The main recommendation from this aspect of the project was that carers should receive training on how to look after young people, including how to make them feel safe and happy.
- In the long term to reduce the problem of domestic violence preventive strategies need to be developed including, handling conflict, building emotional confidence and parenting skills for young people.
- Young people who are facing domestic violence would like the support of others in similar situations so that they feel less isolated. Support groups should be set up for young people to access this kind of support, whether through existing services or chat rooms etc.
- A strong theme to come out was that the subject of domestic violence remains taboo. Through peer education style sessions and discussions the stigma of domestic violence could be broken down so that young people feel they can talk more easily about the issue and its consequences.
- Young people should be involved in writing a charter and policy on confidentiality within domestic violence services. Young people expressed a strong view that organisations should have effective confidentiality policies. These should be advertised, signed up to and promoted well before they access services.
- Young people should be involved in the design and delivery of services, whether this is volunteering in advice centres, helping to write awareness and peer education training or supporting the creation of services that are young person friendly.
- Long term the only way that all of the above recommendations can be put in place and be successful is if organisations both funding and carrying out the work begin to show a willingness to work hard at changing services. To do this by strategically involving children and young and being prepared to make changes which eradicate barriers and campaign for sustainable funding.

The Children's Society

The Children's Society confined its comments to the services that young people accessed or stated they would wish to access.

- A majority (56%) of young people who said they had experienced domestic violence said that they did not do anything in response to witnessing domestic violence as they did not know what to do or who they could talk to.
- Many young people expressed feelings of powerlessness and helplessness– not knowing what to do or where to go for help.
- The evidence from the research shows that almost all the young people who had experienced the involvement of social services after incidents of domestic violence, reported that they found this helpful, even though they may have been critical of the way in which help was offered.
- For the majority of young people domestic violence in their homes had been going on for a considerable time before any help was offered by professionals.
- Another factor that prevented young people from seeking help was their fear for themselves and for their parent or carers and siblings.
- Young people expressed enormous loyalty to parents and ambivalence / confusion about the situation – just wanting someone to help sort it out.
- The importance of informal networks of friends and relatives nearby is significant and often they are the first port of call for children. It is children who are more isolated who are most in need of help and services.
- Several young people were critical of the lack of choice and information in relation to their foster placements.
- Several young people commented that they had no information or guidance about social services procedures – they didn't know what was going on.
- Young people found being on the child protection register to be stigmatising and unhelpful (with one exception).

The Children's Society Recommendations

- Children and young people who have themselves experienced domestic violence should be directly involved in helping with the design and organisation of services and support, both informal and otherwise, which aim to help other children in this situation. A planning or advisory group of young people should be set up for this purpose.
- There is an urgent need for more information and a culture of openness in schools and other places where young people meet in relation to issues such as domestic violence.
- Services which aim to support young people should be user friendly and designed specifically with the needs of children and young people in mind.
- There needs to be an awareness raising campaign aimed at young people informing them of services and support available to them if they are experiencing domestic violence.
- There needs to be a greater awareness amongst professionals of the specific needs of children and young people who have witnessed domestic violence.

Jenny Archard Literature and Background Research

As an outcome of this review and research, some recommendations can be made; these have been broken up under five broad headings. These need to be tempered by what the primary research shows that young people and children in Devon say they want.

Provide more direct services for children and young people

The research has shown that what children and young people really want is to be listened to. Informal networks are the first place that young people go for this help. Further issues identified were the need for:

- More education and publicity about the issues to a wide audience, including work in schools.
- Formal support, e.g. group counselling sessions and one-to-one work, is useful for some children and young people. These services need to be safe, accessible and child friendly.
- Development of existing or new Peer Education projects that include sessions on domestic violence.
- Providing continued support and development for Women's Refuges and existing Outreach projects.

Provide training for those who work with children and young people

Training is already part of the Domestic Violence Strategy and it seems that more of this is needed. All those working with young people who were spoken to would be very keen to have training on domestic violence issues.

- All youth workers need to be able to point children and young people at appropriate services. Youth work training needs to include a specific section on domestic violence, its impact and ways of supporting those who have experienced it. This should include Connexions, statutory and voluntary youth services.
- Work with Family Centres, Sure Starts and other children's projects to train staff in domestic violence issues and enable sharing of good practice.
- There is a need to include work on ethnicity and culture in training for helping professionals such as Social Workers.
- Work with schools, so that domestic violence awareness can fit into PSHE and other parts of curriculum.

continued overleaf

"Over a third of children of domestic violence survivors are aware of the abuse"

British Crime Survey 1996

Incorporating domestic violence awareness in organisations 'child protection' policies

- The Domestic Violence Partnership could provide model policies and guidance on including domestic violence issues in child protection policies.
- Use examples from other areas in the UK.

Further useful research

- Establish accurate baselines of current service provision, so that any new services can be evaluated effectively.
- Make use of research that has been carried out in other places , partly by creating a domestic violence source library for people working in the field so that the latest research is easily accessed.

Publicity and Education

Domestic violence is still a hidden problem and it needs to be talked about and aired, brought out from behind closed doors.

- Work with schools and youth services on awareness raising campaigns across the county.

“Child abuse by a male parent is 15 times more likely to occur in a home where domestic violence is present”

McKiernan & McKay 1994

A full copy of the research can be accessed from www.devon.gov.uk/domesticviolence

Thanks and acknowledgements go to the following organisations and people for their hard work and support throughout this consultation:

Devon Youth Association	Lindie Whitfield Liza Wainwright Hamish Higginson
Researchers	Ele Gould Emma Steer Rachel Evans Carl Gordon
The Children's Society	Martin Campbell Wendy Machin
Literature Review	Jenny Archard
Exeter Safe Project	Maria Cox
North Devon Women's Aid	Jo Morrish
Schools and clubs	St James High School, Exeter Southbrook School, Exeter Axminster 6th Form Totnes Young Carers Exmouth Youth Centre Newton Abbot Young Assessors St Peters High School, Exeter Axminster Youth Group Exmouth Youth Advice Centre
Devon DV Partnership (DCC)	Roy Tomlinson Rachel Martin
Devon and Cornwall Police	Carol Needs
Social Services	Dinah Mears
Youth Worker	Mark Green
Boys Brigade	Paul Ramsbottom
Sure Start	Tim Collins
Voluntary Youth Services	Mark Goodman
Devon Guides	Trish Heap
Devon Play Association	Chris Martin

Special thanks go to all the young people who took part for their hard work and ideas.

**Not In Front
of
The Children
Domestic Violence Consultation
July 2003**



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Not in Front of the Children

Executive Summary

Background and Rationale

The 'Not in Front of the Children' domestic violence consultation was commissioned by the Devon Domestic Violence Partnership, funded by the Devon Children's Fund and co-ordinated by the Devon Youth Association. The main aim of the consultation was:

"To better understand the scale of domestic violence for children living with domestic violence and to inform the design and delivery of appropriate services across the county of Devon"

The consultation was broken down into 3 specialised sections to ensure a holistic consultation took place, 3 organisations took responsibility for specific sections:

- ❖ **Devon Youth Association (DYA)** – DYA took responsibility for co-ordinating the whole consultation and also consulting with large groups of young people across Devon. It was decided that because DYA had a specialism around group work with children and young people they would concentrate on working with young people on gaining their opinions and ideas on definitions of domestic violence, who domestic violence affects and ideas for making services better in the future. DYA worked with nearly 90 young people across Devon from the age of 11-18.
- ❖ **The Children's Society** – The Children's Society took responsibility for working with children and young people who have experienced domestic violence on a one to one basis. They started off by sending out questionnaires to their existing database of young people in foster care and by asking those who returned questionnaires if they would agree to be interviewed. They also looked at 'young people's words' from past interviews that had been recorded and filed.
- ❖ **Jenny Archard** – Jenny was responsible for collating a literature review to support the findings of the primary research. Jenny's main objectives were to look at relevant national, local and international material including statutory frameworks, relevant published research, national policy and local policy.

Alongside the three main sections of consultation was support from two other specialist organisations. **The Exeter Safe Project and North Devon Women's Aid** gave support throughout the whole process and gave specialist advice and knowledge when putting the strategy for consultation together.

Main Findings and Recommendations

The following are brief explanations of the main findings and recommendations, collated from all three completed reports.

- ❖ **More information and publicity about existing services**
- ❖ **More education and awareness raising for children and young people on the issue of domestic violence**
- ❖ **Young people to be involved in the design and implementation of domestic violence services for children and young people**
- ❖ **All young people's services need to sign up to domestic violence policies and strategies**
- ❖ **Training needs to be developed for adults and professionals working with young people from youth club support workers to senior youth workers to ensure there are designated workers for young people to access**
- ❖ **Healthy relationship training for victims of domestic violence to ensure the cycle is not repeated**
- ❖ **Education and counselling for perpetrators**
- ❖ **More research, consultation to develop a strategy to support young people better when they have been removed from the home i.e. in foster care**
- ❖ **Young people's support groups to share experience and gain support**
- ❖ **Peer education sessions across schools and clubs to work with young people to remove the taboo of domestic violence so it becomes easier for young people to talk about the subject and gain help**
- ❖ **Long term funding needs to be secured for domestic violence projects and services to ensure holistic and long-term support for young people.**

Background and Rationale

The 'Not in Front of the Children' Domestic Violence Consultation was commissioned by the Devon Children's fund to look specifically at domestic violence with relation to children and young people across Devon.

The main aim of the consultation was:

"To better understand the scale of domestic violence for children living with domestic violence and to inform the design and delivery of appropriate services across the county of Devon"

In order to achieve this, specified outcomes were set early in the project:

- To identify the scale of domestic violence experienced or witnessed by children and young people
- To understand from children and young people their service needs through different methods of consultation
- To make recommendations of possible service requirements

In order to ensure that the consultation was holistic a partnership was developed to ensure the project was steered appropriately and that people could work on their own specialities to ensure that all aspects of the consultation were covered. The main partners in this consultation were:

Devon Youth Association, Peer Potential Team
The Children's Society
The SAFE project
North Devon Women's Aid

It was decided that the consultation should be split into 3 district areas, to work on their individual specialities.

The Devon Youth Association - DYA took responsibility for co-ordinating the consultation and arranging planning meetings to ensure the work was on target, this also included liaison with the Children's Fund.

DYA also took responsibility for the group work section of the consultation. This entailed running sessions with groups of young people across Devon to research what they understood of domestic violence and what they wanted from service provision around domestic violence.

The Children's Society - The Children's Society took responsibility for working with children and young people who had experienced domestic violence and were now placed in foster care. They were looking specifically at what was good and bad about their experience and how this could be improved in the future. The first stage of their research was to send out questionnaires to their existing database, this was then followed by one to one interviews with young people who gave them permission from questionnaires. Alongside this primary research they also did a file search on young people's words and noting some of the things that were important to this consultation.

SAFE Project & North Devon Women's Aid – These two organisations provided specialist support to the whole consultation. They deal with domestic violence on an everyday basis and gave the steering group advice on every section of the consultation.

Desk Research

The last section of the consultation was a piece of desk research. This research aimed to support the findings of the primary research through the following aims and objectives:

Objective - Examine relevant national, local and international material to include:

Statutory Frameworks - Relevant international and European conventions and directives, Acts of Parliament and other statutory instruments

Relevant Published Research - Specifically those concerning domestic violence published during the last 5 years whose methodology was child centred or whose chief concern was the well being of children

National Policy - Relevant national strategies and policy guidelines published by governmental agencies and key non-governmental organisations

Local Policy - Relevant local strategies and policy guidelines e.g. Devon Domestic Violence Strategy

Therefore 4 questions were set for the desk researcher:

1. What services are available for young people under 25 with regard to Domestic Violence, (looking at comparisons with adult services) - where they are and what they offer.
2. What policies exist for dealing with domestic violence with young people -Schools, Police, Social Services, Youth Services
3. Statistically what is the scale of domestic violence with young people - Police Statistics
4. Recommendations for future service provision.

The final reports and findings can be found throughout the rest of this document.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Thanks and acknowledgements go to the following organisations and people for their hard work and support throughout this consultation:

Devon Youth Association –

**Lindie Whitfield
Liza Wainwright
Hamish Higginson**

Researchers

**Ele Gould
Emma Steer
Rachel Evans
Carl Gordon**

The Children’s Society

**Martin Campbell
Wendy Machin**

Literature Review

Jenny Archard

Exeter Safe Project

Maria Cox

North Devon Women’s Aid

Jo Morrish

Schools and clubs

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Axminster 6th Form
Totnes Young Carers
Exmouth Youth Centre
Newton Abbot Young Assessors
St Peters High School, Exeter
Axminster Youth Group
Exmouth Youth Advice Centre**

Special thanks go to all the young people who took part for their hard work and ideas.

Domestic Violence Consultation Session Plan

Introduction

Begin the session by introducing the research to the group, including an overview of the session, introduction of staff members running the session and issues such as behaviour and confidentiality.

Word-Storming Activities

Working as a large group the young people are asked to word storm the following questions:

- **What is Domestic Violence?**
- **Who does Domestic Violence Affect?**
- **Who can help?**

The facilitator will work with the young people to open up the discussion, however they must not lead the young people in discussion, so that the ideas are all the young people's

Service Statistics

This game allows the young people to find out more about existing services, whilst allowing the facilitators to monitor statistically how many young people know about the existing services.

The young people pick 3 areas of the room each area is labelled:

Know very well

Heard of

Never heard of

Then the following list of services are read out to the young people who are asked to move to the appropriate area of the room i.e. if they have never heard of it, move to that area.

Outreach for women
Refuge for women
Outreach for men
Victim Support
Domestic Violence Officer
Safe Project
Citizens Advice Bureau
Housing Advice
Police
Social Services
Samaritans
Connexions
East Devon Women's Aid
National Victim Support Line
NSPCC
Rape Crisis

Whilst the young people are moving around the room a member of staff records how many young moving so that the statistics can be monitored.

World's Worst/World's Best

This activity aims to look at what young people would like from services that deal with domestic violence. For this exercise the group is split into 2, one group is asked to look at the world's worst service and the other is asked to look at the world's best service. In their groups they are asked to design the very worst and very best services, thinking particularly about what it would look like, what the people would be like and how it would make them feel. They can use either words or draw pictures, or if they don't want to write they can allocate one person to be the scribe.

This activity will be supported by a facilitator but once again they

are only there to generate discussion and not to sway or skew the conversation.

Once the groups have finished their services they then bring their results back to the wider group for discussion. The rest of the group can then add anything they may wish to to the list, to create the world's most worst and best services.

To Finish

Once the above activities are finished it is then up to the facilitators to finish the session, this should be done by asking if there are any questions, if they have anything further to add and letting the young people know where they can get more information from if they should need it, it is at this point that the SAFE booklets will be handed out to each young person taking part.

Domestic Violence Sessions

Overall Statistics and Feedback

During the course of the consultation Peer Potential consulted with 88 young people between the ages of 13-19, across a wide geographical area of Devon. The following findings are the consolidation of all the groups who took part, individual group results can be found further into this report.

What is Domestic Violence?

The first section of the consultation was to find out what knowledge young people had of domestic violence. The following is a selection of words from a word-storming activity. Although the list is very comprehensive some young people struggled to understand the word 'domestic' and had to have this explained to them first.

Domestic Violence is...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Swearing at people · Violence in the home · Abuse · Use of weapons · Rape · Threats · Bullying · Punching · Saying something nasty constantly · Power · Bribery · Sexual abuse · Verbal abuse - shouting & put downs · Financial abuse/holding money back · Killing · Trying to hurt · Fighting · Name calling · Physical attack/harm · Battered · Mentally scared · Constant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Kicking · Children beating up parents · Arguing · Suicide · Can lower self-esteem · Intimidating · Confrontation · Shouting · Trapping people in their houses/freedom being taken away · Making people feel scared/terrified · Beating people up · Making people feel small · Making people upset · Checking up on people · Pressure · Being cut off from friends and family · Controlling behaviour · Fear · Neglect · Emotional violence/emotional hurt · Feeling awkward - not knowing what to do
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Who does domestic violence affect?

Similar to the above activity young people were asked to discuss who is affected by domestic violence. On the whole young people felt that anyone could be affected but the following were the answers from the sessions held.

Domestic Violence Affects....

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Men ❖ Yourself ❖ Anybody ❖ Any age ❖ Women ❖ Wives ❖ Neighbours ❖ Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Husbands ❖ Children ❖ Pets ❖ Perpetrators & Victims ❖ Family ❖ People who deal with it – Services ❖ Older and younger ❖ Brothers and sisters
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Boy/Girlfriends ❖ Little Mo ❖ People in a relationship ❖ Grandparents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ People who can be controlled ❖ Someone who has suffered from domestic violence
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Who Can Help?

In this section we asked young people to decide on the type of people who could help them if they were ever facing a situation of domestic violence. The list is once again very comprehensive, however although many young people knew about the services, they did not know how to access them or even said that they would not access them for fear of an over-reaction and the situation being turned in a direction they felt unsafe and uncomfortable with.

Services that can help me with domestic violence are.....

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ NSPCC ❖ Childline ❖ Helplines ❖ Social Services/Social Workers ❖ Counsellors ❖ Police ❖ Family ❖ Friends ❖ RSPCA ❖ Psychiatrists (Shrinks) ❖ Rape line ❖ Samaritans ❖ Doctors ❖ Schools ❖ Youth workers ❖ Youth Advice Centre's ❖ Connexions ❖ Blue and Red Cross ❖ Internet ❖ TV Helplines – shown after TV shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teachers ❖ Security Guards ❖ 1st Aiders ❖ Parents ❖ Courts ❖ Yourself ❖ Women's Refuge ❖ Neighbour ❖ Guinness Trust ❖ People you trust ❖ Some adults ❖ School Nurse ❖ Ambulance/hospitals/casualty ❖ People in Church ❖ Work Colleagues ❖ Drop-in Centres ❖ SAFE Houses ❖ Magazine problem pages ❖ Posters
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Service Statistics – Who do you know?

This exercise aimed to further break-down the above activity, to enable us to get a broader understanding of who knew about existing services and how much they knew about them. We did this because although the above list is very comprehensive, it may be that only 1 person in the whole consultation knew of that service. Therefore the breakdown of knowledge follows.

Out of 79* young people the following knew about existing services.....

Organisation	Never Heard of	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	79.4%	16.4%	4.2%
Refuge for Women	61.5%	31.5%	7%
Outreach for Men	95.8%	4.2%	
Victim Support	58%	36.5%	5.5%
Domestic Violence Officer	54.2%	20.6%	25.2%
Safe Project	69.3%	21.4%	9.3%
Citizens Advice Bureau	56.7%	30.7%	12.6%
Housing Advice	61.7%	30.2%	8.1%
Police			100%
Social Services		5.5%	94.5%
Samaritans	25.2%	43.3%	31.5%
Connexions	4.2%	35.3%	31.5%
East Devon Women's Aid	56.7%	32.8%	10.5%
National Victim Support Line	47.9%	35.7%	16.4%
NSPCC	29%	10.5%	60.5%
Rape Crisis	51.7%	23.1%	25.2%

World's Worst/World's Best

The following activity looked specifically at services and what was good or bad about them. However to make the activity more interactive we asked the young people to take part in an activity called world's worst/world's best. The aim of the activity is to split the group into 2, one focuses on what the world's best service would look like and the other looks at what the world's worst service would look like, particularly looking at people, places and feelings. Once the groups have done this (through word-storming and drawing pictures), they then come back together to discuss what they thought and add any other ideas to each others paper. The following are the exact thoughts of young people and must be taken in the context of the very best and very worst. The findings have been split into people, places and feelings to gain a clear picture of what young people would like.

The World's Worst Services would be.....

PEOPLE	PLACES	FEELINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Moody and horrible people ❖ Unhelpful staff ❖ Only one age / gender of staff ❖ Sexist service ❖ Old people trying to increase their pensions ❖ Discriminating ❖ They offer no help ❖ Make you feel uneasy ❖ Invade your privacy ❖ Dirty people ❖ Slackers ❖ People who don't care ❖ Rude people ❖ People following you home ❖ Police who are late ❖ Fake people ❖ Drug users and dealers ❖ Racists ❖ Old people ❖ Messy people ❖ Tramps ❖ Someone who is a complete stranger ❖ Shouting ❖ Spitting ❖ Swearing ❖ Staff who over-react – involve the Police etc ❖ Poor/no confidentiality ❖ People not being there ❖ Being judgemental ❖ Too many/too few staff ❖ Staff with no experience ❖ Don't make you feel welcome ❖ Giving bad advice ❖ Workers are not polite ❖ Being the only girl/boy ❖ No peer mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ £10 a minute helpline ❖ In the middle of nowhere ❖ Damp, black and grey offices ❖ Small offices ❖ Falling apart ❖ Messy ❖ Too much waiting time ❖ No help line ❖ Unsafe ❖ Costs too much money ❖ Bad opening hours ❖ Ambulances are late ❖ People getting murdered ❖ Bad, expensive food ❖ In a rubbish tip ❖ No TV or music ❖ Vandalised ❖ Not well lit ❖ On a hill ❖ Right on your doorstep ❖ Lack of places to go for help ❖ Getting through to an answering machine ❖ Hard to find ❖ Not enough room/space ❖ You have to pay for it ❖ No seats ❖ Modern surroundings ❖ Big signs – colourful place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Depressing ❖ Makes you feel uneasy ❖ Not personal ❖ Violent and scary ❖ Dangerous ❖ People who you don't connect with ❖ Someone taking over you life

The World's Best Service would be.....

PEOPLE	PLACES	FEELINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Someone with experience ❖ Helpful ❖ Polite ❖ Confidential ❖ All different ages of people working there ❖ People who listen ❖ Real people ❖ Trustworthy ❖ Well trained ❖ Men and women ❖ Nice people ❖ Young people ❖ Staff that show you they care ❖ Able to have 1-2-1 chats with you face to face or over the phone ❖ Middle-aged ❖ Smiling and friendly ❖ Supportive ❖ Know what they are talking about ❖ Non-judgemental ❖ Available ❖ Lots of people, all ages, sexes and backgrounds ❖ Caring ❖ Welcoming ❖ Staff who are happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Send you information ❖ Counselling for perpetrators ❖ Quiet, comfortable, private and friendly ❖ Phones, computers and books ❖ Proper advice and free ❖ Place for animals ❖ Local but private ❖ Sofas and bean bags ❖ Clean ❖ 24hrs ❖ Advertisements ❖ Leaflets ❖ Visiting schools ❖ Close but not so people can see you drop in ❖ Free food and drink ❖ Big rooms ❖ Beds ❖ Chillout room ❖ Games room ❖ Posh ❖ Disco/bar ❖ Lawn ❖ Tuck shop ❖ Well signposted ❖ Bright and colourful ❖ Secret place ❖ Website ❖ Accessible phone numbers ❖ Easily accessible ❖ Services which is well promoted ❖ Local support group ❖ Special room to hide away ❖ Internet café ❖ Quiet ❖ Ability to pay for transport ❖ Security – CCTV ❖ No government buildings that are cheap and tacky ❖ Close to amenities ❖ Music when you walk in ❖ More school talks on domestic violence ❖ TV with Sky ❖ Chauffer and removal service ❖ Second entrance ❖ Creche ❖ Private rooms ❖ Accommodation ❖ Local advice line ❖ Counselling ❖ Family planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Makes you feel confident ❖ People who make you laugh ❖ People you can relate to ❖ Trust ❖ Supportive

Individual Group Results

St James High School (18 young people)

What is domestic violence?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Swearing at people ❖ Violence at home ❖ Hitting someone ❖ Abuse ❖ Use of weapons ❖ Rape ❖ Threats ❖ Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Punching ❖ Saying something nasty ❖ Power ❖ Bribery ❖ Sexual abuse ❖ Verbal abuse ❖ Financial abuse
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Who does it affect?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Men/husbands ❖ Yourself ❖ Anybody ❖ Any age ❖ Women/wives ❖ Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mostly women but also men ❖ Pets ❖ Perpetrator and victim ❖ Family ❖ People who deal with it – services ❖ Neighbours
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Who can help?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ NSPCC ❖ Childline ❖ Helplines ❖ Social Services ❖ Counsellors ❖ Police ❖ Friends ❖ Family ❖ Women’s Refuge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ RSPCA ❖ Shrinks ❖ Rape line ❖ Samaritans ❖ Doctors ❖ Schools ❖ Youth Workers ❖ Yourself
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Service Statistics – what do you know?

Organisation	Never Heard of	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	94.5%	5.5%	
Refuge for Women	49.5%	33%	17.5%
Outreach for Men	100%		
Victim Support	49.5%	45%	5.5%
Domestic Violence Officer	49.5%	27.5%	23%
Safe Project	71.5%	28.5%	
Citizens Advice Bureau	33%	23%	44%
Housing Advice	60.5%	39.5%	
Police			100%
Social Services		5.5%	94.5%
Samaritans	33%	55%	12%
Connexions		71.5%	28.5%
East Devon Women’s Aid	77%	23%	
National Victim Support Line	39%	55.5%	5.5%
NSPCC	49.5%	23%	27.5%
Rape Crisis	49.5%	23%	27.5%

World’s Worst Service

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Moody and horrible people ❖ Depressing ❖ Discriminating ❖ Old people trying to increase their pension ❖ £10 a minute help line ❖ They offer no help ❖ Not confidential ❖ In the middle of nowhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ No help line ❖ Unsafe ❖ People with no knowledge ❖ Costs too much money ❖ Bad opening hours ❖ Rude people ❖ Falling apart ❖ Messy
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Damp, black and grey office ❖ Small office ❖ Make you feel easy ❖ Invaded your privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dirty people ❖ Slackers ❖ Too much waiting time ❖ People who don't care
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World's Best Service

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Someone with experience ❖ Helpful, polite and confidential ❖ Send you lots of information ❖ Makes you feel confident ❖ All different ages of people working there ❖ Counselling for perpetrators ❖ Quiet, comfortable, private and friendly ❖ Phones, computers and books ❖ Proper advice and free ❖ Place for animals ❖ Local but private ❖ Sofas ❖ Clean ❖ People who listen well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 24hrs ❖ Advertisements ❖ Leaflets ❖ Real people ❖ Visiting schools ❖ Large rooms ❖ Close but so people can't see you drop in ❖ Trustworthy ❖ Free food and drink ❖ Well trained staff
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Southbrook School (23 young people)

What is Domestic Violence?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Killing ❖ Trying to hurt ❖ Fighting ❖ Bullying ❖ Name calling ❖ Physical attack ❖ Kicking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Holding money back ❖ Children beating up parents ❖ Arguing ❖ Punching ❖ Knives and weapons ❖ Swearing ❖ Suicide
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Who does it affect?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents ❖ Men and women ❖ Boyfriends and girlfriends ❖ Anyone ❖ Older and younger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Brothers and sisters ❖ People living together ❖ Drunk people ❖ People who take drugs
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Who can help?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teachers ❖ Security guards ❖ Police ❖ Childline ❖ Doctor ❖ Social worker/services ❖ Friends ❖ 1st Aider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents ❖ Court ❖ Next door neighbour ❖ Counsellor ❖ Guinness Trust ❖ Some adults ❖ People who you trust
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Service Statistics – how much do you know?

Organisation	Never of	Heard	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	80.8%		17.2%	
Refuge for Women	77.4%		22.6%	
Outreach for Men	85.7%		4.3%	
Victim Support	73.1%		22.6%	4.3%
Domestic Violence Officer	54.8%		22.6%	4.3%
Safe Project	77.4%			22.6%
Citizens Advice Bureau	82.8%		8.6%	4.3%
Housing Advice	31.2%		64.5%	4.3%
Police				100%
Social Services			4.3%	95.7%
Samaritans	52.7%		4.3%	43%
Connexions	8.6%		47.4%	43%
East Devon Women's Aid	17.2%		82.8%	
National Victim Support Line	73.1%		4.3%	22.6%
NSPCC	57%		8.6%	38.7%
Rape Crisis	57%			43%

World's Worst Service

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ People following you home ❖ People calling me ❖ Ambulances being late ❖ People getting murdered ❖ Police are late ❖ Bad expensive food ❖ In a rubbish tip ❖ No help ❖ They don't care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dangerous ❖ Messy ❖ Brown, bare, cold and grey ❖ Vandalised ❖ Not easily accessible ❖ Not well lit ❖ On a hill ❖ Old people ❖ Messy people
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fake people ❖ No TV or music ❖ Drug users and dealers ❖ Not personal ❖ Racist ❖ Violent and scary ❖ Swearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Tramps ❖ Smelly ❖ Right on your doorstep ❖ Someone who is a complete stranger ❖ Someone who knows nothing ❖ Shouting ❖ Spitting
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World's Best Service

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Men and women ❖ Sofas and bean bags ❖ Big rooms ❖ Beds ❖ Chillout room ❖ Games room ❖ Posh ❖ Bar/disco ❖ Free service ❖ Lawn ❖ Tuck shop ❖ Nice people ❖ Well signposted ❖ Phone box ❖ People doing it to be in prison ❖ Arrest more people ❖ Days out and holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Young people ❖ Bright and colourful ❖ Secret place ❖ Web site ❖ All types of music ❖ Clean ❖ People who can make you laugh ❖ Accessible phone numbers ❖ Easily accessible ❖ Private ❖ Local ❖ Nice and friendly people ❖ People that know you ❖ 24hr ambulance ❖ Experienced people ❖ Safe ❖ Stuff to take your mind off of it
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Axminster 6th Form (5 young people)

What is domestic violence?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can lower self esteem ❖ Violence ❖ Physical harm ❖ Threats to other people ❖ Verbal abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Punching ❖ Intimidating ❖ Confrontation ❖ Shouting
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Who does it affect?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anyone could suffer ❖ People who can be controlled ❖ Little mo ❖ Family members ❖ Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Men ❖ Women ❖ In a relationship ❖ Someone who has suffered from domestic violence
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This group did not complete the activity 'who can help' as they were unaware of anyone who could really help them in this situation.

Service Statistics – how much do you know?

Organisation	Never Heard of	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	100%		
Refuge for Women	40%	60%	
Outreach for Men	100%		
Victim Support		100%	
Domestic Violence Officer	60%	40%	
Safe Project		100%	
Citizens Advice Bureau		100%	
Housing Advice	100%		
Police			100%
Social Services			100%
Samaritans			100%
Connexions			100%
East Devon Women's Aid	100%		
National Victim Support Line		100%	
NSPCC		20%	80%
Rape Crisis	80%	20%	

World's Worst

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Staff who over-react – involve Police etc. ❖ Lack of places to go for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bad opening hours ❖ Getting through to an answering machine
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World's Best

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Staff who are young and you are able to relate to ❖ People who might be able to relate to you ❖ Staff that show you they care, able to have 1-2-1 chats with you or just on the phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Service which is well promoted – leaflets address, tel no's ❖ More school talks on DV ❖ More information on DV
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Totnes Young Carers (5 young people)

What is domestic violence?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bullying ❖ Trapping people in their houses ❖ Making people scared/terrified ❖ Threats ❖ Beating people up ❖ Making people feel small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Making people upset ❖ Swearing ❖ Rape ❖ Checking up on people ❖ Pressure
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Who does it affect?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anyone ❖ Men ❖ Boyfriends 	
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Who can help?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ School nurse ❖ Counsellor ❖ Parents ❖ Police ❖ Ambulance – hospital and doctors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Court ❖ Teacher ❖ Friend ❖ Social services
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Service statistics – how much do you know?

Organisation	Never Heard of	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	60%	40%	
Refuge for Women	100%		
Outreach for Men	100%		
Victim Support	60%	40%	
Domestic Violence Officer		40%	60%
Safe Project	100%		
Citizens Advice Bureau	60%	20%	20%
Housing Advice	40%		60%
Police			100%
Social Services			100%
Samaritans	40%	20%	40%
Connexions	20%	20%	60%
East Devon Women's Aid	100%		
National Victim Support Line	20%	60%	20%
NSPCC		20%	80%
Rape Crisis	60%		40%

Because the group was very small, they all wanted to work on the world's best and therefore we have no responses for the world's worst

World's Best

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ TV with Sky ❖ Trust ❖ Fully trained ❖ Middle-aged ❖ Free meals ❖ Chauffer and removal service ❖ Special room to hide away ❖ Confidential ❖ 24hrs all week ❖ Bright and homely ❖ Comfy chairs ❖ Internet café 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Supportive ❖ Quiet ❖ Ability to pay for transport ❖ Security – CCTV ❖ Second entrance ❖ Crèche ❖ Private rooms ❖ Accommodation ❖ Local advice line ❖ Know what they are talking about ❖ Local support group ❖ Easy to get to
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- ❖ Smiling and friendly

Exmouth Youth Centre (7 young people)

What is domestic violence?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Verbal – shouting, putdowns ❖ Being cut off from friends and family ❖ Freedom taken away ❖ Controlling behaviour – threats – not necessarily verbal, maybe financial or to children or pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fear – could start with both people – fear of losing the other person ❖ Neglect ❖ At home ❖ Bullying ❖ Physical/emotional violence ❖ Sexual
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Who does it affect?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anyone ❖ Parents ❖ Male/female ❖ Can happen anywhere ❖ Somebody already affected by domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Drugs and alcohol can affect ❖ Grandparents ❖ Children ❖ Husbands ❖ Wives
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Who can help?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Friends ❖ Family ❖ Youth workers ❖ People in Church ❖ Hospital staff/casualty ❖ Work colleagues ❖ Drop-in centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Police ❖ Teachers ❖ Social services ❖ SAFE houses ❖ Women's and Children's Refuge ❖ Childline
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Service Statistics – how much do you know?

Organisation	Never of	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women		86%	14%
Refuge for Women		86%	14%
Outreach for Men	100%		
Victim Support	28%	72%	
Domestic Violence Officer			100%
Safe Project	100%		
Citizens Advice Bureau	28%	72%	
Housing Advice	58%	42%	
Police			100%
Social Services			100%
Samaritans		58%	42%
Connexions			100%
East Devon Women's Aid		28%	72%
National Victim Support Line		58%	42%
NSPCC	14%		86%
Rape Crisis	14%	42%	42%

World's Worst

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hard to find ❖ Not enough room/space ❖ Poor access (bus service) ❖ You have to pay ❖ Poor/no confidentiality ❖ Not being there ❖ Judgemental ❖ Answer phones ❖ Too many/too few staff ❖ Unhelpful staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Only one age/gender of staff ❖ Sexist service ❖ Crap building ❖ Staff with no experience ❖ Few opening times ❖ Bad advice – no service referral ❖ Dark ❖ No seats ❖ Cold, damp and smelly
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World's Best

<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Good listeners❖ Non-judgemental❖ Available❖ 24 hour help and support line❖ Offer advice and support❖ Lots of people, all ages, sexes, and backgrounds❖ Have experience of domestic violence and /or have knowledge of the subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Help with job information, money and benefit information❖ Accommodation needs to be nice, suitable standards❖ Accessible to all e.g. children, pets, male or female❖ No government buildings that are cheap and tacky❖ Close to amenities
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Newton Abbot Young Assessors – (12 young people)

What is domestic violence?

Violence inflicted on children and adults

Who does it affect?

Men, women and children

Who can help?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Social services ❖ Youth centres ❖ School counsellors ❖ Child line ❖ Friends ❖ Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Youth advice centres ❖ Connexions ❖ Police ❖ Doctors ❖ Brothers and sisters ❖ Family
---	---

Service Statistics – how much do you know?

Organisation	Never of	Heard	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	100%			
Refuge for Women	100%			
Outreach for Men	100%			
Victim Support	100%			
Domestic Violence Officer	100%			
Safe Project	100%			
Citizens Advice Bureau	66.7%		33.3%	
Housing Advice	100%			
Police				100%
Social Services				100%
Samaritans	16.7%		83.3%	
Connexions				100%
East Devon Women's Aid	100%			
National Victim Support Line	83.3%		16.7%	
NSPCC				100%
Rape Crisis	66.7%		33.3%	

World's Worst

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ People who don't listen ❖ Don't make you feel welcome ❖ Don't give good advice ❖ Workers are not polite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ People who are not trained ❖ Don't give any advice ❖ Modern surroundings ❖ People there who you don't connect with
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World's Best

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Willing to listen ❖ Caring ❖ Private ❖ 18-40ish ❖ Confidential ❖ Bright and colourful ❖ Music when you walk in ❖ Comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Welcoming ❖ Non-judgemental – not having a problems with what you look like ❖ Entertainment – pool table, smoking room ❖ Counselling ❖ Family planning
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St Peters High School (9 young people)

What is domestic violence?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bullying ❖ Hitting, kicking and punching ❖ Being hurt physically or verbally ❖ Feeling awkward – not knowing what to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Emotionally hurt ❖ Battered ❖ Mentally scared ❖ Constant
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Who does it affect?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Family ❖ Uncles ❖ Parents ❖ Old friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Random people ❖ Children ❖ Pets ❖ Men/women
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Who can help?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A&E ❖ Childline ❖ NSPCC ❖ Blue and Red cross ❖ Family ❖ Friends ❖ School nurse ❖ Hospital ❖ People you can trust ❖ Internet ❖ RSPCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Samaritans ❖ Counsellor ❖ Doctor ❖ Police ❖ TV helplines after TV shows ❖ Social services ❖ Magazine problem pages ❖ Posters
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Service Statistics – how much do you know?

Organisation	Never of	Heard Of	Know Well
Outreach for women	77.7%		22.3%
Refuge for Women	33.3%	55.5%	11.2%
Outreach for Men	77.7%	22.3%	
Victim Support	33.3%	44.4%	22.3%
Domestic Violence Officer	66.5%	22.3%	
Safe Project		77.7%	22.3%
Citizens Advice Bureau	44.4%	44.4%	11.2%
Housing Advice	44.4%	33.3%	22.3%
Police			100%
Social Services		22.3%	77.7%
Samaritans		66.7%	33.3%
Connexions		33.3%	66.7%
East Devon Women's Aid	55.5%	11.2%	33.3%
National Victim Support Line	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
NSPCC			100%
Rape Crisis	33.3%	66.7%	

World's Worst

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ People not listening to you ❖ Being the only girl or boy ❖ Someone taking over your life ❖ 40 and over to talk to you about your problems ❖ Not near to where you live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not near a Police station so you don't feel safe ❖ Big signs – colourful place ❖ No chillout place ❖ No peer mentors ❖ Strangers
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World's Best

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Staff who are happy, you can trust, care about you, understand you and are trained ❖ Seats, nice and comfy, welcoming, free drinks/food/magazines ❖ Light and air conditioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Nice and bright ❖ Windows ❖ Nice smell ❖ In town – not in the middle, easy to get to, able to walk there, free and well funded
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Groups to be included at a later date

- ❖ Axminster youth group
- ❖ Exmouth Youth Advice Centre

Findings and Recommendations

The following are the findings and recommendations of this piece of consultation. These results have been compiled not only using the information gained from the group work sessions, but also from the one-to-one interviews and questionnaires done by the Children's Society and the Primary Research done by Jenny Archard. These findings and recommendations have been discussed at lengths by the steering group of the consultation and agreed as major recommendations for the way forward of domestic violence work with children and young people in Devon.

There needs to be more information and publicity about existing services and where young people can get support, advice and information, including the creation of young person friendly leaflets, videos and internet provision.

More education needs to be set up for young people to become aware of the issue of domestic violence and how to get help if you should need it, this needs to take place in both schools and other youth settings.

Young people need to be involved in writing a charter and policy around confidentiality within domestic violence services. Young people in the consultation found it a very important issue that organisations should have effective confidentiality policies and that these are advertised and promoted well before they access the services

To support the above recommendation, organisations need to sign up to the policies and procedures young people put into place.

Training need to be written and developed for adults and professionals around the issue of domestic violence, specifically related to children and young people. The young people who were consulted felt that they would want to get support of existing staff they had a relationship with. Therefore people from youth clubs to teachers need to have domestic violence training.

To support the above recommendation services need to have designated trained people who young people can access. They need to be capable and informed and able to do a base-line response and signpost young people to appropriate services.

More young people need to be involved with the design and delivery of services, whether this is volunteering in advice centres, helping to write awareness and peer education training or supporting the creation of services that are young person friendly.

There also needs to be more 'healthy relationship' training for victims in order that they become aware of what is and is not acceptable in a healthy relationship and therefore give them support to get out of an unhealthy relationship.

Young people also felt that there was a need to education and counselling for perpetrators so that they could reduce their chance of offending again.

One of the main findings of the Children's Society was that young people seem to be having problems with their carers and the services they gain after they are out of a domestic violence situation. Therefore the main recommendation for this is for carers to receive training on how to look after young people, including looking at making young people feel safe and happy even if they are in respite care or long term foster care.

Young people who are facing domestic violence would also like the support of other young people in similar situations to themselves to make them feel less isolated. Therefore support groups need to be set up for young people to access this kind of support, whether it is through existing services or chat rooms etc.

One of the things that became very apparent during the consultation was how taboo the subject of domestic violence still is. Through peer education style sessions and discussions it is important to break down the stigma of domestic violence so that young people feel they can talk about it and its consequences more easily. However this is not to say that it becomes so de-sensitised that people do not take it seriously.

It was also recognised that to treat domestic violence issues, preventative strategies need to be looked at, including handling conflict, emotional confidence and parenting skills for young people.

The last recommendation focuses mainly on the long-term strategic outlook with regard to domestic violence. The only way that all of the above recommendations can be put into place and be successful is if organisations both funding and carrying out the work, begin to show a willingness to work hard at changing services. The only way to do this is to strategically be prepared to involve children and young people and make changes that will eradicate barriers and to campaign for greater sustainability of funding.



Draft

Devon Children's Rights

Contribution to the

Not In Front Of The Children Project

July 2003



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Introduction

Devon Children's Rights is a Children's Society project working in partnership with Devon County Council.

We provide an independent and confidential service that strives to promote the rights of children and young people aged between 10 and 21 years of age who are involved with Social Services.

Devon Children's Rights:

- provide an advocacy service to children and young people,
- facilitate groups of children and young people to enable them to contribute effectively to the wider planning and delivery of children's services.

In February 2003 Devon Children's Rights agreed to contribute to Phase 1 of the 'Not In Front of the Children' project, funded by Devon Children's Fund, in order to ensure the participation of children and young people involved with Social Services.

Methodology

Devon Children's Rights agreed to undertake 3 specific areas of research;

- a file review,
- face to face interviews with young people who have accessed services following incidents of domestic violence,
- a questionnaire

The Research team comprised Martin Campbell, Children's Rights Co-ordinator, Wendy Machin and Patricia Venn who are employed as sessional workers for Devon Children's Rights.

Target Group

Devon Children's Rights has the details of around 70 young people who have given their written consent to be consulted on issues which affect them in relation to their involvement with Social Services. These young people are all "looked after" i.e. in the care of the local authority, namely Devon County Council Social Services Department. The majority of the young people live with foster carers, while a small number live in residential units. A couple of young people are "accommodated" at home (i.e. the responsibility for their care is shared between the carers at home and the local authority.)

Some of the "words" extracted from the files on the other hand are from young people who are not "looked after" by the local authority, but were the subject of a child protection conference and therefore usually still living at home.

Questionnaire responses

Devon Children's Rights mailed out 72 copies of a questionnaire (see attached). The questionnaires were addressed to the young people's carers with a covering letter explaining the content of the questionnaire. We felt this was necessary to ensure that support might be forthcoming if the young people became upset by the questions.

3 questionnaires were returned as the young person had moved. We received 25 completed forms which constitutes 36% of those sent out. Of these 18 (72%) were boys and 7 were girls. This broadly reflects the ratio on our consent list.

- 32% of respondents were between 10 and 12 years old,

- 40% were 13 to 15 and

- 28% were 16 or older.

- All respondents bar one identified themselves as white British with one young person identifying as "mixed other".

In response to the question "Have you heard adults you have lived with shouting at each other in a way that worried or upset you?" **64% said yes**

In response to the question *“Have you heard or seen adults you have lived with hurting each other on purpose?”* **40% said yes**

- 40% had witnessed both.
- 44% were too scared to do anything about the situation.
- 56% didn't know what to do
- 10% gave other reasons for not doing anything:

“it would also have come back to me”

Of those that did do something;

- 31% spoke to a friend and 80% found this helpful
- 19% spoke to a family member, 66% found this helpful
- 19% spoke to somebody at social services, 66% found this helpful
- 12% spoke to somebody at Connexions and they all found this helpful
- one young person spoke to the police
- one spoke to their doctor
- one spoke to a youth or play worker.

“I went and got someone in the flat”

“I tried to get between them”

- 2 young people said that they were listened to
- 3 were helped to decide what they wanted to do
- 2 respondents said that somebody spoke to their family, with one finding this helpful and the other not
- 3 young people said they were referred to social services
- one was referred to the police.

When asked “what happened then”,

- half of the respondents went into foster care and they all found this helpful.
- one young person said nothing happened.

When asked what they would do if they were in this situation again

- 28% said they would speak to a friend
- 28% said they would speak to somebody in their family
- 20% said they would speak to social services
- 12% said they would speak to the police
- 12% said they would contact Childline
- 4% said they would speak to somebody at Connexions
- 4% said they would call the Samaritans
- 4 % said they would go to a youth advice centre.

When asked what they would then like them to do

- 36% said “stop it”; 36% wanted help in deciding what to do
- 24% wanted the person to talk to their family
- 24% wanted the person to listen to them
- 16% wanted to go and stay with family or friends
- 16% wanted the person to talk to a social worker
- 8% wanted them to talk to somebody at school
- 8% wanted them to contact the police.

When asked what else would have been helpful one young person said

“to have information about these issues at school”.

Another said

“give suggestions as to what could be done about it”

Interviews with young people

Devon Children’s Rights identified 12 young people to interview. These young people were selected on the basis that they had an existing relationship with a member of the research team and were known to have experienced domestic violence. We considered this to be important in the event that the interview brought up painful and / or difficult memories. One of these young people declined our request to be interviewed. One young person was living in a residential school and the staff had misgivings about the young person being interviewed. We could not interview two brothers as they did not keep their appointments. We conducted 5 interviews with 8 young people (3 in groups of 2 siblings). The young people’s carers were present for 2 of the interviews with 3 young people. 2 young people were living at home with their mother.

The following are edited transcripts of those interviews;

The first and second young people interviewed were brothers aged 11 and 14. They said;

“The social worker came around and they took me away the next day. The social worker said I was moved because I was being a pain in the rear end. I was pretty peed off. I wasn’t given any choice. We get counselling once a week now and that’s good. If it happened again I’d want the same thing to happen.”

“I’ve had 3 placements. One placement drove me nuts and I tried to commit suicide. If it happened again I’d go to social services to tell them to sort it out”.

“We have never met our sister who was adopted.”

The third and fourth young person interviewed were a brother and sister, the boy aged 14 and the girl aged 11. They said;

“When we first went into care nobody talked to us about it. [our social worker] sometimes talked to us but he never offered any support.

We have been in 14 placements – I don’t like the fact that I have had so many moves –I wish I hadn’t had any moves.

“I wish we had had more contact with our family. I think the system has let us down. They’ve treated us like we’re 2 and don’t know what’s happening...I’d like them to treat us like our age...they think we’re stupid”.

Some foster carers didn’t feed us properly – A became anaemic.

I reckon foster carers should get more training.

If it happened again I’d talk to my learning support assistant at school.

I’d be worried about talking to a professional, because they say it would be in confidence, but then they go and tell other people.”

The fifth and sixth young people interviewed were brothers aged 11 and 14. They said;

“All I remember is being put in a car, going to see a house – I liked the look of it and 2 weeks later I was stuck there. I didn’t know what it was all about. The first placement only lasted 2 weeks and I got smacked there. I don’t remember the social worker giving me any information. At the time I was looking forward to going to foster care – it was like going on holiday. After we went home a few weeks later mum couldn’t cope anymore and we were sent to a different foster home. At the time, at first I enjoyed being in foster care...but I wouldn’t want to do it again. The first foster home was in A, the second in B and the third in C (different towns some distance apart). Being on the child protection register is stressful If it happened again I’d go to my mates – just a passage out – or maybe you (Devon Children’s Rights). I wouldn’t tell anyone at school. I’d want them to give me some advice.”

“I don’t remember being given any information by our social worker. Now that we know more we wouldn’t want to go into foster care. It was quite fun being in foster care, but I wouldn’t want to do it again. At the time I would’ve wanted to see mum more. We’d just like to be like a normal family without all the meetings. I

like seeing C (intervention worker) cause we do fun things. If it would happen again. I would go to see one of my sisters or up to my mates house. I'd phone the police and I'd want them to get rid of the man. I wouldn't tell social services because they will just take us into care. I would talk to a teacher at school – maybe I'd talk to you (Devon Children's Rights)".

The seventh young person interviewed was a young woman aged 17. She said;

"I felt scared when they started shouting and throwing things. When people are out of control you never know what they might do.

I was scared for my mum and I tried to stop them; I kept screaming and crying but they didn't stop. I went to a neighbour for help and she came and talked to them. Then he left for a while and they took some time to cool off and think about it

It is good to have neighbours; if you lived in the country it might be harder to get help.

I didn't go to anyone at school because I wasn't going to school at the time. But teachers at school might be helpful.

Friends are important for support and you can talk to friends about your problems.

Don't keep quiet and keep it to yourself – talk to someone about it.

It would be good to have more information about this kind of thing in school."

The eighth interview was with a young woman aged 13. She said;

"It was going on a long time before I told anyone. I didn't want to get anyone into trouble. I was scared my mum would get hurt and I might get hurt. I did get hurt.

I tried to tell someone at school when I was little but nobody wanted to know. I was very scared to tell anyone and I didn't know what to do.

I told a friend about it (much later) and they spread it all around the school.

Social Services tried to help my mum but they were always criticising her and this didn't make her feel good.

We all went upstairs, and dad was sent away but he kept on coming round. I didn't feel safe. I'm still a bit scared.

After I came here (to foster carers) it was much better. J listens to me and helps me. They keep my dad away.

I talked to S from Connexions and she said she would help me. Now I am seeing someone at College and this is good: I can talk to them. I would like to talk to other young people who are in care and I would like to meet up with some of them, like we did before (with Devon Children's Rights). I use the internet chat rooms to talk to other young people."

The File Search

The team looked at 150 records of “words” on file at Devon Children’s Rights office in Exeter. These are statements that young people have made to their advocates before attending a social services meeting such as a child protection conference which are then shared with the meeting. The records we looked at covered the geographical social services districts of Exeter and East Devon for the period January to December 2002. Of these “words” 14 made specific reference to domestic violence. This figure does not in any way constitute a representation of the incidence or reporting of domestic violence. It merely reflects the number of young people who chose to make a comment at that particular meeting. These are some of the comments that were made;

I saw my uncle and he told my Nan to phone the police...The police came and took a statement from me, that was fine I told them what I saw and heard, I also mentioned it wasn't the first time he's hit my Mum many times before

I have been staying with my Nan, she's really good to me, my uncle B's there, he's good, I can talk to both of them, they make me feel better and so much safer that I don't worry in the night time that one of them will get killed or hurt

My sister had called the police, and when they came they couldn't calm my Dad, so we all had to go to stay at the house of a lady my Mum knows

It would be ok to come off the register, but say Dad became violent for some reason. I don't like to be on the list – nobody would because it's a meeting every three months. But say I came off and then we needed someone, say like you (Devon Children's Rights) to help us, I wouldn't feel we were important to you people – I know it sounds a bit, you know – nasty to people that are causing the problems but if there became a time where I felt absolutely safe and no harm could come to me, and I'm starting to feel that, I am, but all these things take a bit of time to come – I don't want all these people to be here constantly and I don't mean to sound horrible to Dad or whoever started all this but I wouldn't feel safe. I don't mean I don't feel safe at the moment – I do because he's got better but I don't feel ready. I sort of feel ready – but I don't feel quite ready enough to come off the list. Mum and Dad don't talk about this in front of us.

I know I have another Social Worker but I don't know who it is, I've never seen them.

Sometimes I wish – just a little bit, that we were all back together.

From the time I came here I've wanted to go home because that's the only place I've ever fitted in. Social Services in S should have moved (mother's partner) – he caused the problem not us.....we couldn't stay anywhere in S we weren't allowed to. My Mum had to give up a really good job in a school and I lost mates – it shouldn't be like this it feels like we are the ones who are being punished.

The police came around later but I don't know what was said. I didn't go to school because I'd been up really late the night before.

I was a bit annoyed at being on the register, and I'd like to be off it.

(social worker) didn't help at all at the start. She kept on putting Mum down and if you're meant to be helping someone you shouldn't do that.

It happened pretty quickly and we went to live at a Bed and Breakfast place for a while. That was really horrible, we only had one bedroom to share between us and then Dad got this place.

I see my sister every other weekend if she can get up here, it's a long way from B (town in Cornwall)

I have little contact with my Mum.

Questionnaires from Exeter Safe Project & North Devon Women's Aid

In addition to the questionnaires from Devon Children's Rights we collated the statistics for the above organisations.

9 questionnaires were completed;
7 from boys and
2 from girls.
5 were aged between 10 and 12 years old and
4 were between 13 and 15 years old.
8 had heard adults shouting and
7 had seen violence in the home.
6 did nothing, 5 of whom did not know what to do, 1 was too scared to do anything and one ticked "other" but did not specify.

Of those that did do something

4 spoke to a friend and they all found this helpful;
2 spoke with a family member and both found this helpful;
4 spoke to somebody at school and they all found this helpful;
2 spoke to social services and found this helpful and
1 spoke to somebody at a youth centre and found this helpful.

When asked what happened then

6 young people said that the person listened to them and
4 were helped to decide what to do;
3 young people said the person they spoke to spoke to their family;
2 spoke to social services,
2 spoke to school and
2 spoke to the police.
All the young people found these things helpful.

When asked what happened next

3 young people said "nothing" which they found unhelpful and
2 were taken to a refuge which they also felt was unhelpful.
2 young people went to stay with family or friends and they found this helpful.

When asked what they would do if this were to happen again

3 young people said they would speak to a friend;
2 would go to the police;
1 would go to a family member;
1 to a youth worker and
1 to a refuge.

When asked what they would then like to happen

3 young people said "stop it";
2 said they would want a social worker involved;
2 said they would want school informed;
1 said involve the police;
1 said "listen to me";
1 wanted help to decide what to do;
1 wanted to go to a refuge;
1 wanted to go to a children's home and
1 wanted to stay with family or friends.

In addition the young people made the following comments;

"tried to stop them by getting in the middle of it"

"I knew I could do nothing they didn't listen to me"

if it wasn't helpful tell us why;

"didn't like to leave my friends" (at refuge)

"the men should be removed as mum had a job and we were happy there"

"because my dad still hit my mum"

what would have been helpful?

"if police know about it the law should be allowed to charge the men instead of women being moved away and us having to start a new life. Men should be locked up without the women having to press charges – only if there is enough evidence"

"if they had took us away as soon as they came"

" it wasn't helpful cause they didn't do anything" (young person had been to a family member and spoken to somebody at school. The young person would have liked them "to tell the police"

Conclusions

We have chosen not to comment on the **effects** of domestic violence on children as there is already considerable research evidence which describes this. We have confined our comments to the services that young people have accessed or have stated they would wish to access.

A majority (56%) of young people who said they had experienced domestic violence said that they did not do anything in response to witnessing domestic violence as they did not know what to do or who they could talk to.

Many young people expressed feelings of powerlessness and helplessness– not knowing what to do or where to go for help.

The evidence of our research shows that almost all the young people who had experienced the involvement of social services after incidents of domestic violence, reported that they found this helpful, even though they may have been critical of the way in which help was offered.

For the majority of young people domestic violence in their homes had been going on for a considerable time before any help was offered by professionals.

Another factor that prevented young people from seeking help was their fear for themselves and for their parent or carers and siblings

Young people expressed enormous loyalty to parents and ambivalence / confusion about the situation – just wanting someone to help sort it out.

The importance of informal networks of friends and relatives nearby is significant and often they are the first port of call for children. It is children who are more isolated who are most in need of help and services.

Several young people were critical of the lack of choice and information in relation to their foster placements

Several young people commented that they had no information or guidance about social services procedures – they didn't know what was going on.

Young people found being on the child protection register to be stigmatising and unhelpful (with one exception)

Recommendations

Children and young people who have themselves experienced domestic violence should be directly involved in helping with the design and organisation of services and support, both informal and otherwise, which aim to help other children in this situation. A planning or advisory group of young people should be set up for this purpose.

There is an urgent need for more information and a culture of openness in schools and other places where young people meet in relation to issues such as domestic violence.

Services which aim to support young people should be user friendly and designed specifically with the needs of children and young people in mind.

There needs to be an awareness raising campaign aimed at young people informing them of services and support available to them if they are experiencing domestic violence.

There needs to be a greater awareness amongst professionals of the specific needs of children and young people who have witnessed domestic violence.

**Martin Campbell
& Wendy Machin**

Exeter, July 2003

DEVON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

PROPOSAL FOR 'NOT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN' PROJECT

Devon Children's Rights are committed to supporting the overall aim of the 'Not in Front of the Children' project to better understand the scale of the problem for children living with domestic violence to inform the design and delivery of appropriate services across the county of Devon.

Devon Children's Rights will contribute to Phase 1 of the 'Not In Front of the Children' project, funded by Devon Children's Fund, in order to ensure the participation of children and young people involved with Social Services.

Devon Children's Rights propose to gather information from various sources:

Files of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Violence and have used the Devon Children's Rights Advocacy service in Child Protection and other relevant meetings

A questionnaire sent to 'looked after' children and young people who have agreed to be consulted on issues that affect their lives

A number of face-to-face interviews with children and young people who are, or have been, on the Child Protection Register wholly, or partly, because of issues of Domestic Violence.

It is anticipated that a clearer picture of the specific information to be gathered will follow with the publication of the Research Brief.

Richard Nobes
6th February 2003.

Not in Front of the Children

Literature Review and Background Research

May 2003

Jenny Archard

Consultancy, Training and Facilitation

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Introduction

Background

This research was carried out as a small part of the Not in Front of the Children project, working on behalf of Devon Youth Association with funding from the Children's Fund as part of the Devon Domestic Violence Strategy.

The research and literature review were planned to be completed before the consultation phase of the project began; however because of internal staffing difficulties this part of the work was eventually given to the external researcher with a short timescale for completion. Although the majority of information needed to create a comprehensive report was found, some difficulties in getting access to reference materials and primary data in the time have led to a few areas of the report being less comprehensive than planned. These points have been indicated in the text and would need to be followed up in any subsequent work.

The Brief

The objective of this report is to examine relevant national, local and international material about domestic violence and young people. Specifically, it looks at:

Relevant published research – specifically those concerning domestic violence published during the last 5 years whose methodology was child centred or whose chief concern was the well-being of children

National Policy - relevant national strategies and policy guidelines published by governmental agencies and key NGOs

Local policy – relevant local strategies and policy guidelines

Statutory frameworks – relevant international and European conventions and directives, Acts of Parliament and other statutory instruments.

The questions that this research seeks to answer are:

1. Broadly speaking, what **services** are available for young people under 25 with regard to domestic violence
2. What kinds of **policies** exist for dealing with domestic violence with young people
3. Statistically what is the **scale** of domestic violence with young people

After attempting to answer these questions, the report makes recommendations for future services.

Research Methods

Desk based review of relevant national and local literature, conversations with professionals working in the field (see Acknowledgements) and information from local and national organisations who work with young people.

Work put together by the Devon Domestic Violence network has provided a substantial background to this report. The Mapping Exercise (2001) in particular should be used by anyone wanting to get a full background and picture of the scale of domestic violence in Devon.

Definitions of Domestic Violence

Defining domestic violence is 'not simply an academic exercise' (Lodge, S., Goodwin, J. and Pearson C., 2001). It has been seen as something only perpetrated against women and only involving physical violence, as in the term 'battered wives'. In fact the abuse that is labelled as domestic violence also takes place against men and in same sex relationships and involves many other aspects besides physical abuse.

The definition used by the Devon Domestic Violence Network states:

"Domestic violence is essentially about the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person over another within the context of any intimate or close relationship. Such abuse may manifest itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control and abuse and the imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation."

ChildLine produce an information sheet on domestic violence, which is aimed at both children and adults. It describes domestic violence as

'Aggression or violence that happens in the home when a grown up attacks or threatens another adult in the family. In most cases, the violence is carried out by a man against a woman, although not always... Domestic violence can mean lots of different things. These include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and controlling behaviour.'

Children, Young People and Domestic Violence

For many years children were characterised as 'suffering in silence' in a situation where domestic violence was taking place and many mothers in abusive relationships believed that their children were unaffected, particularly if they did not see what was happening. However research began to show that domestic violence has impacts, which could be long lasting, and that children and young people develop considerable individual coping strategies. [See the section Relevant Research in this report]

The Not in Front of the Children project is considering the effects of domestic violence on children and young people in two ways. Firstly, when children and young people are around this kind of abuse, for example when they have witnessed a responsible adult in their house abusing another, and secondly when young people are themselves involved in one-to-one relationships where domestic violence is taking place. This report looks mostly at the first area.

Scale of the problem

Measuring the full extent of domestic violence is very problematic, as it is a crime that is committed behind closed doors and in private. As such it is often unreported and under-recorded. Women and children of all social classes, ethnicities and abilities experience domestic violence; one in four women experience it at some time in their lives.

According to Domestic Violence in Devon: A Mapping Exercise, approximately 47,124 women in Devon are likely to experience domestic violence in any one year.

Devon and Cornwall Police Statistics

The main source of statistics locally is through Devon and Cornwall Police Domestic Violence Officers, who record all reported incidents. However, many occurrences go unreported to the Police because of the complex set of circumstances surrounding the abuse. Women may be reluctant to report because of perceptions that they will not be taken seriously, or it could compromise their safety or even lead to children being taken into care. Although they want the violence to stop, some women do not want to leave the abusive relationship, again for a complex range of reasons.

In Devon 6958 incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police during April 2002- March 2003.

Research shows that incidents are under-reported but that rates vary: Dominy and Radford (1996) found that only 23% of women in their study who had sought formal help had approached the Police. However, Mama (1996) reported that 53% of women in her study had contact with the Police.

The Police now record whether children are present in the household, but this may not register all children of the family who have witnessed domestic violence. If there are children present, is it recorded and the information should be passed to the relevant social services.

2755 incidents were reported as having children in the house during April 2002-2003

This does not give a clear indication of how many children were present or if there are other children in the family who were not present at the time of the reported incident. The study by Kelly (1999) found that Police Officers had only checked if children were present in 33% of cases.

Statistics from Devon and Cornwall Police for April 2002-2003 for all Devon Districts.

<i>District</i>	<i>Total number of incidents</i>	<i>Number of incidents with children in the house</i>	<i>Percentage of incidents where children are in the house</i>	<i>Number of incidents involving repeat victims in 12 month period</i>
East Devon	1131	341	30	313
Exeter	2060	743	28	684
Mid Devon	582	275	47	185
North Devon	1162	482	41	376
South Hams	469	220	47	112
Teignbridge	819	406	49	211
Torrige	460	173	37	97
West Devon	275	115	42	54
Whole of Devon	6958	2755	-	2032

Information from Women's Refuges and Outreach Projects

In Devon there are Women's Refuges in Exeter, North Devon, East Devon and Torbay. Refuges will provide accommodation for women and their children, usually up to 16 years of age. Many women being accommodated are themselves young people as they fall into the 16-25 age category. The SAFE Project covering Exeter, Mid and East Devon has been set up to address these issues, as it provides support to girls and young women from 14-25 on an outreach basis. The data below shows that it is supporting a significant number of people.

There are Outreach Projects for women victims providing telephone and face-to-face support in all districts of Devon and a county wide telephone helpline for male victims. Data is recorded in different ways by different projects, which makes it difficult to draw comparisons or come to firm conclusions. None the less, the figures give some picture of women and children using services at the moment.

Statistics from Devon Refuges, Helplines and Outreach Projects

<i>District</i>	<i>Refuge</i>	<i>Number of women accommodated 2002-2003/ no children</i>	<i>Helplines and Outreach for Women</i>	<i>Number of women and children supported by service *</i>	<i>Outreach for girls and young women</i>	<i>Numbers 14-24 yrs using Jan 2002-Dec 2003</i>
West Devon	Via Exeter/North Devon / South Devon		West Devon Helpline	47 women total with 77 known children ¹	No project	
South Hams & Teignbridge	South Devon Women's Refuge		South Devon Women's Aid Outreach		No project	
Exeter	Exeter Women's Aid ²	90 women 102 children	Exeter Women's Aid	26	SAFE project	329
East Devon	East Devon Safe House	#	East Devon Outreach Project	25	SAFE project	
Mid Devon	Via Exeter	5% of those accommodated at Exeter	Mid Devon Outreach project	19	SAFE project	
North Devon & Torrige	North Devon Women's Aid		North Devon Women's Aid Outreach Project	70	No project	

¹ 37 women who have 77 children; 3 women with unknown no. of children; 5 women with no children; 2 women with children not now present

² As the refuge moved premises, fewer numbers than previous years have been accommodated

*Blanks indicate that information was not received during the life of this research, but their data is recorded.
* Figures are for six month period January – June 2003 and represent only total numbers contacting the services. It should be borne in mind that for many of these there will be a series of contacts and that once the services become more established numbers will increase*

Summary

The overall picture of domestic violence and young people is hazy because the problem is so under-reported. In the police data we cannot separate out how many young women have been victims of domestic violence, but the anecdotal evidence from Refuges is that they accommodate a high proportion of young women.

For half of those experiencing domestic violence there are children aged under 16 in the household. (Mirlees-Black, 1999). Using a broad calculation, if the figure of 47,124 is used as an approximate number of those women who may directly experience domestic violence and only 20% of those women had one child, then 9,425 children in Devon would experience domestic violence in any one year. Although this research cannot give data on how big the problem is, it does demonstrate that more research is needed to assess the scale so that services can be accurately targeted. Other research has demonstrated that up to 60% of households where domestic violence occurs also involves physical abuse of the children. This statistic leaves aside the increased acceptance that for any child witnessing are living with domestic violence there will be emotional and psychological harm.

Relevant Published Research

What kinds of research have been carried out?

As this report is looking at domestic violence from the perspective of young people and children, the most relevant research is that carried out by directly asking them about their own experiences, rather than getting data from mothers or professional supporters. The methodologies described are also an important starting point for working with children and young people; researchers working locally in Devon need to bear in mind any lessons that can be drawn upon when doing future work.

The study by Mullender, Kelly, Hague, Malos and Imam (1999) involved direct work with children and was carried out in two phases. The first phase was a schools-based survey of 1395 children from ages 8-16, using questionnaires developed for two age groups, 8-11 and 12-16. As this was a broad scope sample, it could not be assumed that no children in the study had lived with domestic violence. So, staff training was offered for teachers, questions of consent, confidentiality, support for children and concerns with child protection issues were fully discussed. The second phase was in depth interviews with 45 children who were known to have lived with domestic violence, their non-abusing parents and some professionals whom they considered significant. It took considerable time to gather the sample, using agency contacts and Women's Support services such as Refuges; because of difficulties the sample was half the size of what was planned. It is worth noting that a feature of this study was the organisation of group discussions with the children, both for the in-depth interviews and for the development of the 'research tools'.

McGee's research (2000) worked directly with 54 children and 48 mothers across England and Wales, again using a variety of methods to find survivors to talk with. The average length of the children's exposure to domestic violence was 6 years. It looked at how best to support children when there is domestic violence happening and who children and mothers approached for help.

More recently Mullender, Hague, Imam, Kelly, Malos and Regan (2002) have studied children's perspectives on domestic violence, bringing together work from the earlier ERSC funded work. They have looked at the effects of domestic violence on children, what children say would help them most in coping with it and what advice children would offer other children, mothers and helping professionals. ■

How does domestic violence affect children?

Hester, Pearson and Harwin (2000) looked at a range of studies to unpick the impacts of domestic violence on children. They showed that whilst living with domestic violence undoubtedly has adverse impacts on children, they are not passive bystanders and do develop complex ways of coping, which may include protecting their mother or even siding with their father who is carrying out the abuse. Children can often think they are responsible in some way for the violence. Hester et al also noted that very few studies have looked at the specific impact of domestic violence on older children (teenagers) or have charted any change in their response to the domestic violence as they progressed from school age to adult.

Overall findings from Hester et al include:

Domestic violence is likely to have a detrimental impact on children

Many children may experience sexual abuse and physical abuse as well as witnessing domestic violence

Professionals have tended to minimise the impact of domestic violence on children who have been witnesses, even though some cases lead to symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Children can experience a wide range of psychological, behavioural and physical effects, which may be short or long term

Children have individual reactions and perceptions to living with domestic violence, influenced by age, ethnicity, economic status, gender, disability, sexuality and their own resilience.

Generally, pre-school children are more likely to have physical symptoms; pre-schoolers have more behavioural and emotional problems and adolescents gain relief through drugs, early marriage/pregnancy, running away or criminal activity.

There can be particular difficulties for black children, especially set against a perception of a racist and hostile society.

The impact of domestic violence on the child may be affected by the mothers ability to carry out an effective parenting role because of the stress she is facing

Gender can be an influencing factor, but there is no common way in which boys and girls deal with domestic violence.

McGee (2000) noted that all forms of domestic violence, not just the violence itself, affect children. Fear persists in children for a long time and they can become suicidal, even as young as seven. The children felt stigmatised and ashamed by what had happened, with consequent effects on their self-esteem and identity.

Mullender et al (2002) make a key point that 'children are actors in their own lives' (p114) and that there are many differences in the way that children respond to the circumstances around them. Interviews of siblings showed wide variations in perceptions and understanding of incidents and also of their responses to them. From a policy and support role, this means that no single service can provide all that children and young people will need as they try to make sense of their experiences. Rather, they need the respect and space to tell their own story and explore their own issues and perceptions. Mullender found that there was a marked difference in the accounts of children who had access to good support networks, especially informal ones.

What are the perceptions of the support that is available?

McGee's study (2000) looked at the support offered by social services, the Police, schools, health professionals and refuges. The women in the study were generally unhappy about their contact with social services or their perceptions of how things would work. Many were concerned that by involving social services their children would be taken into care and some men manipulated this fear to abuse women further. Some felt that there was not a real understanding of domestic violence, for example issues of safety or making the connection between mental health problems and domestic violence. Putting children on the child protection register didn't always lead to the additional help that women expected. Generally, children found the support they were given to be positive.

Mullender et al (2002) looked at support from formal and informal networks. The research showed that informal support topped the list of what had helped children, with specialist domestic violence networks next in importance, which is a move away from the earlier research and the current emphasis on statutory and voluntary sector provision. Relationships with mothers were cited as the most important source of support by children in Mullender's study, far outweighing any other source. This support is often made more limited by the conspiracy of silence that develops as a mother tries to protect her child from knowing what is going on, then the child protecting the mother by not asking. Support aimed at helping mothers to be open with their children and to confront misconceptions would help to create more openness for both to talk. Siblings

Women's Refuges, Outreach and Other Voluntary Support Services

Refuges and Outreach

The four Women's Refuges provide direct support for children when their mothers are accommodated and women of any age who are experiencing domestic violence through the 24 hour crisis lines and the Outreach projects mentioned earlier. The Exeter based SAFE Project is the only one aiming services at young women and girls. It offers practical and emotional support, drop-in sessions and groups and also carries out awareness raising exercises with young people. They provide a comprehensive advice leaflet, which lists sources of help focused on the Exeter, Mid and East Devon areas.

Devon Children's Rights and Representation Project

This project works with young people and children over the age of 10 by providing representation and advocacy support for children, especially for child protection conferences. They work across Devon, primarily with children who are in care, who have open access to the project. Other children will only be offered support if there is a child protection issue.

ChildLine

This well-publicised service provides a 24hr free helpline for children and young people. It gives in depth counselling to those who need it and straightforward advice and information if that is more appropriate.

Victim Support

Local Victim Support services will provide support to the victim of any crime, so it is possible that support could be offered to children or young people. *No data was gathered on the amount of support given in the last year.*

Statutory Services

Police Domestic Violence Units

Each district has a Domestic Violence Officer who deals with incidents attended by other Officers in their area and provides the link with other agencies. The DV Officer can sanction a child protection meeting if he/she believes that there is a risk to the child.

Social Services

Social Services provide support to vulnerable children and young people primarily through the Children and Families Teams based at eight offices around the County. (Other support may be available, for example through the Mental Health teams or Learning Disability team if that is appropriate.) With reductions in funding over recent years and several high profile child abuse cases, the priority for those working with children and young people has become Child Protection. As it can be difficult to prove the link between a child or young person's behaviour and domestic violence which may be undisclosed or unknown, support is not always available.

Joint Agencies Child Abuse Team (JACAT) based at the RD&E hospital provides therapy to abused children up to the age of 18 and their families, through a team of clinical psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and paediatricians. The service only covers Exeter and East Devon, but there is some hope that it will be extended to provide services in more northern and southern parts of the county. Referrals to the service come via Social Services or Health professionals.

Schools

All schools have Education Welfare Officers and Personal, Social and Health Co-ordinators both of whom can do work that is directly linked to raising awareness of domestic violence as an issues for young people and providing support within the school. Within PSHE, domestic violence could be included as part of the relationships and sexuality and peer support.

This is an important area of support as well as education and at present there seems to be little activity in Devon Schools, except a few that have been involved in pilot work with the Domestic Violence Network and Refuge or Outreach projects. It should also be noted that the multi-agency domestic violence awareness sessions taking place in the county, have not yet been attended by any teachers or support staff. This research has not looked in any depth at what kinds of support are currently provided in schools; this is an area that needs more work.

Sure Starts in Devon

Sure Start is the government's programme to support children, parents and communities through the integration of early education, childcare and health and family support services. There are four Sure Starts

operating in 'new' Devon: Bideford and District; Dawlish and Teignmouth; Exeter; and Ilfracombe and Berrynarbor. Each Sure Start defines a work plan and priorities for their own area, depending on local needs but working within a statutory framework. They are able to offer specialist support to families and children, which could include work around domestic violence.

The Dawlish and Teignmouth Sure Start for example has included domestic violence in its plan and has now made links with the local Police Domestic Violence Unit which leads to direct referrals to Sure Start Community Development Worker, who has a special interest in domestic violence issues. Workers from the project are able to let families know about support available including the Sure Start drop-in services and other local services including Home-Start. The Ilfracombe Sure Start does not yet have a domestic violence policy, but staff members and some parent representatives have attended a training day. Whilst outside the scope of this study, it is worth noting that the Lark Project - Sure Start in North Prospect, Plymouth – does have a worker dedicated to domestic violence issues who may be able to help with developing good practice in other areas.

Statutory Framework

The Children Act (1989)

Affects children, their parents and those working with children either as paid workers or volunteers. In order to protect children and young people it is important for both paid workers and volunteers to be aware of the rights and protections for children and young people created by the Act. Designed to allow children to express their views and afford them protection, it does not always work where only one parent/carer is carrying out the abuse.

Safe from Harm

Prepared by the Home Office (1993) to act as a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people (up to the age of 16) in voluntary organisations in England and Wales. It supports and reinforces The Children Act (1989). It is applicable to all workers; both staff and volunteers.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Under Article 12 children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them. However, as Mullender et al (2002) point out, the Convention does not seem to be sophisticated enough to deal with a situation where a child is living with abuse. It does not recognise that two parents may not have a shared view of good parenting which can act to reinforce their inherent inequality.

Family Law Act (1996)

Part IV deals with domestic violence. The act allows non-molestation orders which prohibit particular behaviour or "molestation" generally and occupation orders which could, for example, define occupation rights in the home, including the exclusion of the respondent from it or an area round it. The act requires the court to attach a power of arrest to an occupation order or non-molestation order if the respondent has used or threatened violence against the applicant or child concerned, unless this is unnecessary for their protection. Formerly only current spouses and cohabitants could apply for a remedy against domestic violence, but the act also covers former spouses, former cohabitants and a number of other categories of people within a broadly defined domestic or family relationship.

The act also amends the Children Act 1989 to enable the court, when making either an emergency protection order or an interim care order, to include the requirement that the suspected abuser be excluded from the home rather than the child having to be removed, as was formerly the case. (Devon and Cornwall Police website)

Summary

The national and international legal framework is seen as inadequate by many support professionals in the field, partly as it does not allow for support to children and young people except when they are at risk.

There are more relevant statutory instruments that could be examined, but were not looked at in the time of this report.

Strategies

Devon Domestic Violence Strategy and Business Plan

The 2002—2005 Strategy has three aims:

To reduce the level of domestic violence
To reduce repeat victimisation by 15%
Increase the level of reportage by 10% by improving early intervention services

The section on Children and Survivors points out the need for services for children and young people. It proposes to:

Provide consistent high quality services to survivors across all districts in Devon, recognising the needs of black and minority ethnic groups, same sex relationships, those with a disability and older people

Explore the effective ways of delivering services to children living with domestic violence and base future developments on evidence based research

Develop partnerships working across the support agencies and link domestic violence developments into wider existing and emerging children's services

Develop each agency's internal policies in relation to its role and function

It goes on to make recommendations specific to other organisations or agencies including:

Education – Preventative work opportunities in schools

Social Services – recognising the need for more emphasis on prevention and support for children in addition to the child protection role

Early Years Service – to work with all service providers of 0-14 and parents to develop policies on domestic violence

Connexions – develop the role of personal advisers in identifying children living with domestic violence and promote and provide support to them

Community Safety Partnerships

All the seven Community Safety Partnerships (East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge, South Hams, Teignbridge, West Devon) have a theme on domestic violence, with a variety of objectives, some of which *could* cover providing services for children and young people although few name young people in their aims; South Hams aim to 'To address support issues for children who witness or directly suffer from domestic violence', Mid Devon aim to increase reporting of domestic violence 'through drop-in centre for young people, improve advice on health etc.' and West Devon aim to 'Raise awareness in schools through the national curriculum'.

This look at strategies is not exhaustive and could be added to.

Local organisations' policies to protect and support young people

In looking for policies that will support children and young people, most organisations cited their Child Protection policies as being the area that they would refer to.

Statutory Bodies

Social Services and other Agencies

Plymouth, Torbay and Devon Area Child Protection Committee 'Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures' has a specific section on Children who experience Domestic Violence. This takes its definition from Hester et al *Making an Impact* and gives clear explanations of what domestic violence is, the impact on children, issues of confidentiality and safety. The procedures themselves highlight:

The need for agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child

That assessment and service provision by adult and childcare agencies should be co-ordinated by Children and Families Team to ensure a coherent approach

The need for confidentiality and consent, except where a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm

Taking into consideration issues relating to cultural belief and language issues if the family is from a black or minority ethnic group.

What is really notable here is that support for children is only likely to come if they are deemed to be at risk of significant harm.

Leaflets about child protection are available from Social Services, including 'Child Protection – what to do' for those working in local communities, out of school provision and day nurseries. None of these leaflets say anything specific about domestic violence.

Sure Start

Again from the Dawlish and Teignmouth Sure Start, their Final Plan includes a section titled 'Emotional & Domestic Violence':

'It was recognised that domestic violence was an issue of both the physical and emotional. While the majority of this is seen as an issue for the woman within a relationship it was acknowledged that a problem can exist for either partner. The effect upon the children was the major consideration for both their current situation but the long-term effect this can have upon the development of the child and long-term effects. This must also apply to women who are pregnant so the problem can be tackled before the child is born.

Sure Start will work with the Local Domestic Violence Forum to establish the current situation in relation to domestic violence and to explore ways in which Sure Start can contribute support. In the first instance, Sure Start will provide an information and sign-posting role for people experiencing domestic violence, with a view to developing additional services as appropriate.'

Voluntary Organisations

Several organisations were approached to find out what policies they have and how they operate. Not all replied but those that did are included here.

The Guide Association

Publish 'Safe from Harm. Code of practice: Guidelines and Support for Commissioners' which is a comprehensive document and pocket reminder of child protection practice including guidance on offering support to children and to make contact with police or social services if needed. Although this leaflet does not talk specifically about domestic violence, the signs of abuse are broadly similar, including a section on neglect and emotional abuse.

Devon Play Association 'Children and Young Person's Protection Policy'

As an umbrella organisation for play projects, they have a Children and Young person's protection policy. This has a relevant section on Abuse and another Support for Families:

1. Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse
 - Staff will report all suspicions and allegations to their line manager, who will advise them on the appropriate course of action. The manager will report to the committee member responsible for protection issues, who will inform Social Services.
 - All such suspicions and allegations will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know. The people most commonly involved will be the member of staff who first observed the child and their line manager, and Committee member(s) with responsibility for children and young people's protection.
2. Support families
 - The Devon Play Association will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff, and volunteers in groups.
 - Where abuse at home is suspected we will continue to welcome the child or young person and family while investigations proceed.

Again, domestic violence is not mentioned.

Devon Youth Association

As a provider of advice and guidance services to young people and umbrella body for others, DYA have a policy that gives guidance on dealing with different kinds of abuse; physical, sexual and emotional. Like the Guide Association guidance it provides a list of possible signs and then follows this with action to take. No specific reference is made to domestic violence.

The following may be signs of abuse:

- Allegations made by the child or young person
- Regression in behaviour
- Unexplained injuries or injuries that have received no medical attention
- Attention-seeking
- Inappropriate relationships with peers &/or adults
- Hidden injuries

Severe sleep disturbances with fears & phobias
Running away
Sexual activity through words, play or drawings
Nervousness
Pre-occupation with sexual matters
Self harm
Signs of neglect: looking uncared for
Stealing
Sudden under-achievement
Lying

They note that 'this list is not exhaustive and every person is different any one person may display some all or none of these symptoms and may or may not have suffered abuse'.

Boys' Brigade, Devon Battalion.

Although they do not have specific domestic violence policy, they recognise that it comes under the heading of 'Child Protection Policy/Procedures'. All leaders, who have to undergo 'Youth Leader Training', are made aware of the procedure to follow if a disclosure is made, or if there is a suspicion of a young person in danger of abuse. A code of good practice is issued to all Officers, Leaders and Helpers that are appointed. All allegations/suspicions are to be referred immediately and directly to the Company Captain, who liaises with the Minister, or appropriate Church Official. In Exeter, it could then be referred to Social Services or alternatively, contact the Police Child Protection Unit.

Recommendations

As an outcome of this review and research, some recommendations can be made. These need to be tempered by what the primary research shows that young people and children in Devon say they want.

Provide more direct services for children and young people

The research has shown that what children and young people really want is to be listened to. Informal networks are the first place that young people go for this help, so finding ways of encouraging this to happen are likely to have a big effect.

More education and publicity about the issues to a wide audience, including work in schools, should be a priority. More support for mothers, about how to talk with their children and the benefits of being honest rather than 'protecting' may also help.
Formal support like group counselling sessions and one-to-one work is useful for some children and young people. These services need to be safe, accessible, and child friendly. Again, the emphasis is on sharing experiences with people who will listen.
Developing existing or new Peer Education projects that include sessions on domestic violence.
Provide continued support for Women's Refuges and existing Outreach projects and support the development of this work

Provide training for those who work with children and young people

Training is already part of the Domestic Violence Strategy and it seems that more of this is needed. All those working with young people who were spoken to during the course of this work would be very keen to have training on domestic violence issues.

All youth workers need to be able to point children and young people at appropriate services.
Youth work training needs to include specific section on domestic violence, impacts and ways of supporting those who have experienced it. This includes with Connexions and both statutory and voluntary youth services.
Work with Family Centres, Sure Starts and other children's projects to train staff in domestic violence issues and enable sharing of good practice.
There is a need to include work on ethnicity and culture in training for helping professionals such as Social Workers.
Work with schools, so that domestic violence awareness can fit into PSHE and other parts of curriculum.

Incorporating domestic violence awareness in organisations 'child protection' policies

The Domestic Violence Network could provide model policies and guidance on including domestic violence issues in child protection policies.
Use examples from other areas in the UK

Further useful research

Establish accurate baselines of current service provision, so that any new services can be evaluated effectively
Make use of research that has been carried out in other places, partly by creating a domestic violence source library for people working in the field so that the latest research is easily accessed

Publicity and Education

Domestic violence is still a hidden problem and it needs to be talked about and aired, brought out from behind closed doors

Work with schools and youth services on awareness raising campaigns across the county

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Websites

- www.homeoffice.gov.uk Domestic violence article last updated 2000
- <http://www.womensaid.org.uk> Women's aid facts
- <http://www.domesticviolencedata.org> Fact sheets and data
- <http://www.connexions-cd.org.uk/connectit> Connexions database

www.nspcc.org.uk/inform NSPCC inform - information site

www.bbc.co.uk/hittinghome Background on domestic violence from TV programmes early in 2003-05-14

www.childline.org.uk Childline information

Acknowledgements and Useful Contacts for Future Research

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and friends are also seen as key by children in providing this informal support, so it makes life easier for them if those contacts can be kept and developed rather than broken or not valued by adults.

The message from the Mullender et al study for those working in refuges and other specialist projects who provide support was 'keep up the good work' (p214) as children recognise this as an important source of help. Counselling services are also seen as important but not as widely available. Schools were a potentially important place for help, but teachers were not always able to listen or to be trusted by children. The Police were criticised for not being effective in their interventions, because the perpetrator is allowed to return and because the child is not talked to about what is going on. Contact with social services is rare for children who have experienced domestic violence, as this tends only to come when there are child protection concerns.

Mullender et al considered how racism, ethnicity and culture might affect children's perspective and support needs. Children in South Asian families were found to have access to different informal support networks and that family pressures and social sanctions could lead to different problems. The overriding message was the high need for thorough cultural awareness by agencies providing support, as crass support can cut women and children off from informal support.

What support and information do children and young people want?

Mullender et al (2002) found that what children who are living with domestic violence want most is to be safe and secondly to have someone to talk with about their experiences, a person they can trust and who will understand and listen. Children are easily silenced by adults who don't listen or who ignore them. One of the key messages from this study was that children and young people need to be sensitively involved in the design and provision of services.

McGee's findings were similar. Children want to progress at their own pace; not all need formal intervention but they do want to be able to talk about their experiences. They also want practical information and especially said that schools would be an easy place to get information.

Children in a domestic violence situation want to be kept informed of what is happening, by professionals, by their mother and other family members. They want access to counselling, particularly group counselling where they can share experiences with others who understand.

McGee also found that many children and young people didn't have the language and concepts to be able to talk about their experiences and feelings, which they need if they are to express it as they want to.

Current Services available to children and young people

Signposting to services

Connexions

The new Connexions ConnectIT database, which can be accessed through their website, provides information about services for young people across Devon and Cornwall. It does not list domestic violence as a search category but includes it under 'relationships/bullying and abuse' and seems to be aimed at those who are in abusive relationships rather than witnessing domestic violence in their family. It signposts children and young people to the Refuges, Outreach projects and Women's Aid as well as four other youth drop-in projects; In-touch youth counselling service in Exeter, Tennyson Way Community House in Exmouth, Tiverton Market Drop-in Centre and the YAC at Ivybridge. It is not clear if any of these places offer specific support for people with domestic violence issues or if they provide more general help with relationship issues. Personal Advisers within Connexions are also likely to signpost any young people for their caseloads, but they are not receiving particular training on domestic violence issues.

Youth Workers

There are a very large number of sessional youth workers employed by Devon County Council and by voluntary youth projects, working with children and young people usually from 13-25 years. To give an idea of how many people are involved in delivering services, the County Council has more than 40 youth workers who work alongside sessional workers and volunteers and in Exeter there are more than 80 youth work sessions happening in a normal week. All these workers are able to signpost young people to services and do so, when they become aware that there is a problem, but most have received little formal training in domestic violence issues; it is only touched upon in the local formal youth work training.

Definition* of Domestic Violence

The term domestic violence shall be understood to mean the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person over another within the context of any intimate or close relationship. Such abuse may manifest itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control and abuse and the imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation.

*Devon Network multi-agency definition